

**Question for written answer P-010983/2013/rev.1  
to the Commission  
Rule 117  
Werner Schulz (Verts/ALE)**

**Subject:** Failure to grant EU assistance for independent election observation in Azerbaijan

In December 2012 the Commission published a call for proposals (EIDHR 19.04.01 und 19.08.01.03) worth EUR 2.2 million with the aim, among other things, of providing for observation of the imminent presidential, local and parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan. Under the initial timetable, a decision should have been taken on 5 May 2013 and agreements should have been signed on 30 May in order to allow plenty of time for preparation before the presidential election in October 2013.

The decision was, however, put off for over two months. At the end of July, all applicants for observer status for the presidential election, including reputable NGOs with experience of working with EU partners, received a rejection. Almost all the projected expenditure of EUR 2.2 million was returned to Brussels by the EU Delegation in Baku.

- Why were non-registered organisations not permitted to apply in the call for proposals?
- Is the Commission aware that NGOs critical of the regime in Azerbaijan are, as in all states in the Eastern Partnership that are subject to authoritarian rule, not being admitted for registration?
- How come there was a two-month hold-up in the work of the Evaluation Committee?
- What action is the Commission taking to increase the effectiveness of the work of the Delegation in Baku?
- What action is the Commission taking to assist civil society organisations for election observation in the countries of the Eastern Partnership to plan and sustain their activities?