



Statement

In Response to Ms. Dunya Mijatovic, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe

**as delivered by Mr. Vahe Gevorgyan, Deputy Permanent Representative of Armenia at the 1210th Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
December 20, 2018**

Mr. Chair,

We would like to warmly welcome Ms. Dunja Mijatovic back to the Permanent Council in her capacity of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe and thank her for a comprehensive and coherent assessment of the human rights in Europe.

Armenia welcomes close interaction and high-level dialogue with the Council of Europe, which was consolidated during your first visit as Commissioner for Human Rights to Armenia in a crucial time for my country.

The December 9 Early Parliamentary Elections have accomplished democratic transition, which will provide comprehensive framework for promoting and protecting human rights, democracy and rule of law in close cooperation with international and regional organizations including the Council of Europe and OSCE. The findings of the upcoming report of your September visit are very essential in this regard.

As was communicated to you by the authorities of Armenia, we are committed to upholding the best standards of human rights, having the European Convention, as well as our other international commitments at the centre of our Government's efforts.

Gender equality is high on our agenda. The Acting Prime Minister Pashinyan has numerously emphasized the importance of women's participation in decision-making processes at all levels.

Earlier this year Armenia has already signed the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence along with the adoption of the relevant national law.

We also welcome a strong emphasis on safety of journalists in your address. Freedom of expression including ability of journalists to report on issues of public interest significantly contributed to the non-violent and peaceful change in Armenia. Furthermore, no single incident of impediment of work of the journalists was reported at the recent Parliamentary Elections.

We acknowledge your personal contribution in creating safe environment for journalists in Armenia

Mme Commissioner,

We highly value your efforts to promote and protect human rights elsewhere in Europe without exception. Human rights are universal and the status of territory cannot be impediment for their realization, as it is clearly stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, on which you put strong emphasis today. As this year we are commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention of the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, it should be clearly maintained that when it comes to human rights there cannot be grey zones.

The unimpeded access of human rights monitoring bodies, including your mandate, to conflict areas, including Nagorno-Karabakh, is essential prerequisite for full implementation of the international and regional human rights instruments. The access to Nagorno-Karabakh can help to avoid blame game, some part of which unfortunately we saw today as well.

In concluding, let me wish every success to your endeavours and pledge full support of Armenia.

Thank you.