



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Head of the OSCE Office in Baku Ambassador Bilge Cankorel

As delivered by Charge d'Affaires Carol Fuller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 2, 2011

We warmly welcome Ambassador Cankorel back to the Permanent Council and thank him for his comprehensive report. Ambassador Cankorel, the United States highly values the Office's work, particularly in providing election-related assistance, seeking to strengthen media and other fundamental freedoms, and promoting good governance.

Your briefing today comes at a particularly auspicious time, following the Azerbaijani government's release of journalist Eynulla Fatullayev on May 27. The United States welcomes Mr. Fatullayev's release. We monitored his case closely, calling for a transparent legal process consistent with Azerbaijani law and international norms. We remain committed to working with Azerbaijan to advance democratic reforms, including on freedom of expression, and other reforms necessary to secure a prosperous future for its people.

We are grateful for the efforts by the OSCE Office to promote good governance, to increase transparency and strengthen rule of law, and to reinforce the anti-corruption work of the Azerbaijani government and people. We fully support the Office's activities regarding elections, judicial reform, and respect for freedoms of expression and assembly. Activities by the Office promoting the rule of law, including training to increase the professionalization of judges, prosecutors, and defense lawyers, reinforce the Azerbaijani government's commitment to strengthen its judiciary.

We also continue to support the Office and the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media in their vital work to facilitate a more pluralistic and open media environment in Azerbaijan, in line with OSCE commitments.

We encourage the Office, as well as the Government of Azerbaijan, to collaborate with civil society and to develop additional constructive solutions for addressing Azerbaijan's challenges in the area of democratic reform and human rights.

We reaffirm the United States' commitment to continue working with the government and people of Azerbaijan to advance Azerbaijan's development as a prosperous, modern, democratic country. We continue to call on Azerbaijani authorities to uphold their OSCE commitments, including those on the freedoms of expression and assembly. The OSCE Office in Baku will remain a crucial partner in these objectives.

Ambassador Cankorel, as this is your final appearance at the PC as Head of Office, we would like to thank you warmly for your dedicated service and wish you all the best in your future endeavors.

Thank you, Chair.