

## **The European Parliament refrains from observing of upcoming presidential elections in Azerbaijan**

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On January 16, 2024, *RIA Novosti* with reference to a statement by European MPs, reported that: *“The European Parliament will not observe this electoral process and consequently will neither comment on the process nor on the results that will be announced afterwards”*. The European Parliament clarified that no individual MEP has been authorized to observe or comment on the EP’s behalf on the February early elections in Azerbaijan.

It follows from the statement that the European Parliament at the official level prohibits its members from monitoring the Azerbaijani elections and, in this regard, making any statements or giving assessments on behalf of this international structure. Perhaps this statement was made based on previous years' experience when Baku privately lured deputies or figures from different European structures to the presidential and parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan, and then used their positive feedback, supported by gifts and generous donations, about the process and outcome of the election as the official position of their organizations. It is obvious that in order to give irrefutable legitimacy to its next re-election in the eyes of its own society and the international community, Ilham Aliyev’s regime will use such an unscrupulous scheme of actions.

The European Parliament, in turn, insures itself against political interference and advises its members not to exploit the authority of the organization for their own purposes. On the other hand, the statement of the European MPs testifies to the *de facto* boycott of the monitoring of the presidential elections in AzR, which could later provide the EP with an additional tool to pressure the regime in Baku, if necessary.