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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY**

**On Presidential Elections in Armenia**

**942<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Permanent Council  
28 February 2013**

Thank you Mr. Chairperson,

We would like to add our voice in sharing some of our thoughts on the recent elections in Armenia and the OSCE's involvement in the process.

At the outset let me emphasize that Turkey attaches great importance to peace and stability in the South Caucasus region. An election in a neighbouring country that is engaged in the settlement process of a protracted conflict is an important event. Therefore, like previous elections, we have followed the process through information provided by OSCE's various means, including the 4 spot reports published by the CPC.

We note that contrary to previous examples, the 18th February Presidential election was not the scene of violent incidents. We note that while statements made both by ODIHR and the OSCE PA indicate positive aspects, they also refer to worrying and recurring practices that are clearly contrary to OSCE commitments. We also note that other non-technical but still important issues such as lack of competition and its causes, were given less prominence in the OSCE reports. We have read calls made by one OSCE participating State and I quote: "urging law enforcement officials to investigate and take appropriate action in response to credible reporting of elections violations (...)"

On the other hand, while reading the statements made in various capitals after the elections, some of which were based on OSCE findings and assessments, we have kept in mind the strong financial support given by the international community to projects implemented in the pre-electoral period, on a scale rarely seen in the OSCE region. We also note that the Central Electoral Commission, while dismissing all allegations of fraud by opposition candidates, highlighted only the "overall positive" assessment made by observers.

It is also a matter for Governments to make sure that elections are perceived as competitive and democratic by the candidates and voters themselves. We note from the CPC spot report of 21<sup>st</sup> February that in Armenia, obviously, one prominent opposition candidate does not share the general positive assessment on the conduct of elections.



On the other hand, while we note that there has not been a repetition of the events of March 2008, we believe that it would be important in the name of regional stability that appropriate measures be taken in line with OSCE commitments to overcome the challenges raised in the aftermath of these elections.

Finally, taking this opportunity, we would also like to express our concern regarding the continuing disagreements that led to the lack of cooperation and two separate assessments made by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and ODIHR in Armenia. It is our sincere hope that lessons will be drawn so that the Assembly and the Office will be able to put aside their differences and resume cooperation in election observation activities. This is a matter of credibility in an area which is a hallmark of our Organization.

Thank you.