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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

**Statement
in response to the statement by the Czech Republic
on behalf of the European Union
as delivered by the Delegation of Armenia
at the 1392 meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council**

06 October 2022

Mr. Chairman,

The Delegation of Armenia thanks the delegation of the Czech Republic on behalf of the European Union for raising this current issue.

I should like to inform the Permanent Council that on 2 October, Foreign Minister of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan and Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bayramov met in Geneva. The meeting was preceded by meetings with Philip Reeker and Brice Roquefeuil, Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group from the United States and France, respectively.

The position of the Armenian side on the withdrawal of Azerbaijani troops from the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia and the immediate release of all Armenian prisoners of war was emphasized during the meeting. Likewise, the importance of introducing international mechanisms for controlling the border situation was highlighted. The Armenian Foreign Minister emphasized that the war crimes committed by the armed forces of Azerbaijan should receive a clear assessment by international bodies, and that the perpetrators must be brought to justice. The sides also exchanged views on the peace treaty between Armenia and Azerbaijan, ensuring the rights and security guarantees for the people of Nagorno-Karabakh. The mutual understanding reached on unblocking of regional transport routes under the sovereignty and jurisdiction of the countries was positively noted.

Two days later, on 4 October, at the initiative of the American side, a phone conversation took place between the Foreign Minister of Armenia, the U.S. Secretary of State and the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan. The sides exchanged views on the meeting held on 2 October in Geneva and reaffirmed their previously expressed

positions. They agreed to continue discussions aimed at establishing stability and security in the South Caucasus.

Taking this opportunity, we would like to thank the United States for its assistance in the long-overdue return of 17 Armenian prisoners of war from Azerbaijan. We appreciate the personal efforts of State Secretary Antony Blinken in this regard, and hope that further efforts will be made to reach the full and unconditional release of all prisoners of war illegally held in Azerbaijan since the war of aggression in 2020. It should be also noted that Azerbaijan obstructs the retrieval of the bodies of the fallen soldiers within the sovereign territory of Armenia.

Dear colleagues,

Allow me also to inform the Permanent Council about the quadripartite meeting of Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, President of France Emmanuelle Macron and President of the European Council Charles Michele, which is scheduled in Prague on the sidelines of the European Political Community Summit. In this regard, let me express our appreciation for the efforts and dedication of Presidents Macron and Michel to bring peace to our region.

At the same time, it should be noted that this meeting should in no way serve as another pretext or loophole for Azerbaijan to evade its obligations, including those related to the punishment of the perpetrators of war crimes committed during the recent aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Armenia, as well as back in 2020 during the war of aggression against Artsakh. We underline that first of all, guarantees of the implementation of the agreements reached during the meetings mediated by the European Union are needed, and we expect that, in addition to mediation efforts, the EU will spare no effort to ensure the implementation of the agreements reached through its mediation.

This includes, *inter alia*, a clear and targeted condemnation of all violations and crimes, without resorting to false parity and “bothsidesism”, which is not only counterproductive, but also extremely dangerous, since such an approach emboldens the perpetrators to commit new crimes. It should be made clear to Azerbaijan that the further use or threat of force or any other step aimed at undermining the ongoing peace process in the South Caucasus and obstruction of settlement of all issues related to and resulting from the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will not be tolerated by the European community.

Thank you.