



PC.DEL/855/16  
10 June 2016

ENGLISH only

## STATEMENT BY TURKEY

### **In Response to the Address by Ambassador Günther Bächler, Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office for the South Caucasus**

*(1104<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Permanent Council, 9 June 2016)*

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

We join the previous speakers in warmly welcoming Ambassador Günther Bächler, Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office for the South Caucasus, to the Permanent Council and thank him for his address.

Protracted conflicts in the South Caucasus are obstacles to peace, stability and prosperity not only for the region but for the OSCE area as a whole. Peaceful resolution of all conflicts in the region will contribute to political stability and economic development of all concerned countries, open up new avenues for bilateral as well as regional cooperation, and put to rest a serious challenge that has been poisoning the atmosphere for dialogue and cooperation in this hall for much too long.

It is therefore essential to finally come to the assessment that the mere containment of protracted conflicts cannot be viewed as success. Such a sense of false comfort is dangerous given that these conflicts may instantly flare up into outright hostilities, as we have witnessed recently.

Additional impetus, ingenuity and courage are required to break the deadlocks which prevail in the region. Fresh ideas and new perspectives need to be developed to trigger political will within the parties to reach a solution. The OSCE's comprehensive security outlook, its broad acquis, means and capabilities to address issues in a cross-dimensional manner, make it the most suitable platform to develop those elements required for progressing towards solutions.

As a country of the region, the South Caucasus occupies a special place in Turkey's foreign policy, and we remain ready to contribute to any effort to help settle these conflicts, in full cognizance also of the numerous added benefits that such a development would entail for all at the local, regional and international levels.

Mr. Chairperson,

The address by Foreign Minister of Georgia H.E. Mr. Janelidze at the PC last week was very timely in terms of assessing the current situation in Georgia. He highlighted the main obstacles standing in the way of progress towards the settlement of the conflict. In this regard, as emphasized by Minister Janelidze, the OSCE should be more active in the resolution of the conflict through peaceful means and the conflict should not be left to remain "frozen".

In this framework, we support all efforts to bring a comprehensive and sustainable solution to the conflict that is respectful of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia. We see the Geneva International Discussions as the key platform for addressing the issues stemming from this conflict and hope for concrete progress in the next round which will take place in the coming week. We also repeat our call on all sides to refrain from taking unilateral actions that do not comply with efforts within the Geneva International Discussions and have a potential to further compound the situation.

We consider the Ergneti Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) important for reviewing the security situation and humanitarian issues on the ground. We are pleased to see the constructive and result-oriented approach of the sides in this platform. We also welcome the recent resumption of meetings of the Gali IPRM and hope that they will be held regularly.

Mr. Chairperson,

Regarding the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia, we believe that the escalation of violence and consequent number of losses on both sides in the beginning of April on the Line of Contact should be a wake-up call for international community where circumstances now impel us to state that “merely calling the situation unacceptable and unsustainable is neither acceptable nor sustainable”.

We welcome the immediate efforts deployed to de-escalate the tension and bring the sides together for solution. We attach importance to the fullest possible use of the Minsk Group as a way of supporting these efforts.

It is encouraging that the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan came together on 16 May in Vienna and agreed to move forward. It is important to maintain this momentum and we hope for the talks planned to take place this month produce substantive results towards a comprehensive lasting settlement. Confidence building measures and political talks should go hand-in-hand in a mutually reinforcing manner. For our part, we remain ready to support all ideas that are acceptable for both sides of the conflict to find a just, viable and lasting solution through peaceful means.

In conclusion, we encourage the Chairmanship in Office to continue its primary focus on the efforts to the settlement of the protracted conflicts in the South Caucasus and we thank Ambassador Bächler, wishing him every success in his new post and future endeavours.

Thank you.