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

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Statement delivered by Ambassador J. Tabibian
in response to H.E. Mrs. Ilinka Mitreva, the Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,
at the 493rd meeting of the Permanent Council
5 February 2004

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

As my delegation welcomes very warmly this second visit of H.E. Minister Mitreva of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to this PC, let me say that it is not usual for my delegation to participate in this particular exchange. We typically listen and we have not much to add, because, though interested in general, many of the specifics in this instance do not affect us directly. Of course, we have no presumption or pretension, in any specific or detailed way, to respond to or to comment on the issues, or events, or problems, as well as achievements that have been described either by Her Excellency or by our other colleagues. Most of them are better informed, more directly engaged, more vested and interested. My delegation and my country on the other hand have no such assumptions or presumptions. Our opinions and our observations are mostly because we belong to this community. I personally have been here long enough to have seen previous involvements of the OSCE in the situation or the challenges faced by Macedonia and to have therefore observed the evolution and, I am not reluctant to say, the progress and the achievements. A situation that looked like a situation of crisis, we are very happy to say that in three years is now a situation not of crisis but of stabilization and progress and most interestingly, a hopeful statement about the future, a future in a so called either European or Euro-Atlantic structures. This brings me to the gist of my statement.

We are and by "we" I mean Armenia, but I look around the table, there are a few others like us, who do not speak on behalf of anybody else. We are somewhat

unattached, sometimes atomized units, and we listen to these exchanges and we ask ourselves whether we should hear these things through a certain prism or a certain filter. On the one hand, it is encouraging to assume that, and Macedonia is not the first, to see that certain States, particularly in certain parts of Europe, consider the OSCE as one of the so-called front offices, the customer service offices of the European Union or NATO. I do not know whether we should have great pride in the fact that some States put their case for Europe and European integration at the OSCE. I would consider seriously whether that should really pump up our pride, our self-importance. If it were only so that this would be the audience where the pleadings or the statements of future, prospective, hopeful applicants to this or that group were heard and therefore acted upon, right here, in this place. We wonder about this, because some of us may be a little more reserved and think perhaps that while this is a window, it is only a window, a display window, but the transactions do not take place in the display window. There is what is known as a back office that decides on things. The front window sometimes is not even in the same building. It is like those beautiful displays of shirts in hotel lobbies, but the store that sells them may be two kilometers away. Our delegation wonders: what is the function the OSCE performs in the dynamics of this relationship, between the hopeful aspirants and the ultimate determination of their joining other groups? Is this a prototypical case?

We also notice other things. For instance, it is very encouraging for us to hear this morning the EU recognize an important role for the OSCE in Macedonia. That Summit you referred to, Madam Minister, in Thessaloniki, was a Summit in which among the co-operative events and co-operative activities to create security, if my memory does not fail me at this stage, the OSCE was not mentioned. We are encouraged and grateful that gradually our place, our mission, our role, our contributions are being somewhat recognized and therefore given their due. So, please, accept my remarks not so much about Macedonia, but as remarks prompted by the Macedonian statement about the internal dynamics of our own organization here and our relationship with other organizations. We are deeply committed to the maximum co-operation between various organizations. We have even consecrated that notion in our Charter in Istanbul as the "platform". Therefore, it is not in a competitive or reticent spirit that I say these things. I am simply trying to figure out, because ultimately we may find ourselves hopefully soon, though probably not for a

while, in the queue of the queue that is lining up for what is described as European integration. Therefore, part of us is in a learning mode: we just want to know when and how are petitions presented formally, or where is the advocacy done, or where do we really have to display ourselves as a future and prospective bride, before we are categorized as hopeless spinsters. With these thoughts in mind, I appreciate very much the candor with which Her Excellency made the Statement about the present situation. Again we repeat, it is quite impressive that in three years a so-called "problem" case turns into a major opportunity and success story.

Mr. Chairman, thank you very much and thank you for your indulgence.