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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

Statement
In Response to the Address of H.E. Bujar Osmani,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia
delivered by Ambassador Armen Papikyan,
at the 1387th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council

September 1, 2022

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of Armenia welcomes H.E. Mr. Bujar Osmani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia to the Permanent Council and thanks him for outlining the priorities for incoming chairmanship of the OSCE.

Distinguished Colleagues,

North Macedonia will be assuming the Chairmanship of this Organization at extremely challenging times, when the deep European security crisis raises legitimate questions about the relevance of the OSCE as a platform for dialogue, which has been primarily tasked to reduce the security risks across the entire area of its responsibility.

The current state of play of European security is the consequence of years of compromising on the fundamental principles of the OSCE and the Helsinki Final Act, in particular the non-use or threat of use of force, of the erosion of the fundamental OSCE concept of comprehensive, cooperative and indivisible security and gradual undermining of the arms control and confidence building regime.

This continuous erosion created an environment of impunity which two years ago resulted in the war of aggression of Azerbaijan against Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) and its people, which dealt a severe blow to the security and stability in Europe. This war of aggression is yet to be properly condemned and assessed against the background of violations of the OSCE commitments and principles of Helsinki Final Act.

Excellency,

We listened carefully to the priorities of the upcoming Chairmanship and we took note of them. We proceed from the understanding that this is the preliminary outline and the more elaborated version will be presented upon the assumption of the Chairmanship in January next year. At this stage allow me to share with you some of our observations.

We welcome the Chairmanship's understanding of the complexity of conflicts in the OSCE area and its intention to pursue solutions to unresolved conflicts in line with the OSCE principles and commitments.

In this respect, we encourage the upcoming Chairmanship to pay equal and equitable attention and show appropriate level of commitment and engagement in relation to all conflicts in the OSCE area without prioritization and exception. We also expect that the upcoming Chairmanship will fully support and strive to reinvigorate the existing negotiation formats for the conflicts, which are within the mandated work of this Organization.

While fully cognizant of the security environment in which the upcoming Chairmanship will be operating, it is nevertheless clear that the success of chairmanship will also depend on its ability to act in a good faith and play the role of trustworthy facilitator, which takes into account the positions of all participating States and leads the processes within the organization in a transparent and inclusive manner.

We hope that the upcoming Chairmanship will take this observation on board, and the Armenian delegation will do its utmost to support the North Macedonia's Chairmanship on this path.

We also note that issues related to threat of terrorism and mass proliferation of arms will be among the priorities of the upcoming Chairmanship. In this regard, we hope that due attention will be paid to the problem of foreign terrorist fighters and mercenaries used in armed conflicts in the OSCE area and the related subsequent proliferation of arms.

We welcome the priorities of the upcoming Chairmanship in the area of human rights. Promotion and protection of human rights in the whole OSCE area without exception has been and is a priority for Armenia. As we have stated on numerous occasions, the violation of basic human rights and freedoms lay in the roots of many conflicts and tensions, therefore we encourage the upcoming Chairmanship to pay due attention to the issue of protection and promotion of human rights of all people, regardless of the status of the territory in which they reside.

Distinguished Minister,

As I already noted, North Macedonia will be assuming the Chairmanship of this Organization in an extremely challenging security environment. I am confident that you are fully cognizant of extremely difficult tasks and challenges that your Chairmanship will face while in the lead of this Organization.

We welcome and share your assessment with regards to the OSCE as a unique platform for a dialogue that while “institutionalizes our differences” at the same time provides tools and mechanisms to mitigate crisis situations.

The role of the Chairmanship is indeed crucial, since through acting as a fair broker and facilitator of dialogue, it could and should strive to build consensus. Rest assured, distinguished Minister, that you will have the full support of this delegation in such endeavors of North Macedonia’s Chairmanship, since we believe that success of the Chairmanship is indeed the success of each and every participating State.

That said, I would also like to briefly react to the remarks made by the Delegation of Azerbaijan.

Dear colleagues,

Boasting about the results of the war of aggression, accompanied by widespread violations of international humanitarian law and ethnic cleansing is rather symptomatic and put at display the root causes of the security crisis that we are discussing today.

Regrettably, the OSCE has been remiss in allowing Azerbaijan to violate with impunity the OSCE fundamental principles and commitments. With the OSCE’s silent connivance and continued appeasement, the use or threat of force has been presented by Azerbaijan as triumph of international law. And this situation has been created by the environment of impunity in which Azerbaijan has been operating, a situation when resolving conflicts by force has become the new normal.

At present, we find ourselves in a situation when Azerbaijan, a country with abysmal record of human rights, while having violated almost all principles of the Helsinki Final Act is quite comfortable or in a way even privileged to act in an atmosphere of total impunity.

It remains to be seen whether the OSCE and its participating States have the capacity and will to resist and revert this trend.

Thank you.