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

**Statement in response
to the Address on the Priorities of the EU Presidency by H.E. Jean Asselborn,
Vice Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg,
delivered by Ambassador Jivan Tabibian
at the 542nd Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
January 27, 2005**

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Of course, our Delegation was and is excited to hear from the new Presidency of the European Union and we wish to extend to His Excellency all the welcome that is merited and heartfelt on our part. We also want to congratulate on the assumption of the Presidency of the Union and we are really looking forward to a very close cooperation with Ambassador Reuter while he is here representing that Presidency.

Let me say, Mr. Chairman, like many of our Colleagues, who as usual enumerate and indicate the list of things we are willing and eager to do, committed to do. Some Delegations are better equipped to be comprehensive in their lists, who have the benefit of their files, archives, memories, papers and writers; usually they do not leave anything out.

We share the thrust of EU policies. Since every one of those decisions was consensus decisions, and Armenia was happy to join them, we really do not think we have to repeat that what we had already committed to do, we remain committed to do.

We also share the usefulness of the list that our American colleague gave us today, of the concrete, specific, incremental contributions, decisions; we recognize that though they are not equal to, but they are of equally significant value as the great ideas and great principles. Matters such as those that ensure safety, travel and MANPADs, or whatever the case may be, those are the concrete contributions of our Organization and they are not to be dismissed. One may of course, emphasize some instead of others. Therefore, we are not going to repeat again, what we have agreed to do and we see the great parallels between the Chairman-in-Office's Statement recently and the Statement of our Guest today.

Let us make a couple of general observations. One of the observations has to do with the relationship between values and security. That is a very profound question, because let us agree that the phrase "European values" is broad, generic, inclusive. There is some ambiguity whether European values are only and exclusively represented or incorporated in the European Union.

The European Union may be the most European institutional expression and consolidation of some of these values, but European values exceed the borders of the European Union and in some ways, we can say that not only we aspire, we share, but also we are constitutive elements of those. Values are like the climate; they do not necessarily recognize or respect territorial, political borders. Values – in the way we are talking about them – seem to be civilizational and not only legislative and, therefore, we must say that when we talk about European values we talk about something larger than what the European Union is or does, though it may represent.

The second point about values is the following: One must recognize the relationship, sometimes perverse relationship, between values and security. Let us be extremely provocative, particularly on a day when we commemorated with a moment of silence victims of Auschwitz and World War II. When societies, states, governments, countries do not feel secure, they are unlikely to uphold values.

The first victims, first traded-in, first compromised in the name of security are values. If one were to look historically back at the 20th century, he/she can say that it is this fetishism of “National Security” for which all of us, ALL OF US without exception at all times have been willing and continue to be willing to sacrifice, to trade, to exchange, to submit and to subordinate all kinds of values, for the sake of what is known as “National Security” and its personification – “the National Security State”. That is not by the way the monopoly of any one member in this group. They all, we all have a mental approach to this in which security is primordial.

Let us be realistic: If the OSCE is to help implant values, encourage their application, encourage the adherence to and the compliance with commitments and values, the OSCE first and foremost must perform the function of making its participating States feel secure. Secure in their integrity, secure in their place, secure in their relations with other States and particularly secure in their knowledge that in their own domestic politics they enjoy the combination of the ability to run their country according to their own political, historical, social traditions and at the same time aspire to the vision of democracy, growth, modernity, prosperity or social justice, as they wish. Without that security, it is very difficult to preach about what values should be and what commitments should or should not be put in a primary place.

This is an interesting point and I think that the OSCE is struggling to create equilibrium between those two tendencies. Therefore, some people want the OSCE to increase the sense of security, while others believe that if they only “saw the light” and apply the values, security will automatically follow. That is a wishful way of looking at the world; whatever happened in the 20th century, completely undermines that kind of utopian idea that if somehow people stuck to their values those things between themselves will all be OK, resolved, settled.

One concluding remark that we wish we could have expressed to the Foreign Minister is this: Armenia’s relations with the European Union are a relationship of exaggerated hope and tentative promise. We have like many, exaggerated hopes though hopefully not misplaced without which we would not know in which direction to grow, to develop, to reform, while on Europe’s side there is a tendency towards remaining as ambiguous and vague about prospects as possible.

In that sense we are very enthusiastic about a relatively more concrete idea, that of “New Neighbors”. Armenia’s attitude towards “New Neighborhood” concept remains absolutely committed, excited, anticipating and our relations with Brussels are structured with that in mind.

But in Vienna, the question is whether the OSCE is the anti-chamber, the waiting room for the European Union. And that image, that perception can in some cases somewhat distort the true nature of our relationships in this body. The OSCE was not designed to be the waiting room, the anti-chamber for any other organization. As that additional burden falls on it, it shows all the evidence of its inability to perform that role.

Our final point on this is that sometimes the European Union puts too much weight on what we call “accountants’ calculations”: whether it gets its money’s worth. We even heard the Minister explicitly refer to the EU share of the OSCE budget of 70 percent. We can tell you, in some ways if one were really looking for a return on investment, there might be better places to invest. But the impact of that contribution should not be based on “accountants’ calculations”. What we would have said to His Excellency in French is “*calculs d’epiciers*”. It is like a grocery store operator’s thinking whether he should continue or not to carry a certain brand, or a certain size, when not getting his money’s worth.

It looks very funny for those of us who are not obviously in those 70 percent. We think that the European Union gets a lot; whether that “a lot” is worth it, it is up to the European Union to decide. Let us give you a little thing that you might convey to the Presidency and to all the European Union members. Since 1998, that I have been here, every Chairmanship has either been European Union member, or in line for EU membership, every one of them.

Presently, our three major institutions are headed – the ODIHR Director, the High Commissioner for National Minorities and the Representative on the Freedom of the Media – by people who come from EU countries. Right now, our Secretary General is also from a European Union club; even though when he got to this position it was not then yet clear if he would go out as an EU member State citizen. When we really look at some structural things, appointments, positions, influence, ACMF meetings – to start questioning whether the European Union is getting its money’s worth appears to us who have no pretension to get our money’s worth, as a rather peculiar form of discontent.

All these things can be worked out. We hope budget and scales issues are occasionally liberated from what we call “bean counting”. We wish we could return to *The Vision*. We see ourselves in the broader role of adapting and look at our institutions as instruments for truly doing what they were meant to do – *Security and Cooperation*, because if we loose sight of that, there is no reason for us to continue with the formalities of bookkeeping.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, since you are the Chair and you are the traffic cop of these PCs, could we somehow suggest to our very distinguished guests, when they squeeze in an appearance at the Permanent Council, it is symbolic of squeezing the OSCE into a tight schedule among more pressing priorities. It is not up to me, a common

Ambassador here, to question the pressures on the schedules of Foreign Ministers, they are very busy people, and I cannot even get my own Minister to sit down for ten minutes. But, we think it is symbolic that if anyone of any importance, any visibility, any eminence, comes to talk to us, to report to us and to *listen* to our views, we do think that until and when they can protect the time of their participation at the Permanent Council, they should instead be willing to postpone or maybe even forego their appearance; otherwise we can all read by E-mail what he/she has to say, and what we have to say in return. This puts you in an extremely uncomfortable position, because the pressures on you are already sufficient but maybe in a friendly, gentlemanly manner you can convey these perceived discomforts.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your indulgence.