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Hügelgasse 2, A-1130 Vienna Tel: +43 (1) 403 13 22 Fax: +43 (1) 403 13 23 E-mail: vienna@mission.mfa.gov.az

**Statement  
at the 762<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council  
28 May 2009**

*In response to the European Union Special Representative  
for the South Caucasus, Ambassador Peter Semneby*

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of Azerbaijan welcomes the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus Ambassador Peter Semneby to the Permanent Council meeting today. We have listened carefully to and taken note of his remarks.

Cooperation with the European Union is one of the foreign policy priorities for Azerbaijan, and we have been following this strategy actively and consistently. Azerbaijan is among signatories of the Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, as well as the Southern Corridor Summit Declaration. We consider both initiatives to be in line with our national interests. It is noteworthy that they build on and are complementary to existing agreements accumulated over the years of our partnership.

Like the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan, the Eastern Partnership is also based on the commitments to the principles of international law and to fundamental values, particularly mutual respect to sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of internationally recognized borders. Unequivocal adherence to those principles remains the foundation of our partnership relations with the European Union.

Two weeks ago the Permanent Council held discussions on the 7 May Prague meeting between Armenian and Azerbaijani Presidents, where we registered our disappointment with its outcome and the subsequent statement of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs. I am sure Ambassador Semneby has had a chance to get acquainted with that statement. Azerbaijani position on the matter was also brought to his attention during his recent visit to Baku.

The next meeting of the Presidents is planned to take place in June in Saint-Petersburg. En route to the meeting the Azerbaijani side hopes to hear constructive

messages from Armenia, which can break the current impasse and positively affect the peace process. We call upon the European Union and its Special Representative to exert pressure on Armenia with the aim of making her prone to compromises.

The success of the Eastern Partnership in the South Caucasus depends much on the establishment of peace and good neighbourly relations among all states of the region. The continuation of current situation is unacceptable, as are all proposals on regional cooperation and confidence building measures before the political settlement, which will only conduce to maintaining the *status quo*. Unless Armenia withdraws from all occupied territories of Azerbaijan, including the Nagorno-Karabakh region, any proposal on regional cooperation and confidence and security building measures with Armenia will not be relevant.

Thank you.