IS THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE FOSTERING DEMOCRATISATION INazerbaijan?

Analysing the impact of the organization and its faith in the ballot box.

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Abstract:

This paper examines the impact of the Council of Europe (CoE) in the process of democratisation in Azerbaijan, a member state where the organization has failed to overcome the obstacles for democratic progress, legitimising a democratic façade. This case exemplifies the weakness and potential of the Council, while the political and social context in Azerbaijan illustrates how conflict, natural resources, and geopolitics can challenge the progress of democracy. Both the country’s underlying conditions and the organization’s internal weaknesses have been addressed in this paper, aiming to identify obstacles and opportunities. After looking at the CoE’s strategy and actions, the need to move beyond the legitimisation of authoritarian practices and flawed elections, through a holistic and impactful monitoring system, has been highlighted. At a time of economic and social change in Azerbaijan, it is in the best interest of both the country and the CoE to cooperate to uphold democracy, human rights and the rule of law.
Table of contents:

Chapter I: The illusion of Transition: Missed opportunities for Council’s action.......8

1.1. On the run to membership: democratic progress and failures before 2001. ...............9
   1.1.1. Post-Soviet transformation in the 1990’s. .......................................................... 9
   1.1.2. The main political developments during the negotiations for accession. ..........14

1.2. Post-Accession Period: A Council Member consolidating authoritarianism. ..........21
   1.2.1. The 2003 presidential elections: A ‘sultanistic’ succession. ..........................23
   1.2.2. The 2005 parliamentary elections: No ‘Colours’ in Baku. ..............................27
   1.2.3. The issue of political prisoners. .................................................................31
   1.2.4. The Azerbaijani Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers. .........................36

Chapter II: Obstacles for effective action of the Council of Europe.........................41

2.1. Azerbaijan’s internal features: ............................................................................. 42
   2.1.1. Democracy lost in a geopolitical game. .............................................................. 42
   2.1.2. The Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. .................................................................. 48
   2.1.3. Oil and Diplomacy. .......................................................................................... 52

2.2. The organization’s internal weakness: .................................................................58
   2.2.1. The ‘Transition Paradigm’: a deficient framework for Council’s action.........58
   2.2.2. The flaws of CoE’s monitoring mechanisms. .....................................................64

Chapter III: 15 years after accession: windows of opportunity for Council’s action ..73

3. 1. Economic crisis: A time for reforms: .................................................................73
3.2. Secretary General’s inquiry under Article 52 of the ECHR: ..............................77
3.3. A revisited strategy: steps for impactful action: .................................................79

Conclusion ..................................................................................................................84

Bibliography .............................................................................................................87
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