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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

## STATEMENT

**by Ambassador Armen Papikyan, Permanent Representative of Armenia  
at the 1020<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting of the Forum for Security Cooperation**

**7 September, 2022**

The Delegation of Armenia warmly welcomes Belgium as the new Chair of the Forum for Security Co-operation and thank you for outlining the priorities of the Belgian FSC Chairmanship.

Mr. Chairman,

Belgium will be assuming the Chairmanship of the FSC at a time when the OSCE concept of comprehensive, co-operative and indivisible security is under serious threat and the arms control and confidence-building regimes continue to be undermined. We hope that at this critical juncture the Belgian FSC Chairmanship will take decisive steps to rebuild trust among all stakeholders and strengthen the foundations of the OSCE as a genuine platform for dialogue and co-operation. Let me assure you, Mr. Chairperson, that you can count on the support of the Armenian Delegation during the Belgian FSC Chairmanship. We stand ready to constructively engage and contribute to the discussions and work on your proposed priorities and other issues of the FSC agenda.

Mr. Chairperson,

Armenia has taken good note of the work programme of the Belgian FSC Chairmanship and, taking this opportunity, I would like to touch upon some specific issues, which we believe are important for our work.

Children and Armed Conflict. Protection of children's rights constitutes a key part of the obligations undertaken under international humanitarian law.

The recent large-scale war of aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh and its people in 2020 has demonstrated once again the lack of effective mechanisms for protections of human rights during armed conflicts, particularly the rights of children, as the most vulnerable part of the civilian populations. As a result of the indiscriminate targeting of civilian settlements, around 90 000 civilians were displaced, including elderly and children, schools and kindergartens were damaged and destroyed. Unfortunately, the 44-day war against the people of Artsakh claimed the life of a child and 9 children were wounded. Only thanks to the civil protection measures taken by the local authorities, further casualties were avoided. Amid failure by the OSCE to take proper actions to stop and prevent violence against peaceful population and use of force within its area of responsibility, Azerbaijan still continues its policy of blatant violations of human rights, including by targeting critical civilian infrastructure and the villages and towns close to the line of contact in Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as terrorizing the civilian population by demanding them to leave their homes under the threat of force. We are looking forward to a meaningful discussion on the topic of protection of children's rights in the whole area of the OSCE, regardless of the country of their residence and its status, as human rights are universal and they cannot be applied and respected selectively.

Mr. Chairperson,

Armenia remains committed to the full and effective implementation of the Code of Conduct both in its letter and spirit. The Code of Conduct is one of the most important documents of the OSCE's politico-military dimension and remains a key instrument for promoting comprehensive and co-operative security in the OSCE area, if implemented fully and in a good faith. With this in mind, we believe that the Security Dialogue on the Code of Conduct will provide an opportunity for the participating States to reaffirm their commitment to international humanitarian law and adherence to the principles of the OSCE Code of Conduct.

Distinguished colleagues,

The topic of the Women, Peace and Security agenda is also among our priorities. We believe that full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in all spheres of public life, including the defense sector provides key prerequisites for sustainable development and, in particular, for sustainable and lasting peace. It is with this understanding that Armenia has developed the necessary legal framework and has taken concrete measures aimed at enhancing the full participation of women in the security sector and in particular the armed forces. The Armenian delegation stands ready to make its contribution to the promotion of the WPS agenda within the FSC under the leadership of Belgium.

Finally, SALW and SCA hold an important place in the FSC work and we look forward to this year's Biennial Meeting. Over the years we, the participating States have developed a number of important commitments in the field of SALW and SCA with the aim to address the security risks associated with them. Regrettably, this field has turned into an instrument of political manipulations and justification of the use of force. Now we are convinced that the Belgian FSC Chairmanship will show responsibility and will rectify this situation by refraining from steps and activities which can further undermine the work of the FSC and the credibility of the OSCE.

In closing, let me wish you, Mr. Chairperson, and your able team every success during the upcoming trimester, and hope that your Chairmanship will be marked by important accomplishments in these extremely difficult times.

I take this opportunity to thank Belarus for responsible chairmanship of the FSC in an unprecedented difficult situation.

Similarly, I would like to welcome Bosnia and Herzegovina as a new member of the FSC Troika. We look forward to our collaboration next year.

Thank you.