

**Ivo Vajgl**  
Member of European  
parliament



## **Advisory Committee on the Conduct of Members of the European Parliament**

**Mr. Gerald Häfner**

Brussels, January 08, 2014

Dear Mr Häfner,

I am responding to your request regarding my trip as a member of an NGO of observation mission to the presidential elections in Azerbaijan last October.

As you are referring to some media reports on the controversy of the reports of different missions, including the official mission of the European Parliament, I have to remark that some of these press reports were explicitly bias and insulting for the Members of European Parliament who participated in the observation missions. As regards to me personally, European Voice has published a diffamatory lie that I am acting in the capacity of a 'Special Envoy of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for relations with Azerbaijan'. This is of course a lie to which I responded in the same newspaper but as always a media which is pursuing its diffamatory goal has the last word.

I am following the problems in and around Azerbaijan for many years, since I was Ambassador of Slovenia to the OSCE in Vienna in the years 1998/2001 and I am actively engaged in the debates about the Nagorbo-Karabakh problem. In this context, the presidential elections in October were of my outmost interest and I accepted the invitation of the European Academy for Election Observations in Brussels to participate in their observation mission.

You reminded me of my duty to report about my trip to Baku, which I did not submit assuming that, as it was a private kind of mission, organized by a well-known organization in Brussels, it would not be necessary. I obviously made a mistake.

Finally, I would like to express my concern about the fact that the elections in Azerbaijan has triggered, in my view, unprecedented and unproportional reactions. According to my knowledge about foreign policy and interest of the European Union, Azerbaijan is a partner country to the EU, a strategically

important country on the cross-road of the interests of its very influential and aggressive neighbours, Russia and Iran, at the same time a Muslim country with a very secular system, respect for national and religious minorities and a very important source of energy for Europe. It is also true that Azerbaijan is far from our standards of democracy but the EU can influence the positive development by its tolerance and understanding for the complexity of transition and problems like the occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh.

With best regards,

Ivo Vajgl MEP