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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

**Statement**  
**in response to Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov,**  
**OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities**  
**as delivered by Mr Arman Hovhannisyan, Deputy Head of Mission**  
**at the 1401<sup>st</sup> meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council**

*08 December 2022*

Mr Chairman,

I would like to join others in warmly welcoming High Commissioner Kairat Abdrakhmanov back to the Permanent Council and thank him for his detailed report which we have carefully considered.

Protection and promotion of the rights of national minorities is high on the agenda of the Armenian Government. The rights of major minority groups in Armenia, namely Yezidis, Russians, Assyrians and Kurds are protected by the Constitution and the respective law on national minorities. The Constitution of Armenia also ensures their representation in the National Assembly of Armenia. Their representatives also head a number of communities across the country. Particular attention is paid to opportunities of primary education in the native languages of minorities.

High Commissioner,

Obviously, in different countries national minorities face different challenges. In most of the cases we speak about the protection of the rights of minorities whereas there are cases when we speak about the protection of minorities as such. Unfortunately, history knows a number of cases when once indigenous peoples were gradually reduced to a minority group in their own homeland with the subsequent and complete extermination and disappearance. Regrettably, this trend continues in our days as well and an entire indigenous population faces similar threats, finding themselves on the brink of extermination.

Unfortunately, the discrimination based on belonging to a national minority or related grounds is the most common violation which is prohibited under international law and most notably under the Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations, the importance of which we continue to underline.

For obvious reasons, states with abysmal human rights records usually have little or no reason to protect the rights of minority groups simply because even the majority does not enjoy the fundamental rights and freedoms. Therefore, particular attention should be paid to such countries where minority groups are seemingly non-existent and where the international norms and principles serve as a pretext for suppressing the rights and fundamental freedoms of national minorities.

That being said, we believe that Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations should be further developed with a view to taking more robust action against the backdrop of continuous unlawful suppression and violation of the rights of national or ethnic minorities by some governments.

High Commissioner,

We welcome your active dialogue and cooperation with a number of participating states and relevant international organisations throughout the reporting period. We also continue to closely follow the situation with the protection and promotion of the rights of Armenian minorities in the OSCE participating States.

The need to pay particular attention to the extreme manifestations of state-induced hate propaganda based on ethnic or national origin is essential for your mandate, especially when such hatred is fueled by the highest leadership of a participating state. This should clearly serve as an early warning sign and prompt for early action to prevent ethnic tensions from escalating into conflict or even a full-fledged war.

In closing, High Commissioner Abdrakhmanov, we wish you every success in your endeavours and assure you of Armenia`s continued support in fulfilling your mandate.

Thank you.