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Delegation of France

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR STÉPHANE VISCONTI,  
ALSO ON BEHALF OF THE TWO OTHER CO-CHAIRS OF THE OSCE MINSK  
GROUP, AT THE 1275th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

16 July 2020

**In response to the delegation of Azerbaijan**

**Right of reply**

In view of the direct allegations made against the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group by the ambassador of Azerbaijan, I should like to exercise our right of reply.

The Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan is well placed to appreciate the efforts made by my colleagues and myself since midday on Sunday, 12 July, following the incidents at the international border. We have spared no efforts, day and night, and have maintained almost continuous contact with the ministers from both sides, the military authorities and international representatives. We have released several communiqués, including the one the day before yesterday. Under a separate agenda item, we had intended to read that statement which, as you know, calls for the restoration of an atmosphere conducive to negotiation, for a total return to the ceasefire and for substantive negotiations.

We chose to withdraw this agenda item because of the extreme fragility of the current situation. In fact, the situation has changed since the publication of that communiqué. There was violence in the night with several victims. We do not yet have all the details, not least because the accounts by the two parties are contradictory. At this stage, the ceasefire seems to be holding, but we shall refrain from making any pronouncements here because it is not the role of the Co-Chairs. I recall that according to their mandate, the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group have the role of promoting dialogue between the parties by making proposals. It is not our role to carry out investigations to identify those responsible and even less to criticize or condemn either side. This is neither our mission nor our role.

Every effort must be made in the next few hours to calm the situation.

Thank you.