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DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

Statement
in Response to the Report of Ambassador Andrey Sorokin, Head of the OSCE
Office in Yerevan
delivered by Ambassador Arman Kirakossian at the 1062nd Meeting of the
OSCE Permanent Council
July 16, 2015

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to warmly welcome Ambassador Andrey Sorokin to the Permanent Council and thank him for the informative report.

At the outset, we would like to reiterate our strong support to the activities of the OSCE Office in Yerevan. Efficient and result-oriented interaction between my Government and the OSCE Office clearly reflects the high level of cooperation of Armenia with OSCE. It also indicates the resoluteness and ownership of Armenia in implementation of its OSCE commitments in all three dimensions.

We particularly value the report of Ambassador Sorokin, especially when the OSCE Office in Yerevan remains the only fully-fledged OSCE field office in the South Caucasus. Therefore we call on the current and incoming Chairmanships and participating States to ensure full political support to the Office.

The current report does not simply reflect implementation of the Armenia's OSCE commitments and the contribution of the Yerevan Office to that end. It entails a comprehensive and detailed assessment of Armenia's progress in the fields of democracy, rule of law and human rights throughout last year. However, we should not transform the consideration of the report of the activities field mission into a peer review of one participating state.

We were pleased to note that the Head of the OSCE Office shares our assessment on the close cooperation and support from my Government, which creates positive and conducive environment for steady progress of the Office's programmatic activities.

While acknowledging the successful performance of the OSCE Office we should stress that it is based on strong national ownership on the need to ensure further progress in democratization and sustainable development of Armenia.

Let me turn to evaluation of some programmatic activities of the Office from the point of view of the host country.

Political-Military Dimension: Community policing and supporting modernization of Police educational institutions continue to be among key programmes of the OSCE Office in military-political dimension. Their primary aim is to promote democratic policing and further strengthen trust and confidence between the society and the Police. Gender mainstreaming is one of the elements of the police education reform. The report outlines overall positive assessment of the police reform by our society. The literate interaction, in terms of their respective rights and duties, between police and civil society in realization of the freedom to peaceful assembly during recent demonstrations in Yerevan is yet another evidence of progress in police reform.

We also support the launch of a new project in the sphere of addressing domestic violence.

Another important project continues to be the strengthening of democratic control of Armed Forces, the important elements of which are: supporting Armenia in implementation of the OSCE Code of Conduct, raising the awareness of the military personnel on their rights, parliamentary oversight, training of international humanitarian law and supporting the comprehensive security sector reform.

In the ***Economic and Environmental Dimension*** dimension the flagship programme continues to be the regulatory framework reform which already has positive impact on the GDP rate. We support cooperation between the Office and Aarhus centres, ENVSEC and other stakeholders in raising awareness on addressing natural disasters, including wildfire management at all levels of governance.

Human Dimension: Strengthening democratic structure and promoting human rights standards stands high in the agenda of my Government. The Office was active in implementation of third dimension programmes and it contributed to development of democratic institutions and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms. We made remarkable progress especially in the field of freedom of media and combating trafficking in human beings.

Armenia appreciates the Office's partnership with civil society. However, it should not be forgotten that it is the Government who undertook OSCE commitments and the Office should assist the Government in implementing those commitments. Yet on some issues we see that the Office tries to mainstream the work of the civil society in the areas where there is no relevant commitment. For example report suggests that the Office is trying to initiate the work of civil society in preparing action plan on the implementation of UN SC 1325 resolution when the host country did not make such kind of request nor undertook commitments in this regard.

In reply to Azerbaijan: We took note of the high interest of Azerbaijan to the activities of OSCE field operations. We might perceive it as a wish to study and make use of the positive experience of cooperation between Government of Armenia and the OSCE Office. But the recent unfortunate developments, related to the closure of the PCiB Office in Baku offer opposite explanation, namely Azerbaijan rather wishes

to impose its negative experience on Armenia and interfere into defining of our priorities in cooperation with OSCE.

In conclusion, we would like to take the opportunity to commend the personal role of Ambassador Sorokin in successful performance of the Office and wish him further success in his responsible mission and future endeavours.

Thank you.