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DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

Statement
in response to the address by
Minister for Foreign Affairs of France H.E. Bernard Kouchner
delivered by Ambassador Ashot Hovakimian
at the 722nd meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
July 17, 2008

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to join my distinguished colleagues and warmly welcome Minister Bernard Kouchner today in this PC meeting. For us and I'm sure for many others as well, your appearance and your thoughts that you shared with us is another evidence of relevance of this organization and we very much appreciate that acknowledgement, especially from the country which has assumed the EU presidency. We would like to use this opportunity to congratulate France in this regard and wish it every success in this role, especially at the times where EU needs crucial decisions and steps.

Today speaking on behalf of the EU means speaking also on behalf of candidate, associate, and sometimes of correlated or partner countries, and we are amongst them. It should be also mentioned that the EU presidency so far worked effectively and acted in a co-operative manner with these and with the ENP partner countries in particular and we are confident that this inclusive approach will be carried on further.

From Armenia's perspective, close, effective and durable cooperation with the European Union will encourage and support our political and economic development and our objective of further integration into European economic and social structures as well as our closer integration within Europe. The Armenia-EU joint ENP Action plan is very much consistent with our own priorities. We are looking forward to developing more active and inclusive co-operation with the European Union, which we are confident, will gradually become more ambitious and consequential. We hope that France as the EU presidency country will contribute sufficient efforts to that purpose.

It should be mentioned that on a bilateral level we have and we are confident that we will have excellent relations with France which we value very much indeed.

Let me briefly touch upon the issue of co-operation between the EU and the OSCE: it should be noted that today these two organisations became too close and interconnected - two organisations performing roughly in the same region, sometimes complementing each other, sharing values, objectives and visions. Of course there are differences in handling various issues, differences in techniques and approaches.

In this regard, the OSCE's umbrella is more inclusive and we believe that the EU may gain an advantage from this kind of close co-operation with the OSCE.

Mr. Chairman,

We would also like to touch upon another important aspect - the role of France as a co-Chair of the Minsk Group.

Armenia believes that co-Chairs of the Minsk Group, including France, have been doing their utmost to resolve the conflict. We also believe that the Minsk Group is the only valid and competent arrangement, which during the years has accumulated expertise and capability necessary for finding durable and commonly acceptable solution to this conflict. In this regard, we consider the meeting arranged and facilitated by the Minsk Group co-Chairs between the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan in St. Petersburg as a positive and constructive one. Armenia is ready to work harder and with full commitment with all parties concerned to ensure a long-lasting peace. We have the determination to carry on the peace process.

In conclusion let us wish you, Your Excellency and to your dedicated team here and back in France every success in future endeavours.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.