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Arman J. Kirakossian
(1956-2019)

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In Memory of My Dearest Friend His Excellency Arman J. Kirakossian

A thoughtful and responsible researcher, a true patriot and a brilliant diplomat, a warmhearted, noble and devoted friend, Arman Kirakossian was one of the rare people whose merits were fully appreciated even by most competent critics.

Arman was a man of intellectual energy and wisdom, which he shared during our long and deep conversations that lasted for more than 40 years. Remarkably, we never argued, we always respectfully accepted the positions, views and concerns of each other and this, of course, was thanks to Arman's kindness, placidity and tolerance. It is very hard and painful to realize that unfortunately I have to write about all this shortly after my friend passed away.

Cooperation between the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Doctor of Sciences in History, Professor Arman Kirakossian and the Center for Civilization and Cultural Studies of Yerevan State University began 12 years ago on the day the Center was founded. From that day on, as the Center's Board member he participated in numerous discussions, round tables and workshops. We were also honored to undertake the publication of Arman's first book representing his activities as Armenia's Ambassador to the United States. He entrusted us with the publication of his second book, while already gravely ill, and we present it to our readers with great respect and appreciation.

The book gives a holistic view of the activities of the Armenian Embassy in Vienna and of the tasks that both the members of the Embassy and the Ambassador himself had to solve. The published material includes texts of a wide variety of genres. In their integrity, they reflect the whole

spectrum of problems faced by Armenian diplomacy, which required in-depth analysis and substantiated actions. Without a doubt, the book is an invaluable source of information for the further development of Armenian diplomacy.

For the YSU Center for Civilization and Cultural Studies, both books by Arman Kirakossian are of additional significance as they make the most important and most valuable contribution to the series of publications under the general heading "The Sources of Armenian Diplomacy".

Prof. David Hovhannisyan

*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary,
Director of Center for Civilization and Cultural Studies, YSU*

**STATEMENT ON THE VERDICT OF THE TURKISH COURT
REGARDING THE ASSASSINATION OF HRANT DINK**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, January 26, 2012

My delegation expresses its concern and disappointment regarding the recent verdict of the Turkish court on the assassination of Hrant Dink, prominent Turkish Armenian journalist, editor-in-chief of daily *Agos* being published in Istanbul.

In order to keep trial proceedings free from political speculations, Armenia refrained from raising this issue in an anticipation of promised free trial which would shed light on this extremely deplorable event. Now, when everything is said and done by different branches of Turkish authorities, we have to state that justice has not been served.

We took note of the statements and opinions expressed by the OSCE Representative on the Freedom of Media and Council of Europe High Commissioner on Human Rights who themselves expressed their dismay and shock over inability to bring instigators and perpetrators of the assassination of Hrant Dink to justice.

The European Court of Human Rights clearly established the liability of Turkish authorities in preventing this murder and we regret that this attitude of covering up the crime has not been changed throughout the investigation and trial proceedings. The burden of finding the organizers of the crime was exclusively taken up by the family of Hrant Dink whose lawyer repeatedly brought up important and insightful evidence. Unfortunately, the investigation and trial proceedings deliberately ignored these findings and thus effectively covered up the case which ended up with the acquittal of the 18 suspects.

Regretfully, the manner by which the justice system of Turkey handled this case was not considerably different from that of the defense at the proceeding of the European court of Human Rights. This comes to testify that there are serious shortcomings in implementing the OSCE commitments and Council of Europe obligations with regard to the protection of freedom of expression, free trial and racial tolerance in Turkey.

We are particularly disturbed by the continued existence of the article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code. Prior to his assassination Hrant Dink was stigmatized by the mentioned article of the Penal Code which effectively curbed realization of free speech and truth seeking. Along with the other countries, Armenia made a recommendation to Turkey at the Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council to further amend the article 301. This recommendation was rejected with an explanation that at that stage it was not possible to accommodate it.

The life and death of Hrant Dink was an awakening call for the society he was born into and lived in. I, myself, as representative of the Government, attended his funeral and was impressed by the presence of tens of thousands of people of different political, ethnic and religious background who paid their tribute to Hrant Dink. Similar demonstrations took place recently and we respect the sincerity of the members of Turkish society to reveal the truth for someone whose life itself was dedicated to the truth seeking in regard to injustice that had been inflicted upon a whole nation.

We would like to stress that we have also noticed some statements containing certain disappointment with regard to the Turkish court ruling, which came from highest authorities of Turkey and echoed by the judge himself. We would like to hope that these statements will eventually have some impact on the ground.

Hrant Dink served the cause of human rights and humanity. The judgment of the European Court of Human Rights from September 14, 2010 linked the duty of authorities to protect life and uphold freedom of expression together and thus provides a legal ground for promoting safety of journalists. In our view, the OSCE participating states can fully take the spirit of this decision to ensure that freedom of expression and right of life is to be safeguarded in the same context of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

**STATEMENT ON THE SOCHI SUMMIT OF THE
PRESIDENTS OF ARMENIA, RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND
AZERBAIJAN**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, January 26, 2012

First my delegation would like to express the gratitude of the Armenian side to the President of the Russian Federation Dmitry Medvedev for organizing the summit in Sochi on January 23, 2012.

We are also thankful to Ambassador Andrey Kelin for presenting here the outcome of the summit including the Joint Declaration of the Presidents of Armenia, Russian Federation and Azerbaijan.

Armenia welcomes the fact that in the Joint Declaration the parties committed themselves to expedite the process of reaching understanding with regard the Basic Principles based on previously undertaken work.

It is important that the parties reiterated the agreement reached in March 2011 Sochi summit on the investigative mechanism into possible cease-fire violations and discussed with the OSCE Minsk group Co-Chairs and Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office the implementation of this agreement.

Armenia has been consistently advocating the introduction of confidence building measures in all dimensions. People to people contacts involving various representatives of intellectual, scientific and social circles may produce good results if they generate trust towards peaceful settlement of the conflict. Any misuse of the humanitarian contacts for political purposes aiming at introducing new and unacceptable elements in negotiating process or intensifying war rhetoric will discredit the very essence of confidence building.

We would like to stress the indispensable role of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group, namely United States, France and Russian Federation in finding lasting solution to the NK conflict and we are glad to note that this position of the parties has been fully reflected in the Joint Declaration.

In conclusion, we regret that the statement just made by the delegation of Azerbaijan contradicts the spirit of the Sochi Joint Declaration. The mixed messages are not helpful in improving the climate of negotiations.

**STATEMENT ON THE CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS BY
AZERBAIJANI ARMED FORCES ON THE BORDERLINE
TERRITORY OF ARMENIA AND ON THE LINE OF CONTACT
WITH NAGORNO-KARABAKH**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, June 7, 2012

We would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the recent deadly incidents on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, as well as on the line of contact with Nagorno-Karabakh, as a result of continued ceasefire violations by the Azerbaijani side.

On 4 June, an Azerbaijani military unit intruded into the Armenian territory and tried to ambush members of the Armenian armed forces near the settlements of Berdavan and Chinari, in the Tavush region of the Republic of Armenia. As a result of these actions, three Armenian servicemen were killed and several soldiers were wounded. Similar attempts of subversive actions took place on 5 and 6 June, again in the territory of the Tavush region, which resulted in a number of casualties.

On 6 June, an Azerbaijani armed unit tried to infiltrate into the contact line between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan. In this incident, one Karabakhi soldier lost his life and two were wounded.

Confronted by the flagrant ceasefire violations, which put the lives of civilians and servicemen at risk, the Armenian armed forces were compelled to respond to the subversive actions by the Azerbaijani side.

Unfortunately, these are not isolated incidents. On 25 April, Azerbaijani armed forces targeted Dovegh settlement in the Tavush region, specifically firing at a kindergarten. Two days later, the Azerbaijani armed forces intruded and ambushed an Armenian military vehicle, also in the Tavush region. As a result, three Armenian soldiers were killed.

All conflict situations are unique; however, they share a common trait. The conflict resolution can succeed once all the parties reject violence as a means of achieving their goals. This was highlighted throughout the Chairmanship Conference on the Northern Ireland case study on conflict resolution held on 27 April, and it was the very same day in Dublin that the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group released a statement expressing their

concern over the series of ceasefire violations along the Armenia-Azerbaijan border and the line of contact, particularly over the above-mentioned incidents that occurred in April. The statement *inter alia* stressed, and I quote: “The Co-Chairs strongly condemn any loss of life, and reiterate that there is no alternative to a peacefully negotiated settlement of the conflict”.

Here, I would like to recall the statement made by my delegation at the meeting of the Permanent Council on 22 December last year, which adopted the Unified Budget for 2012. Azerbaijan rejected the request of the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for an increase in the financial allocation, which would have made operational the agreement between the President of Armenia and Azerbaijan to create an investigative mechanism into ceasefire violations that had been reached at the Sochi Summit on 5 March, 2011. In its statement, the Armenian delegation emphasized that, by rejecting implementation of the investigative mechanism, Azerbaijan shouldered full responsibility for further ceasefire violations and the victims caused by them.

In their recent deliberations, the Azerbaijani delegation has continued to reject the implementation of confidence-building measures, notably the proposals of OSCE Chairmanships and the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group on consolidation of the ceasefire, withdrawal of snipers and the creation of an investigative mechanism into ceasefire violations, arguing that the investigative mechanism should become part of a peaceful agreement and that the Presidents had agreed to the idea of an investigative mechanism but not to its implementation, as if agreed ideas should go unimplemented.

This interpretation is also in clear contradiction to the Sochi Joint Statement of 23 January by the Presidents of Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

By making belligerent statements, increasing its military budget, every day threatening to start a war, and organizing subversive actions and provocations on the border with Armenia and the line of contact with Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan not only creates obstacles to peaceful negotiations, but also poses a real threat to regional security and stability.

I would like to conclude by quoting the statement made by the Foreign Minister of Armenia, Edward Nalbandian, at the joint press conference with the United States Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton: “We strongly condemn the brutal provocations organized by the Azerbaijani side on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border. It is not enough for Azerbaijan that there are constant violations by Azerbaijanis on the line of contact between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. Now they are trying to transfer the tension, and to escalate the situation onto the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which greatly undermines the negotiation process, as well as threatening regional stability. The responsibility for all possible consequences of such activities lies with the Azerbaijani side”.

**RESPONSE TO THE STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENTS OF
THE OSCE MINSK GROUP CO-CHAIR STATES**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, June 21, 2012

Armenia highly appreciates the efforts of the Heads of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair states - the Presidents of the United States, the Russian Federation and the French Republic, aimed at the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The joint statement adopted in Los Cabos by Presidents Barack Obama, Vladimir Putin, and François Hollande is the fourth document issued by the Heads of the Co-Chair countries on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict which may serve an impetus for the negotiation process.

Armenia is unanimous with the Co-Chair countries in their resolute commitment to achieve an exclusively peaceful settlement of the issue.

We also regret that despite the call in the Deauville statement, progress was not achieved at the Kazan Summit on June 24, 2011, given the well-known position of one party to the conflict on which my delegation elaborated after the Kazan summit.

Staying committed to the already reached agreements, reflected in the joint statement of Sochi made by the Presidents of Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan on January 23, Armenia will continue its efforts aimed at the endorsement of the Basic Principles of the conflict settlement.

Along with the Co-Chair countries, we have repeatedly called to respect the ceasefire agreement of May 1994 and to abstain from hostile rhetoric and invited the attention of the Permanent Council to the recent flagrant violations of the ceasefire.

Armenia accepted the proposals of the Co-Chair countries aimed at the consolidation of the ceasefire regime, namely withdrawal of snipers and creation of an investigative mechanism into ceasefire violations and incidents.

Armenia has on numerous occasions reiterated its readiness to continue the negotiations on the basis of the statements of the Heads of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair states adopted in L'Aquila, Muskoka and Deauville.

We add to this the recent Los Cabos statement and expect that Azerbaijan will express similar readiness and will also accept the above-mentioned proposals of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs.

We are convinced that full use of the assistance of mediators, Minsk Group Co-Chairs, can bring all parties closer to peace and reconciliation towards negotiated outcome of the conflict resolution.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF
AMBASSADOR ANDREY SOROKIN, HEAD OF THE OSCE
YEREVAN OFFICE**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, July 19, 2012

We would like to warmly welcome Ambassador Sorokin and appreciate his first appearance to the Permanent Council which is accompanied by a comprehensive report.

The Government of Armenia attaches special importance to the successful performance of the OSCE Yerevan Office and will further contribute towards maintaining its rich programmatic activities and strong capacity to deliver tangible outcomes under the leadership of Ambassador Sorokin.

The cooperation with the Office has been marked by trust that entails transparency and openness both from the side of the Government and the Office.

Before going into dimensions, we would like to stress an important point which was highlighted by my delegation on other occasions as well. We do not think that the conflict related issues should be tackled or reported by the South Caucasus field missions including the Yerevan Office and the Office should be immune from the actions emanating from the conflict perceptions. Reports of the field mission tend to be approached from the perspective of peer review of hosting country. We do not thoroughly dismiss merits of assessing country performance as well, but first and foremost this assessment should be done with regard to the progress of the host country towards fulfilling its OSCE commitments and previous report of the field mission should be taken as a point of departure against which this progress should be measured. And from this standpoint, we are proud to say that Armenia made decisive accomplishments particularly in area of human rights and strengthening democratic structure.

With this in mind we would like to refer to some key programs in all three dimensions.

The Government of Armenia and the OSCE Office in Yerevan have developed productive cooperation in the sphere of the political-military

dimension, in particular, the projects are aimed at the enhancement of democratic control of the Armed Forces, at raising the awareness of military personnel on their social, legal rights and, thus, contributing to better institutional protection of those rights. The implementation of the projects currently underway, such as “Support to the MoD to develop leadership and management in the Armed Forces”, “Social protection system for soldiers” are central indeed in terms of making the democratic principles as part of daily life of the Armed Forces. We look forward to continued assistance of the Office in fulfilling Armenia’s commitments emanating from the Code of Conduct. Armenia’s readiness to engage the OSCE field mission in transparent and open manner in reforming Armed Forces should be encouraged and the attempts to impede these projects by simply invoking hostile attitude towards the Armenian Armed Forces are doomed to failure.

In the second dimension the Office played an important role in preparing and introducing regulatory framework reform. The further sectorial implementation of the regulatory framework will benefit from continued support of the Office.

As in recent years the Office performance in third dimension was strong and it helped Armenia in registering irreversible progress in ensuring rights of freedom of expression and freedom of assembly. Here, it is important to mention effective cooperation of the Office with other OSCE institutions particularly with the OSCE representative on Freedom of the Media.

The balanced programmatic activities of the Office across all dimensions are ensured by strong performance in each of them. Yet cross-dimensional activities of the Office also cover priority areas such as elections. We value the Office’s joint project with the Central Electoral Commission aimed at ensuring fair and free elections. The recent Parliamentary elections were an important test for assessing ability of Government to register strong progress in conducting free and fair elections. The Government of Armenia is determined to capitalize on this positive experience in conducting next year Presidential elections.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate our strong support to the Yerevan Office activities.

**STATEMENT ON THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN
NAGORNO-KARABAKH REPUBLIC**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, July 19, 2012

We took note of the statement made by the delegation of Cyprus on behalf of the European Union. In our view the realization of human rights of people including right to vote cannot be kept hostage of the uncertainty of the legal status of the territory. Thus, one can recognize or not recognize constitutional and legal framework of the entity but cannot deny the right of people to enjoy fundamental human rights including right to vote. Therefore, we do not interpret this statement as the one who does not recognize the right of people living in Nagorno-Karabakh to form the government through elections.

As EU is well aware, the elections are essential tool to overcome democratic deficit in all forms of governance even those with non-conventional status in international relations. With this in mind, number of international observers including members of the Parliaments of the OSCE participating states and European Parliament are monitoring the elections in Nagorno-Karabakh which are taking place today.

When it comes to the issue of the final status of Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenia subscribes to the statements of the Heads of the Minsk Group Co-Chair countries released in L'Aquila and Muskoka which clearly establish that the final status of Nagorno-Karabakh should be determined by a legally-binding expression of will.

My delegation also took note of the recent statements made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan and Turkey on this matter. In this regard, I would like to reiterate statement made by my delegation at 920th Meeting of the Permanent Council in response of the similar points made earlier by the distinguished delegation of Azerbaijan.

As far at the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey is concerned, we do not want to refer to its substantial part since it is almost identical to the statement of Azerbaijan and we do not want to repeat ourselves here. Simply, we would like to stress that the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey does not fit into the logic of a neutral

mediator, member of the Minsk Group. Instead it fits very well into “one nation two states” logic regardless of repetitive clarifications of the Turkish delegation here in Vienna on its readiness to assume impartial role in the conflict settlement process.

Last but not least, the statement of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs is full of factual distortions and we have had impression that this statement describes the other conflict situation in the OSCE where Turkey is directly involved through overt military occupation of the territory of an EU member and the OSCE participating state.

STATEMENT ON THE RELEASE OF RAMIL SAFAROV

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, September 6, 2012

My delegation would like to draw the Permanent Council's attention to the situation created by the joint action of the Governments of Hungary and Azerbaijan resulting in the transfer and release of the Azerbaijani officer Ramil Safarov, who was sentenced to life imprisonment by the Hungarian court in 2006 for his particularly brutal murder of the Armenian officer Gurgen Margaryan. In response to this action Armenia has suspended its diplomatic relations with Hungary.

Azerbaijani official circles have glorified not only the criminal but the crime itself, suggesting that Ramil Safarov could serve as a good example for the younger Azerbaijani generation. Azerbaijan went to great lengths to bring about the transfer and release of the convict. At presidential, parliamentary speaker, prime ministerial, foreign ministerial and ambassadorial levels Armenia continuously drew the attention of Hungarian leadership to the inadmissibility of transferring the murderer, and the Hungarian side unequivocally ruled out any possibility of transfer many times before it finally took place.

The current Hungarian Government claims that it believed the false assurances of Azerbaijan that the murderer would serve the rest of his prison sentence in Azerbaijan. The decision to transfer the murderer was the result of a political process conducted in a non-transparent and secret manner at the highest political level of the two countries, as has been admitted by the head of the presidential staff of Azerbaijan. The simple fact that the communication dated 31 August 2012 of the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice of Hungary under the title "Ramil Sahib Safarov will serve the rest of his imprisonment term in Azerbaijan" was released after the pardon is very revealing.

The people of Armenia cherish their centuries-old friendly relations with the people of Hungary, with whom they and particularly the Armenian community share historic ties. The reaction, statements and protests of thousands of Hungarians, religious leaders, NGOs and political organizations against the action of their current government, and their

expressions of support for Armenia, indicate that the centuries-old tradition of friendship will overcome the test to which it is being subjected to.

We have taken attentive and appreciative note of the various statements on the part of the international community that have expressed concern and regret and have condemned the pardon granted by the President of Azerbaijan. We would like to recall only one of them now. When joining his voice to the international condemnation of the glorification of the terrible crime, the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe expressed his deep disappointment at the fact that the release of the perpetrator took place through the abusive use of a legal instrument of the Council of Europe. There were strong condemnations of the deal by the three Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, backed up by several other condemnations from international structures and individual countries. Armenia now expects an unequivocal position to be taken by the OSCE and its relevant structures, on the basis of the OSCE values and principles.

The practice of encouraging hate crimes against Armenians is not something new in the policy of the Azerbaijani leadership. On various occasions the Azerbaijani leadership has used racist and xenophobic language aimed at the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh, at those living in Armenia itself, and most recently at Armenians all over the world.

However, the case of Ramil Safarov is shocking even for a country with such a negative human rights record. Immediately after arriving in Baku, Ramil Safarov was promoted to the rank of major, received his salary from the Ministry of Defense for the period he served in the prison, was awarded a new apartment, and was welcomed as a national hero.

The pardoning, official promotion and nationwide glorification of the Azerbaijani serviceman are evidence of who stood behind his crimes. They also show that Azerbaijan cannot be regarded as a reliable partner in bilateral and multilateral relations, particularly when it comes to delivering on such commitments as the OSCE commitments on fighting hate crimes.

Moreover, this action is in outrageous contradiction to the joint statement by the Heads of Delegation of the countries of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group and the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia in 2011 in Astana, which emphasized the urgent need for confidence-building measures to prepare populations for peace, and furthermore violates the joint statement by the Presidents of Armenia, Russia and Azerbaijan adopted in January 2012 in Sochi: in both cases the President of Azerbaijan himself agreed to work towards confidence-building. The action goes against the statements on Nagorno-Karabakh made by the Presidents of the countries of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group during the G8 Summits in L'Aquila, Muskoka, Deauville and Los Cabos.

The present situation gravely harms the peace process and the efforts to seek a negotiated and peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. While the demonstrative and vulgar steps taken by the Azeri Government in releasing and glorifying the murderer have shocked the international community, the latest reactions from Azerbaijan are no less shocking. In fact, Azerbaijan is expressing its cynical contempt of international law and of the international community in general.

**REMARKS AT THE EVENT DEDICATED TO THE 500TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN BOOK PRINTING AND
200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MEKHITARIST CONGREGATION
PRINTING HOUSE**

Vienna, Mekhitarist Congregation, November 22, 2012

First of all, I would like to thank our guests – the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Vienna, Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Peter Stephan Zubrigen, my colleagues, Ambassadors and diplomats of friendly to Armenia countries, members of Austrian Parliament, representatives of the Austrian Government, Presidency, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador of Austria to Armenia Alois Kraut, politicians, intellectuals, academicians, armenologists, Armenian Ambassador in Prague Tigran Seiranian – to celebrate with us very significant for the Armenian nation anniversaries. We have in our audience today also representatives of the Armenian community of Austria - the Armenian Apostolic Church of St. Ripsime and Mekhitarist Congregation of Vienna. Special thanks go to Abbot Paulus Kojanian and members of Mekhitarist Congregation for co-organizing this event.

I would like also to use this opportunity to thank the Government of Austria for the special attention and attitude towards our compatriots, the Armenian community, which has more than two centuries long history in this country.

This year we celebrate one more important date, the 20th Anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between two friendly countries – Austria and Armenia. This anniversary was celebrated on a highest possible level, when the President of Austria Heinz Fisher visited Armenia in June. It will have its continuation next year, when the President of Armenia will visit Vienna. We are sure that these visits will help us to enhance and deepen the friendship and cooperation between our two states and peoples.

Father Paulus had already spoken about Vienna Mekhitarist Congregation and its Printing House. I will briefly introduce to you in English the history of this important Armenian institution. The Mekhitarists

of Vienna, along with their brethren in Venice, belong to the Mekhitarist Congregation established by Abbot Mekhitar in Constantinople and headquartered since 1717 on the island San Lazaro, near Venice. The Congregation was established with the express wish, objective and goal of its founder to serve “God and Nation”, by bringing education and enlightenment to Armenians through their studies, research and publication of Armenian classical literature and history. The Mekhitarists Fathers were settled in Vienna in 1811. A decree signed by the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph I recognized the presence of Mekhitarists in Vienna and permitted them to set up a Printing House. In time, the monastery in Vienna became a major center and point of reference for Armenian culture and studies worldwide. Its amassed collections of antiques, ceramics, silverware, coins, paintings, ancient manuscripts and books. The Printing House became a point of reference for the Imperial Government that ordered in 1849 the printing of Hungarian banknotes, and in 1854, ordered school books to be printed for the Ministry of Education.

The first Armenian book was printed far away from Armenia – in Venice in the year of 1512 by Hakob Meghapart, who worshipped manuscripts. Typography held a vital role and was turning point in the lives of Armenian people after the invention of alphabet in the beginning of the 5th century. The book written with the Armenian letters became an evidence of the Armenian culture rebirth. The first printed books were styled like Armenian manuscripts, prompting the continuation of this tradition. The Armenian typography continued its journey to Madras, Lvov, Rome, Milan, Paris, New Julfa, Amsterdam, St. Petersburg, Constantinople, Tbilisi, Shushi, Yerevan.

Every year in cooperation with three major international professional organizations from the world of books, the International Publishers Association, the International Booksellers Federation and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, UNESCO designate a city as World Book Capital for one year, between two consecutive celebrations of World Book and Copyright Day (23 April). This initiative is a collaborative effort between representatives of the main stakeholders in the book industry, as well as a commitment by cities to promote books and

reading. The city of Yerevan was named as the World Book Capital 2012 at the conclusion of the meeting of the selection committee, which was held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on 2 July 2011. Yerevan is the twelfth city to be designated World Book Capital after Madrid, Alexandria, New Delhi, Antwerp, Montreal, Turin, Bogota, Amsterdam, Beirut, Ljubljana and Buenos Aires.

The city of Yerevan was chosen for the quality and variety of its program, which was very detailed, realistic and rooted in the social fabric of the city, focused on the universal values and involving all the stakeholders involved in the book industry. The city of Yerevan has presented a particularly interesting program with many different themes, including the freedom of expression, as well as several activities for children, who will be the readers and authors of tomorrow. Yerevan World Book Capital 2012, which is still going on, unites experts and professionals from the region and all over the world and serves as an impetus to promote publishing and raise awareness that books can serve as a medium which encourages cultural, political, social and economic development. Special attention was focused on the organization of different events aiming at involvement of large segments of population to the Book-celebration activities: there were organized **Yerevan Book Fair**, Open-air Reading Festival, **Book Donation Days**, Festivities dedicated to the First Translators. In a separate presentation, the arts inspired by Armenian typography were shown: the art of decoration, and the art of engraving. Special attention, special accent was also given to the 500th anniversary of book printing.

Designation of Yerevan as the World capital is not only a respectable tribute to the foundation and development of Armenian typography, but also serves to ensure the sacred connection of generations and to slow the historical path tread by the book: from Gutenberg's invention all the way to the internet.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS BY THE
SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE COOPERATION COUNCIL OF
TURKIC SPEAKING STATES**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, December 20, 2012

We took note of the statement made by Ambassador Halil Akinci.

As you may know there was a proposal to invite the Cooperation Council of Turkic speaking countries to the Dublin Ministerial Council alongside with the international organizations and Armenia was among those countries who objected this invitation. Since the General Secretary of CCTS Ambassador Akinci is again invited to the Permanent Council, we deem it appropriate to explain our position here one more time.

Armenia attaches great importance to the development of global and regional cooperation. However, when cooperation is based on particular solidarity stemming from perceptions of common origin and kinship and covers not cultural but security and political relations among states, we approach the issue with certain caution.

We openly communicated our concerns last year during the first appearance of this organization in the Permanent Council which took place under similar circumstances.

We recalled the statement delivered at the founding Nakhichevan summit by a leader of one-member state of this organization who explicitly referred Armenia as a country that territorially separates Turkic world and is created on the Turkic lands. We also recall that similar ideas were nurtured by a certain political movement a century ago and they became an ideological justification for the first genocide of the 20th century.

As we understood then from the clarifications offered by Ambassador Akinci, the organization itself does not necessarily share all views expressed by the leaders of member countries.

However, the certain statements of the leadership of the organization and personally Ambassador Akinci indicate that our concerns were more than justified. Here, first of all I mean the statement made by Ambassador Akinci on February 17 of this year in Istanbul which is available at the official website of CCTS. The statement is full of racist and xenophobic

remarks against Armenians and on certain instances it comes pretty close to hate speech. However, the most shocking part of the statement is condemnation of those Turkish intellectuals who try to reconcile with the past of their nation by offering apology and understanding to others. According to the statement the motives of such reconciliatory actions of Turkish intellectuals are ignorance and desire to please foreigners.

We sincerely hope that these remarks are not shared by all members of CCTS, since we have excellent bilateral relations with certain members, while trying to find ways to move toward the reconciliation with other countries.

The OSCE has been taking completely different approach to the issues of regional cooperation and reconciliation. 57 countries whose languages may resemble each other may not, whose origin can be traced similarly or differently are united to advance the cause of a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community free of dividing lines.

Thus, we find inappropriate to invite an organization whose concept of cooperation drastically departs from the values we believe in the OSCE.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF H.E.
LEONID KOZHARA, OSCE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE, MINISTER
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF UKRAINE**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, January 17, 2013

We would like to join other delegations in congratulating Ukraine on the assumption of the OSCE Chairmanship and to extend our warm welcome to H.E. Mr. Leonid Kozhara, Chairman-in-Office to the Permanent Council.

We appreciate your insightful address, which alongside with the highlighted priorities of the Ukrainian Chairmanship offers a cooperative framework and program of work for this year. We welcome the stance of the Ukrainian Chairmanship to lead Helsinki+40 process towards establishing free, democratic, common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community. We are also encouraged by the aspiration of the Chairmanship to promote trust, confidence and reconciliation to this end.

In our view, the implementation of the Astana Declaration and all subsequent OSCE commitments across three dimensions will further contribute to the strengthening of the identity of our organization and its ability to play primary role in the conflict resolution within its region.

We took note with appreciation of the readiness of the Ukrainian Chairmanship to contribute towards resolution of existing conflicts in the OSCE area.

There are number of conflicts in the OSCE area and their resolution is addressed through different arrangements and mechanisms some of which are closely linked with the activities of our organization. Every conflict situation and its resolution are unique and require continuity, consistency and expertise of mediators. Hence, the support of the Ukrainian Chairmanship to the agreed formats particularly the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs as highlighted in the priorities will be an important contribution towards conflict resolution.

The conflict resolution is possible once all parties concerned abandon violence as means to achieve their goals and show political will to move towards peace and reconciliation. The Ukrainian Chairmanship's clear message on the absolute imperative of rejecting violence, honouring already reached agreements and arriving to the negotiated outcome based on recognizing each other's rights will be an indispensable part of the collective practical efforts aimed at resolving existing conflicts. The right of people to

peace, equality and self-determination should be addressed alongside with their individual human rights and thus they cannot be simply denied in the OSCE area.

We welcome the intention of the Ukrainian Chairmanship to put special emphasis on the conflict prevention and reoccurrence in the conflict cycle particularly at the stage of the early warning and early action.

Armenia is ready to closely work with the Ukrainian Chairmanship to advance its priorities in all three dimensions.

We agree that the Arms control, disarmament and CSBMs are integral part of the OSCE concept of comprehensive, cooperative, equal and indivisible security and thus any setback here may create and even consolidate dividing lines also at the regional level. Therefore, we will be eager to extend our strong assistance to the Ukrainian Chairmanship in its efforts in building bridges between existing approaches.

We took note of the Chairmanship's intention to increase the role of the OSCE in the development of existing and establishing new transport corridors and, in our view the OSCE role can be indeed strengthened here if the principles of Helsinki Final Act and Maastricht Strategy Document such as refraining from unilateral coercive economic measures, isolating and economically disadvantaging other participating states will be fully maintained.

As far as the Human Dimension is concerned, we sincerely hope that balanced approach of the Ukrainian Chairmanship which is clearly visible in its priorities will pave the way for increased level of understanding and cooperation among all participating states. We value the Chairmanship initiative to pay special attention to the education of youth in the realm of tolerance and non-discrimination.

Unfortunately, unprecedented manifestation of racism and hate crimes in certain areas of the OSCE creates a culture of impunity and xenophobia and young generation should be given the chance to overcome the imposed images of hate crime glorification. In this regard, this initiative of the Ukrainian Chairmanship is a timely one.

We believe that the valuable experience gained by Ukraine in the international cooperation will be fully utilized to have the OSCE at its best, an inclusive platform for dialogue of equal partners.

**REMARKS AT THE EVENT DEDICATED TO THE 500TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN BOOK PRINTING**

Graz, University of Graz, January 17, 2013

It is a great pleasure for me, the Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to Austria, to be present at this wonderful event organized by Pro Oriente, which is dedicated to the 500th Anniversary of the Armenian Book Printing.

We started to celebrate this very important for the Armenian Culture Anniversary last November with an exhibition of old Armenian books at the Mekhitarist Congregation of Vienna, when the Austrian officials and Ambassadors of many countries were present.

We value our relations and cooperation with Austria. Last year we marked 20 years of diplomatic relations with the first ever visit of the President Heinz Fisher to Armenia. The Armenian Culture was one of the priorities of the three-day visit, when the Austrian President visited many cultural sites in Armenia. The visit of the President of Armenia to Austria hopefully this year will bring new impetus to the friendly relations existing between our two countries.

Armenian-Austrian relations are not just 20 years old, they go deep into the history for more than 200 years. Many Austrian institutions preserve and continue to study Armenian cultural heritage. One of these institutions is the Manuscript Research Centre of the Graz University, which studies written cultural heritage, such as manuscripts and early printed books. We are very proud and value your very important cooperation with the Institute of Ancient Manuscripts in Yerevan Matenadaran, the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Armenian Academy of Sciences and, of course, the Mekhitarist Institution of Vienna. I would like to mention very important project of the Centre, the “Digitalization of the Armenian Manuscripts of Mesrob Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts”.

And today we gathered here for another interesting project of the Centre that was realized by very good friend of Armenia and the Embassy, professor and doctor Erich Renhart with the cooperation of the Government

of Styria and the Armenian Community of Graz. I would like to specially thank you for this excellent book you prepared and published, ‘’The Image of Armenia in selected manuscripts and printed works of the Graz University Library’’’, which is a testimony of friendly relations and cultural cooperation between Austrian and Armenian peoples.

**STATEMENT ON THE RECENT ATTACKS ON THE
VULNERABLE GROUP OF THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY IN
ISTANBUL, TURKEY**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council. January 31, 2013

My delegation expresses its concern over the series of recent attacks on the persons of the Armenian origin in Istanbul, Turkey. In the last two months, five attacks, one of them fatal, took place in Samatya, an area historically inhabited by Armenians in Istanbul. The target of attacks is a certain group of person namely elderly Armenian women, citizens of Turkey.

There is a strong indication that the attacks could have been racially motivated taking into account their consistency and brutality towards particular group of people as well as circumstances of the perpetrated crimes.

On December 28, Marissa Kucuk, an 85 years old woman was found stabbed to death at her place. A cross had been carved on her body.

Another Armenian woman was attacked on her way to the Church on January 6th, the Armenian Christmas Day.

The latest crimes occurred on January 22 and 23 when other elderly women were attacked and beaten and one of them was severely wounded and as a result lost her eye.

We are encouraged by the prompt reaction of the Turkish civil society who recently organized the rallies and showed support to their Armenian countrymen.

Unfortunately, the strong reaction is still lacking from the Turkish authorities. The Istanbul governor quickly dismissed any racial motivation of those crimes suggesting that the reasons standing are ordinary ones and linked with robbery.

The result of these unrevealed crimes is a climate of fear and anxiety among the Armenian community.

Exactly one year ago, my delegation raised certain concerns over the case of Hrand Dink, a prominent Turkish Armenian intellectual, who was killed by ultranationalist group for advocating the cause of Armenian-

Turkish reconciliation based on recognizing and addressing past grievances. Unfortunately, since then no any positive development was registered in revealing organizers of this hate crime and addressing the climate of fear and impunity. Moreover, certain personalities who were responsible for stigmatizing Hrand Dink were promoted. Among them is the newly appointed Head of the Ombudsman Institution of Turkey Mehmat Nihat Omeroghlu, who in his former capacity of judge upheld a conviction of Mr Dink for “insulting Turkishness” by invoking a controversial 301 article of the Penal Code. It should be recalled here that in 2010 the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Turkey's Court of Cassation's decision to uphold Dink's conviction for "insulting Turkishness" had constituted a restriction on his free speech since his writings neither incited hatred nor violence. The European Court of Human Rights also ruled that the Turkish authorities had not only failed to uphold his right to free speech, but had failed to protect his life despite repeated and detailed intelligence reports about plans to assassinate him. On the other case of murder, namely assassination of the Turkish conscript of the Armenian origin Sevag Balykchi the military trial is still ongoing and we sincerely hope that it will clearly reveal the motives and circumstances of this crime and provide justice. The very date of crime, April 24, provides solid ground to qualify this as yet another hate crime against Armenians in Turkey.

The protection of minorities and issues of the tolerance and non-discrimination is a priority of our Organization and we took note of Turkey's intentions to address them through implementing and developing new commitments. Therefore, we call on the Turkish authorities to carry out a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation into series of attacks targeting vulnerable groups of the Armenian community in Turkey and we will remain seized on the matter.

**STATEMENT ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN
AZERBAIJAN**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, February 14, 2013

My delegation has two brief points regarding the statements delivered under this current issue.

We share the concerns over the campaign of intimidation against Azerbaijani writer Akram Aylisli. It is deeply disturbing to see Azerbaijani authorities trying to silence voices advocating reconciliation and peace in their respective society. The same authorities who granted pardon and glorification to Ramil Safarov, a brutal hate crime perpetrator, are now ostracizing and depriving Akram Aylisli, a prominent Azerbaijani writer of his awards. Mr. Aylisli dared to communicate through his literature the ideas of peace and reconciliation with his neighbours. Threats against him triggered yet another officially orchestrated Anti-Armenian campaign in Azerbaijan.

We call on Azerbaijani authorities to uphold OSCE commitments on freedom of expression and combating racism and xenophobia.

My second point goes to the remarks which were put by Norway and Switzerland on certain proposals with regard to the NGO financing in Armenia. We are surprised that the issue of the NGO financing in Armenia is being discussed by Norway and Switzerland under this current issue which as we understand is covering human rights situation in another participating state.

We are also surprised that this statement comments on certain initial discussions and proposals in Armenia which are not yet put into any legislative motion. We understand that there is an attempt to balance something in this organization but we are not sure whether this time the balancing act was relevant.

That being said, I would like to assure that Armenia will use appropriate occasions to introduce its policy towards NGOs in future thematic deliberations. In any case we are not going to make clarification on that issue under this current item.

**REPLY TO THE STATEMENT OF THE DELEGATION OF
AZERBAIJAN**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, March 14, 2013

We took note of the statements made by the delegation of Azerbaijan and France and at this stage we would like to offer information on this incident.

This year on February 26-27 Armenians all over the world including refugees from Azerbaijan commemorate the 25 anniversary of Sumgait pogroms. Sumgait is an Azeri city not far from the capital of Baku where massacre of the Armenian population took place in 1988 years before the war was unleashed by Azerbaijan against population of Nagorno-Karabakh. My delegation circulated Press Release on this occasion.

French Armenian organizations held remembrance evening in the French parliament. Unfortunately, certain Azeri young people tried to impede the remembrance event by showing disrespect and humiliating the victims. Their provocative and violent behaviour caused the incident. We trust that the relevant French authorities will thoroughly investigate the incident.

Unfortunately, once again we see the outcomes of Azerbaijani intolerant policy towards its past and the people who were part of that past. Several delegations have already raised here the case of hatred campaign initiated by Azerbaijani authorities against the prominent Azerbaijan writer Akram Aylisli who dared through his literature to pay tribute to enormous suffering of the victims of pogroms which took place in Sumgait and Baku.

Encouraging reconciliation through respecting memory of the victims is essential. Making provocation or punishing those who still remember will only further alienate peoples from each other.

**OPENING REMARKS AT THE INTERNATIONAL
SYMPOSIUM “MONASTIC LIFE IN THE ARMENIAN CHURCH”**

Salzburg, University of Salzburg, April 15-16, 2013

I am delighted to greet the participants in the Symposium and on behalf of the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia to thank the University of Salzburg, Mayr-Meinhof Institute, Pro-Oriente and St. Benedict College for the excellent organization of the symposium, and for providing me an opportunity to participate and present the opening remarks.

From both the official perspective, as the Ambassador of Armenia to Austria, and personal, as a historian and Armenian Studies researcher, I greatly appreciate the initiative and the purpose of the Symposium. There has been a certain amount of research and work in Armenian Church Studies conducted in and outside of Armenia in recent years. The successes of Armenology in Armenian Church Studies are self-evident. It is an honour to see here so many distinguished Armenian and Austrian armenologists and specialists on the Armenian Church Studies gathered here to highlight certain aspects of Monasticism in the Armenian Church.

The Armenian Church played very important and significant role in the history of the Armenian nation and statehood. With the disappearance of Armenia's independence for several centuries, the conditions of decentralized and fractionalized existence of the Armenian nation, during the periods of historical tragedies, ideological divisions and battles of the last decades Armenian Church was simultaneously a policy maker, defender, carrier and preserver of national and cultural identity of its people. And today the reestablishment of the Armenian independence, the reawakening of the Armenian national life and philosophy in Armenia, the fundamental changes and reforms that have been taking place in the Armenian society, and the enormous political and economic challenges facing the Republic of Armenia, understandably reflect on Armenian Church, its new role and purposes. In the same time Armenian Church continues its role of a custodianship of the Christian Armenian tradition and national identity in Diaspora.

I would like also to use this opportunity and to emphasize that the Government of Armenia and the Armenian people value our relations and cooperation with Austria. Last year we marked 20 years of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between two countries with the first ever visit of the President of Austria Heinz Fisher to Armenia. The Armenian Culture and spiritual life were among the priorities of the three-day visit, when the Austrian President visited Etchmiadzin and met the Catolicos of all Armenians Garegin II. The visit of the President of Armenia to Austria will bring new impetus to the friendly relations existing between our two countries.

Armenian-Austrian relations are not just 20 years old, they go deep into history for more than 200 years. Many Austrian institutions preserve and continue to study Armenian cultural heritage. One of these institutions is the Salzburg University, which has Armenian studies programs and important cooperation with the Armenia`s scientific institutions.

I hope that both the symposium and possible publication of its proceedings will contribute significantly the Armenian Studies and will inspire further research in this field.

In conclusion, I would like to thank once again the organizers, the Salzburg University, and particularly Professor Jasmine Dum-Tragut for initiating and realizing this very important project.

**RESPONSE TO THE STATEMENT BY H.E. YURY FEDOTOV,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE UNODC AND DIRECTOR-
GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE IN VIENNA**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, April 18, 2013

We would like to warmly welcome Ambassador Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and Director-General of the United Nations Office in Vienna.

I would like to stress that this address is very timely taking into account the evolving agenda of the OSCE in addressing the transnational threats. New capacities such as Transnational Threats (TNT) department and adoption of the several decisions may further transform the OSCE into a strong regional partner of the UNODC in its global fight against drugs, crime and terrorism.

This cooperation should focus on the urgent threats which require prompt actions and generate political will to meet challenges together regardless of various political disagreements among member and participating states.

We are pleased to note that the Armenia's cooperation with the UNODC is ongoing. The second assessment mission of the UNODC Container Control Programme, which aims to assist Governments to establish effective container controls, is currently working with relevant Armenian governmental agencies to enhance Armenia's capabilities of preventing drug trafficking and other illicit container crimes. We are looking forward to your upcoming visit to Armenia in the course of which the relevant memorandum will be concluded.

The UNODC has earned a well-deserved reputation for the expertise of its staff, its insightful and analytical reports, and responsible stewardship of resources. It has a unique and irreplaceable role in promoting international cooperation.

It is that with the acknowledgement of UNODC contribution in forging international cooperation, we would like to recall certain instances where principles of the international cooperation were violated.

Here I am referring to the conference on strengthening cooperation against terrorism which was held in Baku, Azerbaijan on 18-19 March and was mentioned by the distinguished Azerbaijani Ambassador. Armenia has not been invited to the conference which thanks to the address of the Azerbaijani president became yet another venue for highest authorities of that country to voice out their racist and xenophobic remarks against Armenians.

The circulation of the address of Azerbaijani president by the Azerbaijani Delegation in the OSCE can give a good idea to the participating states to what extent the Azerbaijani leadership misused the framework of international cooperation in order to demonstrate a well-known attitude which has nothing to do neither with the word of international nor cooperation. We are not surprised of this verbiage as well as the Chair's summary which accurately replicates Azerbaijani position *vis-à-vis* Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. We hope that this experience will be thoroughly evaluated by the UNODC.

I would like also to briefly react on the points made by Azerbaijani delegation. In his mentioned address the President of Azerbaijan underlines that terrorism cannot be associated with any nationality or religion. However, he did attribute terrorism to Armenians using phrases like "Armenian terrorist organizations" and portrayed the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as fight of Azerbaijan against terror. So, this inconsistency has apparently racist motivation.

In conclusion, we would like to wish every success to Ambassador Fedotov and reiterate our readiness to cooperate with the UNODC on various fora of the international cooperation.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO ELMAR MAMMADYAROV,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF AZERBAIJAN**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, May 14, 2013

We thank Mr. Elmar Mammadyarov, Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan for his address.

We took note of determination of Azerbaijan to work in the OSCE towards security community and its readiness to contribute within the Helsinki+40 process. In this regard, there is an evolving conviction in our organization that establishing trust and confidence through ensuring positive engagement is key to our overall success. With this in mind, we welcome Mr. Mammadyarov to the PC and express our readiness to interact positively with Azerbaijan in the OSCE.

At this stage we would like to react on some points made by the distinguished Minister.

Armenia is more than ready to move beyond the current status quo of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. However, the positive change in the settlement process requires certain efforts from all parties to the conflict. First, parties should refrain from confrontational positioning towards each other. Second, they should be constructively engaged with the international mediators, the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs. Third they should implement already reached commitments.

Armenia's engagement in the negotiation process meets these requirements. First, Armenia does not exert pressure on negotiation process by bellicose statements and war threats. Second, Armenia does not cast doubts on good faith and effectiveness of mediators. On many occasions Armenia has been stressing its readiness to embark on the settlement process in line with the all statements made by the presidents of Co-Chair countries in L'Aquila, Muskoka, Deauville and Los Cabos. Third, Armenia is ready to implement all commitments made within in the OSCE MC and the trilateral framework namely March 5, 2011 and January 23, 2012 Sochi joint statements between Presidents of Armenia, Russian Federation and Azerbaijan. Accelerating the endorsement of basic principles remains essential in leading the process towards a positive outcome. Basic principles will provide the framework for the conflict resolution identifying mutual

compromises. Principles should be adopted in their entirety without privileging any of them. On numerous occasions, Armenia highlighted the recognition of the right of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to self-determination as a principle indispensable to the progress in conflict resolution.

Having said this, we will leave to the Azerbaijani side to determine its readiness to fulfil these requirements aimed at ensuring continued progress in the settlement.

What we would like to stress here it is the inadmissibility of escalation on the ground. Our response to escalation has always been the willingness to accept various proposals on confidence building measures put forward by the Co-Chairs such as withdrawal of snipers and the establishment of an investigative mechanism into possible cease-fire violations.

Rejecting these proposals does not send a message of readiness to resolve the issue by peaceful means.

Likewise, linking confidence building measures with the implementation of certain actions envisaged by the basic principles is not a genuine excuse.

In our view, efforts towards reconciliation between societies and confidence building measures may create an atmosphere for mutual respect, acceptance and hence lead to a better environment for compromises.

We think that after almost twenty years since the end of the military stage of the conflict our societies are more than ready for peace. We took note of the growing calls for reconciliation in the Azerbaijani society, as well as the actions being taken by Azerbaijani authorities towards eminent persons advocating peace and reconciliation with the immediate neighbours.

In our view, the OSCE can offer important toolbox for launching important reconciliation initiatives.

Armenia made clear on highest level that the settlement of Nagorno-Karabakh issue should be based on the respect of universal human rights. Thus, greater respect and promotion of human rights in the region is essential. In our view, the OSCE and its field missions can greatly contribute towards enhancing the democratic profile of the countries in the region.

In conclusion, we hope that the joint meeting at the Ministerial level in Krakow will create a positive momentum in the NK settlement.

**REMARKS AT THE EVENT DEDICATED TO THE 24TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE AUSTRIAN CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL IN
GYUMRI AND THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE ARMENIA
HELP ASSOCIATION'S ACTIVITIES**

Vienna, Representation of the Lower Austria, May 16, 2013

It is a great pleasure for me, the Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia, to be present at this wonderful and in the meantime sad event celebrating of 24th Anniversary of Austrian Children's Hospital in Gyumri and the closing ceremony of the Armenia Help Association`s activities.

On this occasion I would like to thank on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Armenia the President of Armenia Help Association Dr. Christoph Lechner, Vice President Mr. Hans Döller, Hospital economist Peter Günter, the Government of Austria, particularly the Ministry of Health, and the Director of Mother and Child Center in Gyumri Dr. Ashot Kurghinian for their commitment and great work they've done during all these years related to the establishment and further activities of this important institution.

My special thanks also go to all supporting Institutions: Austrian social partners in the construction industry, Caritas-Austria, Krankenhaus Schrebb in Lower Austria, Vienna Vision Center, Armenian Apostolic Church Community in Vienna, and all private donors.

The 1988 Spitak earthquake destroyed the second city of Armenia Gyumri, including the children's hospital, a lot of school children were injured or died. In Austria this tragic event gave the impetus for supporting actions by the Government, some public institutions, relief organizations and many private donors. The ceremony of the start of the construction of the Austrian Children's Hospital (ÖKS) took place a year after the earthquake. The official opening was manifested in June 1992 with the support of the Armenia Help Association (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Armenienhilfe - ARGE), which includes the Austrian social partners in the construction industry, Caritas-Austria and the Armenian Community in Vienna. Without support of this very Association the existence of the children's hospital could not have been possible.

After 24 years of its establishment, the former Austrian Children's Hospital (ÖKS) renamed today as Austrian mother-child center in Gyumri, helps those for whom it was intended, even in a larger extent. This program is a model of excellent cooperation between Austria and Armenia, success story in our relations, one of the best examples and symbols of friendship and cooperation between Austrian and Armenian peoples. And we hope that with the closure of the Association's activities this program will be continued by the active involvement and participation of the Austrian Development Agency.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF
AMBASSADOR ANDREY SOROKIN, HEAD OF THE OSCE
OFFICE IN YEREVAN**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, July 18, 2013

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

First, we would like to stress that the activities of the Yerevan Office strongly contribute towards fulfilling Armenia's OSCE commitments in all three dimensions.

Giving all credits for the OSCE good performance in Armenia to the Office, we would like to stress that the successful activities of the Office are based on the clear consensus existing in the Armenian society on the necessity of further democratization and modernisation of the country through engaging in the international and regional cooperation.

It is in this favourable environment that the Office manages to become a reliable partner for cooperation among various stakeholders including Government, Parliament, Local authorities and civil society.

The reports of the field missions in the Permanent Council tend to be approached by some participating states from the perspective of peer review of hosting country. We do not thoroughly dismiss merits of assessing country performance as well, but first and foremost this assessment should be done with regard to the progress of the host country towards fulfilling its OSCE commitments and previous report of the field mission should be taken as a point of departure against which this progress should be measured. And from this standpoint, we are proud to say that Armenia made decisive accomplishments particularly in the area of good governance, human rights and democratization.

Having said this, we would like to refer to some key programs in all three dimensions.

The Government and the Parliament of Armenia and the OSCE Office in Yerevan have developed productive cooperation in the sphere of the political-military dimension, in particular, the projects are aimed at the enhancement of democratic control over security sector. We look forward

to continued assistance of the Office in fulfilling Armenia's commitments emanating from the Code of Conduct. Armenia's readiness to engage the OSCE field mission in transparent and open manner in mainstreaming human rights of military personnel and increasing democratic control over the Armed Forces can be considered a good practice which Armenia will be ready to share with other interested participating states. The readiness of Armenia to engage the OSCE in reforming security sector can be regarded as a confidence building measure.

Introduction of community policing is another major achievement of our joint cooperation in the security sector. The evolution of this undertaking from a pilot project to a full-fledged reform shows potential of our organization and its field presences in introducing, sustaining and developing projects.

The regulatory framework reform known under its nom de guerre guillotine is a landmark project of the Yerevan office which starts bringing tangible results in its fight against obsolete and burdensome laws and regulations. The guillotine project has already been implemented in three sectors namely public utilities, transport and public health and five more sectors including tax, customs and entrepreneurships are to be reviewed by November 2013. The Government of Armenia intends to implement second phase of the regulatory framework reform which inter alia will introduce Regulatory Impact Assessment system. The Office's contribution will remain essential for the success of the second phase of the project

The Government of Armenia is ready to continue close cooperation of the Office in sustaining and building on achievements in number of key areas in third dimension, such as freedom of media, freedom of association, combating trafficking and so forth. Armenia's accomplishments in ensuring fundamental freedoms have been widely acknowledged by international community including international governmental and non-governmental organizations and from our side we would like to acknowledge the role of the Yerevan Office in this regard. Here, it is important to mention effective cooperation of the Office with the OSCE institutions.

The cross-dimensional activities remain a strong point of the Office. We appreciate its involvement in assisting host country in preparation of

recent Presidential elections and the Yerevan City Council elections which marked important progress towards fulfilling democratic aspirations of the citizens of Armenia.

We took note of positive assessments of the Presidential elections by international observation missions and international organizations and we intend to continue strengthening electoral legislation and capacity in close cooperation with the ODHIR. Here, we anticipate continued involvement of the Office as well.

Last but not least, it had not been possible to achieve all this without trust and transparency. The activities of the Office attracted great interest of the whole organization and the participating states. The recent ACMF trip was a good case in point and here we would like to thank the Office for hosting representatives of the participating states in Armenia. The visit certainly helped to show the activities of the Office in every detail in a most possible transparent manner. And here I would like to refer to the comments made by the Azerbaijani Ambassador. If after all self-exhaustive inquiries made by the Azerbaijani delegate in Armenia during that trip, Azerbaijan still requires more transparency in the activities of the Office, perhaps it needs to reflect on possibility of opening an Azerbaijani representation in Yerevan.

When it comes to transparency Azerbaijan has failed to lead us by example. Unfortunately, Azerbaijan did not allow ACMF delegates to visit that country and get acquainted with the activities of the OSCE Baku Office. Yet Armenia did not only receive trip but also created conditions for all ACMF delegates to successfully undertake their mission.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT BY THE
DIRECTOR OF THE CONFLICT PREVENTION CENTRE (CPC),
AMBASSADOR ADAM KOBIERACKI**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, September 13, 2013

We would like to thank Director of CPC Ambassador Adam Kobieracki for his report and use this opportunity to make comments on some points raised in the report.

First, we appreciate the role of the CPC as a chair of the informal group on the conflict cycle. The deliberations of the informal working group are important in coordinating the various efforts to implement the Vilnius ministerial decision which is one of the major achievements of the OSCE in the recent years. In our view, the scope of the activities of the informal working group should be clearly delineated and emanate strictly from the decision itself in order to maintain its focus and result oriented approach.

Second, we highly value the expertise of the Conflict Prevention Centre in promoting confidence building measures both at thematic and conflict specific cases. In this regard, we appreciate the input of the CPC in organizing Security Days on Reconciliation and Conflict Resolution where a wide and almost unanimous agreement was achieved regarding to the potential of our organization in pursuing whole conflict cycle through systematic and cross dimensional application of reconciliation tools.

As far as a particular conflict case is concerned, we have noticed the reference made to the project of bringing together the Armenian and Azerbaijani journalists. In our view, the CPC can make important contribution in launching various confidence building measures if it undertakes an inclusive approach. It implies reaching out, in close coordination with the OSCE Minsk group Co-Chairs and the Personal Representative of the Chairman in Office, to all sides of the conflict including population leaving in the conflict area.

Third, we appreciate the assistance being provided by the CPC to the field missions in developing projects. In this regard the ongoing project to implement Code of Conduct is an important undertaking which brings

together various stakeholders in Armenia including Parliament and Ministry of Defence. The democratic control and further strengthening of human rights in the armed forces should be important outcome of these projects.

Fourth, we welcome the role of the CPC in building frameworks which can assist participating states in implementing their priorities and commitments. Here I would like to particularly refer to the project of elaborating national action plan aimed at implementation of UN SC resolution 1540. Armenia is looking forward to working closely with the CPC in this regard.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF
THORBJORN JAGLAND, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE
COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, October 24, 2013

We would like to warmly welcome Mr. Thorbjorn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe and express our gratitude for his pragmatic and encouraging address.

Both the OSCE and the Council of Europe remain highly relevant regional organizations, shaping the collective efforts of their participating and member states to maintain peace, security and stability in our wide region through active promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, rule of law and democracy.

As it has been stressed on various occasions, further promotion of targeted and result oriented cooperation between the Council of Europe and the OSCE is a priority for the Armenian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

OSCE is one of the main partners of the Council of Europe in its efforts to promote respect for human rights, the rule of law and democracy, and the level of cooperation between the two Organisations with a regular pattern of consultations, high-level meetings and personal activity and dedication of Secretaries General, is yet another evidence of that. I would like to recall the address of Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee of Ministers at the OSCE Permanent Council in June, where particularly he stressed the importance to encourage the two organizations to enhance the co-operation, to exchange information and to coordinate their activities with a view of developing synergies and avoiding duplication, in the context of their acquis on thematic issues, which continues to reflect the different yet complementary mandates and working methods of our two Organisations.

The cooperation between OSCE and the Council of Europe has enhanced in the field of protection of rights of persons belonging to national minorities, freedom of media, combating trafficking in human beings, fight against terrorism and promotion of tolerance. Another

important area of cooperation between the two organizations is the election related activities, including election observation. We value in particular the latter one as a down-to-earth and extremely important undertaking between the two standard setting organisations. We cannot afford setbacks here and any failure to speak in one voice should become a subject to scrutiny.

The potential of cooperation between the OSCE and CoE has not been fully utilized. In our view their wide toolbox could be implied in combined way particularly in the third dimension of the OSCE through further promotion of human rights and creating the conditions for reconciliation, thus shaping the way for establishment of European community based on indivisible human security.

We would like to take this opportunity and express our gratitude to the Secretariat of the Council of Europe and the Secretary General for the constant support and cooperation rendered to the Armenian Chairmanship in realization of its priorities and programmatic activities. In particular, we appreciate participation of Mr. Thorbjorn Jagland and Mr. Nils Muižnieks, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe in the High-Level Conference “Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Intolerance in Europe” held in Yerevan on October 21-22.

At the end, I would like to stress that Armenia, as an active member of the Council of Europe, will continue to contribute to the objectives, values and principles of the Organization.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF RANKO
KRIVOKAPIC, PRESIDENT OF THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY
ASSEMBLY**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, October 31, 2013

We would like to welcome Mr. Ranko Krivokapic, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and thank him for his interesting address.

The Armenian side would like to reiterate its readiness to closely cooperate with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and its Presidency in promotion of cooperation between the OSCE participating States and contribution to the security, democracy, rule of law and prosperity in the OSCE area within the parliamentary dimension of our Organization.

We value the role of parliamentary diplomacy in addressing the existing conflicts. In this regard I would like to recall that the Agreement on ceasefire of 1994 was reached also thanks to the joint appeal signed by the Presidents of the Parliaments of Armenia, Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan.

In our view, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, as the forum which encompasses parliamentarians elected by their respective peoples, has the necessary reputation and credibility to encourage all the parties to the conflict to develop confidence building measures. We recall that in the autumn session of Dubrovnik in 2011 there was a proposal of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs addressed to the Parliamentarians of Armenia and Azerbaijan to work together to consolidate ceasefire, particularly withdraw snipers.

At the end, I would like to stress that Armenia will continue to contribute to the objectives and activities of the Parliamentary Assembly which inter alia include raising democratic profile of our region.

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE MINSK GROUP CO-CHAIRMEN AND THE PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE OSCE CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, November 14, 2013

We would like to warmly welcome the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group Ambassadors Igor Popov, Jacques Faure and James Warlick and the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk to the Permanent Council and thank them for their comprehensive reports. As this is the first appearance of Ambassador James Warlick in the Permanent Council, we would like to extend our special welcome to him.

We would like to express our appreciation of the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chair countries – Russian Federation, France and the United States to advance the peaceful resolution of Nagorno Karabakh conflict that was manifested once again in their joint statement of Enniskillen on 18 June.

We would like to believe, that the upcoming summit of the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan will pave a way for negotiations process towards the peaceful resolution of the conflict.

In this regard I would like to recall Joint Declaration adopted by the Presidents of Armenia, Russian Federation and Azerbaijan on January 23, last year in Sochi, where parties agreed to accelerate the adoption of the Basic Principles. I would like to underline, that as it was stressed by the Presidents of three co-chairs countries in Enniskillen, elements of the Basic Principles should be seen as an integrated whole, as any attempt to select some elements over others would make it impossible to achieve a balanced solution.

I would also like to make reference to reached agreement, reflected in the joint statements of the Russian, Armenian and Azerbaijani Presidents in Sochi, in March 2011 and January 2012 on the creation of mechanism on investigation of incidents along the cease-fire line. Its practical implementation could contribute to the consolidation of cease-fire, prevent

deplorable incidents and cease-fire violations and create favourable conditions in the negotiation process.

Armenia will continue its efforts towards the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict exclusively through peaceful means and on the basis of the purposes, principles and norms reflected in the UN Charter and the provisions of L'Aquila, Muskoka, Deauville, Los Cabos and Enniskillen statements of the three Co-Chair countries' Presidents, as well as statements on Nagorno-Karabakh peaceful settlement, adopted in the framework of the OSCE Ministerial Councils in Helsinki, Athens, Almaty, Vilnius, Dublin.

While Armenia values the three Co-Chairs' efforts for the continuation of the negotiating process and preservation of peace, unfortunately we witness continuous Azerbaijani campaign against the Minsk Group Co-Chairs which have the mandate of OSCE as the only negotiating format for the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Even here in Vienna, there are attempts to denigrate Co-Chairs' efforts to find a negotiated solution.

In spite of the efforts of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office and his team to not allow the escalation of the situation on the ground, the Azerbaijani side makes continuous attempts to weaken his Office.

We reaffirm our support to the Minsk Group Co-Chairmen, Ambassadors Igor Popov, Jacques Faure, and James Warlick and the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESSES BY THE
SECRETARY GENERAL OF COOPERATION COUNCIL OF
TURKIC SPEAKING STATES AND THE SECRETARY GENERAL
OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF TURKIC SPEAKING
COUNTRIES**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, December 19, 2013

We took note of the statements of Ambassador Halil Akinci and Mr. Jandos Asanov.

During the last three years after the Ministerial meetings my delegation has been observing practices of inviting guest speakers to the Permanent Council based not on the merits of their possible contribution to the work of our organization but as a result of non-transparent deals.

Today we are having exactly this case when the views on security and cooperation in Europe by the invited entities have no added value for this organization and stand in blatant contradiction with the concept of comprehensive, cooperative and indivisible security of the OSCE.

On numerous occasions my delegation made strong reservation on deplorable practice of openly siding with those parties to the conflict which are perceived to have similar origin.

The Gabala Declaration adopted by the leaders of the member countries of above entities in August of this year did not become an exception and brought even stronger language of kinship solidarity against two OSCE participating states.

Armenia's position of rejecting kinship security is not exclusively formed by historic past when the genocide of an entire nation was justified by inhuman ideology but it is also shaped by today's realities including twenty years joint land blockade imposed on Armenia by two members of these entities on the grounds of kinship solidarity.

We are strongly disappointed by the appearance of these two entities as guests in Kyiv Ministerial Council despite the fact that they were not included in the list of invitees of the relevant decision of the Permanent Council. We would like to seek clarification of the Ukrainian Chairmanship with regard this violation of the OSCE Rules of Procedure. The Armenian

Delegation regrets that the Ukrainian Chairmanship departs from already established practices, particularly those of two previous Chairmanships and thus let these two entities openly disregard OSCE regulations.

Here I would like to refer to the distribution of materials and documents by these two entities at the Ministerial Council. It should be mentioned that only after the protests of the delegation of Armenia the distribution of documents was stopped. In case of future discussions on the possible participation of the above-mentioned entities in the Ministerial Council Meetings the Delegation of Armenia will take into account their misconduct and defiance of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF H.E.
DIDIER BURKHALTER, OSCE CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE,
PRESIDENT OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION AND HEAD OF
THE SWISS FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, January 16, 2014

We would like to warmly welcome H.E. Didier Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation and Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, to the Permanent Council and thank him for the address.

Mr. President, my delegation has already had the opportunity to present its views on the priorities of the 2014 Swiss Chairmanship during your first appearance at the Permanent Council last year. Therefore, we will endeavour to make some emphasis on certain points which were outlined in the framework of your thoughtful address.

Indeed, the ideas underpinning our organization have history marked by painful lessons and important changes. The First World War inflicted heavy losses on Europe and 9 million military casualties do not stand alone among silent reminders of great European tragedy. It also had tragic bearing on peoples that were not directly involved in. The first modern genocide perpetrated under the cover of the First World War, which claimed one and a half million lives of the Armenian people in the Ottoman Empire, shows to what extent humanity can degrade in the absence of international system of security and protection of human and humanitarian rights.

Great tragedies are overcome by great hopes and changes. The end of the First World War brought such a hope to Europe by creating new international security system, empowering people to acquire and exercise their right of self-determination that gave birth to many states present here today at this already 57 seat table. The ideas of peace, security, equal rights and self-determination of people were later on fully reflected in the Helsinki Final Act.

We completely agree with your assessment that the OSCE constitutes a seminal multilateral format to discuss, build and shape peace. Peace comes first in our efforts to reach conflict resolution. It is important duty of

our organization led by the Chairmanship to convey a strong message of rejecting violence, de-escalating crisis situations, strengthening ceasefire regime and honouring previous commitments.

We are encouraged by the Chairmanship's stance to promote confidence building measures in the South Caucasus particularly with regard to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The willingness of the sides to conflict to engage in confidence building is a clear indication of their intention to find peaceful solutions. In our view, confidence building measures aiming at creating better atmosphere with regard to Nagorno-Karabakh conflict can be focus oriented and effective once they include authorities, people and civil society of Nagorno-Karabakh.

We welcome the intention of the Chairman-in-Office to support Minsk group Co-Chairs' efforts through his Personal Representative, Ambassador Kasprzyk. And we hope that the importance attached to his mandate by the Chairmanship will be fully reflected in the 2014 Unified Budget.

Switzerland has accumulated valuable expertise and knowledge in mediation activities serving the cause of peace and reconciliation. Some of them involved certain OSCE participating states. Therefore, we understand that the Swiss Chairmanship pays particular attention to strengthening of the mediation capacities of this organization. We view the readiness of the Swiss Chairmanship to bring issues related to the conflict cycle and protracted conflicts into agenda of Helsinki+40 process in line with its vocation of being impartial bridge builder which, as the distinguished Chairman-in-Office stressed, is an intrinsic part of Swiss foreign policy. In this respect we would like to highlight two points.

First, strengthening of mediation capacities should not produce additional mandates entitled by same tasks and, therefore, tempt some parties to the conflict to do mediation shopping. The Astana Commemorative declaration clearly outlined the role of the agreed formats in conflict resolution and my delegation will be guided by such approach in the process of Helsinki +40 as well.

Second, when it comes to thematic approach of strengthening capacities of the organization in conflict cycle, our point of reference is Vilnius decision on conflict cycle along with Astana declaration. The work

of informal working group on conflict cycle which already became important and inclusive platform of dialogue among OSCE Secretariat and participating states should not be duplicated. In this sense, my delegation has certain reservations with regard to some approaches highlighted in the roadmap of Helsinki+40 process circulated last December.

Let me turn now from appropriate peace-making to inappropriate peacemakers.

In our view peacemakers or mediators are those who are in peace and reconciliation with everyone and particularly with their neighbours. Here, I am not referring to personalities but participating states, since the OSCE first and foremost is an intergovernmental organization and not a community service to volunteer. Those who impose universal coercive measures, who openly advocate kinship security, who need mediators themselves to establish relations with other people and participating states cannot be helpful in strengthening the mediation capacities of this organization.

We hope that Switzerland who pledged to conduct its Chairmanship in non-biased, transparent and cooperative manner will understand our concerns.

Mr. President, we agree with the assumption that the sovereign equality and decision making by consensus are two valuable principles of the OSCE which can somehow hamper the organization unless participating states apply a degree of pragmatism. Since the Chairmanship is the first among equals here, we will expect this degree of pragmatism in overcoming difficulties and leading all of us to common success.

In conclusion, we would like to thank the outgoing Ukrainian Chairmanship, Ambassador Ihor Prokopchuk and wish all success to You, Mr. President, Ambassador Thomas Greminger and Your able and competent team.

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF PETER MAURER, PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, January 30, 2014

We would like to warmly welcome Mr. Peter Maurer, President of International Committee of the Red Cross and express our gratitude for the encouraging and thought-provoking address.

First of all, we would like to extend our sincere congratulations on the 150th Anniversary of the International Committee of the Red Cross. This significant and turbulent period of the history of humanity was marked not only with the great tragedies of the two World Wars, genocides and widespread violence but also with the great hope, which Jean-Henri Dunant and his followers gave to the humankind by establishing the Red Cross Movement.

The ICRC with its principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence, solely humanitarian mandate and decades of hard work has proven to be a value, and it is our common responsibility to protect and support it.

The Government of Armenia stresses utmost importance to cooperation with the ICRC, which goes back to 1992. We would like to commend the efforts of the ICRC in addressing the humanitarian consequences of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, including the problem of missing persons and organization of the return of prisoners of war.

We fully share your assessment that the resolution of the remaining cases of missing persons is vital for reconciliation and stability in the region. Among the recent steps of the Government of Armenia in this vein is drafting of the Law “On Missing Persons”, which is currently passing intrastate procedures. The Armenian side has welcomed the recent initiative of the ICRC to create a database of the DNA of families of missing persons, aimed to facilitate the process of their searching. Needless to say, that the representatives of the ICRC enjoy free access to all the places of detention in the territory of Armenia and we expect this to happen elsewhere in the OCSE particularly in our immediate vicinity. We would

like to underline also the importance of full, genuine and unrestricted cooperation between the offices of the ICRC in the region on this humanitarian matter.

We highly appreciate your continuous and effective cooperation with the Nagorno Karabakh authorities and the Office of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. Regular visits of the representatives of the Red Cross to the Line of Control and Armenian-Azerbaijani state border serve as a restraining factor against escalation.

We agree with You that the ICRC has high potential for building trust and confidence in the region. We are pleased to note that Armenia is continuously and strongly advocating the types of activities in this realm to which You referred in Your address. Strengthening the ceasefire regime and addressing the local needs of border communities through full compliance with the principles and norms of the international humanitarian law will pave the way for progress in the political process as much as violations of humanitarian law through degrading treatment of the prisoners of war or civilians held in captivity can further deepen mistrust among parties to the conflict. Unfortunately, the latter cases have a tendency to become systematic in our region. It is our firm belief that no political calculations and objectives can justify targeting or mistreating civilian population.

Under these circumstances we see the role of ICRC in providing information and bringing national missions, Red Cross and Red Crescent societies together in helping all victims of the conflict regardless of their origin. To achieve these goals the ICRC should continue to remain depoliticized and impartial through human application of victim-oriented approach. In putting forward the principle of human equality ICRC and OSCE can work together.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you, Mr. Maurer, all success in Your endeavours and offer full support and cooperation of Armenia to the noble mission of the International Committee of Red Cross.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF H.E.
SEBASTIAN KURZ, AUSTRIAN FEDERAL MINISTER FOR
EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, January 30, 2014

We would like to warmly welcome H.E. Sebastian Kurz and express our gratitude for his interesting and thought-provoking address. We would like also to take this opportunity and congratulate Minister Kurz on his appointment to the post of the Austrian Federal Minister for European and International Affairs and on assuming the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

The Delegation of Armenia expresses its profound gratitude to the Government of Austria for the excellent hospitality and creation of all necessary conditions for our work.

We are pleased to note that Armenia and Austria have common priorities in the Council of Europe and wish to commend the Austrian Chairmanship for ensuring continuity and consistency of activities of the Organization. Armenia, as an active member of the Council of Europe, will render its full support to Austria in promoting the objectives, values and principles of the Council of Europe and implementation of its priorities.

We would like to stress the need for further promotion of targeted and result oriented cooperation between the Council of Europe and the OSCE. These two organizations have significant potential, which has not been fully utilized. In our view their wide toolbox could be implied in combined way particularly in the third dimension of the OSCE through further promotion of human rights particularly addressing hate crimes in our common region. The strong position of Council of Europe on deplorable cases of hate crime glorification is very important for the OSCE as well.

We welcome the joint steps undertaken so far by the Austrian Chairmanship of the Committee of Minister of the Council of Europe and the Swiss Chairmanship of the OSCE to further promote the cooperation between the two Organizations in the areas of common interest. I would like to welcome the initiative to hold the upcoming joint Conference “Not for Sale – Joining Forces against Trafficking in Human Beings”, which we

view as an important step to coordinate activities and develop synergy in the context of combating trafficking.

Another important area of cooperation between the two organizations is the election related activities, including election observation. Our standard setting organizations should exclude setbacks in this field and carefully examine those cases when we failed to speak in one voice.

Armenia and Austria share excellent and active bilateral relations. Recently President Fisher paid a visit to Armenia, and this year we will more deepen our cooperation during the official visit of the President of Armenia to Austria.

In conclusion, we would like to thank once again You, Mr. Minister for the address and wish You all success in Your responsible mission.

**STATEMENT ON THE CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS BY THE
AZERBAIJANI ARMED FORCES**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, February 6, 2014

We would like to invite the attention of the Permanent Council to the recent escalation of the situation on the Line of Contact between Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan as a result of attempted infiltrations and subversive actions of the Azerbaijani armed forces into the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. Since January 20 such provocations of Azerbaijani Armed Forces led to two casualties in the Defence Army of Nagorno-Karabakh. There were reports of casualties from the Azerbaijani Armed Forces as well.

We are deeply concerned in regard of these incidents, and feel sorrow for the lost lives of the young soldiers. We would like to recall the recent press-release of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs, who “expressed their deep concern over continued violence in the region, and stressed that recent incidents undermine negotiations and diminish the prospects for peace.” The Armenian side fully shares the above assessment.

We also share the importance of complying with 1994 ceasefire and 1995 ceasefire strengthening agreements concluded on trilateral basis, as well as implementing the proposals of the withdrawal of snipers and creating investigative mechanism into ceasefire violations.

The clear and unequivocal commitment to the ceasefire and confidence building by the parties concerned will definitely serve as a crucial factor for creating conducive environment for the peace process as much as every new death of a soldier or a civilian on the Line of Contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan and on the borders between Armenia and Azerbaijan will create new difficulties towards that end.

In response to the distinguished Ambassador of Azerbaijan I would like to add, that regrettably, the military provocations of Azerbaijan are combined by aggressive political provocations, which, with all imagination, is hard to perceive as contributing to the peace process. I would like to quote the statement of the President of Azerbaijan, made on 20th of January, four days before the meeting between the Ministers of Foreign

Affairs of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Paris, and available on official website: "... Our historic lands are not limited by Nagorno Karabakh and adjacent territories. Today's Armenia is in reality the historic land of Azerbaijan."

The officials of the ruling party of Azerbaijan are echoing their president. One of the leaders of "Yeni Azerbaijan" Party Siyavush Novruzov has stated "The Azerbaijani Army is able to put Armenia to its place and reach Yerevan in a few days".

We recall that this kind of statements from highest authorities of Azerbaijan had been aired before Azerbaijan unleashed an aggressive war against Nagorno-Karabakh in the beginning of 90s. The irresponsible marriage of war mongering and wishful thinking cannot contribute towards peace and security in our region.

In response to the statement of Ambassador of France, we hope that the Azerbaijani side will keep its promise for ceasefire during the period of Olympic Games in Sochi.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF H.E.
ANTONIO GUTERRES, UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR
REFUGEES**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, February 20, 2014

We would like also to join the previous speakers in warmly welcoming Mr. Antonio Guterres, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and thank him for his interesting and informative address.

The issues of refugees continue to be high on the agenda of my Government. Armenia is committed to its relevant international commitments in the sphere of refugees.

We highly appreciate the high level of cooperation between the Government of Armenia and the UNHCR in addressing the issues of displacement in Armenia. Since 1988, when the first waves of refugees from Azerbaijan fled to Armenia, we implemented a number of programs aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of hundreds of thousands of refugees, providing housing and guarantying their human rights and fundamental freedoms. We particularly value the humanitarian mission of the UNHCR in this regard. In close cooperation with your esteemed Office we were able to successfully implement integration programs and diffuse the inherent tensions.

However, the housing of more than one thousand families experiencing two decades years of the protracted displacement remains on the agenda of the Government. We are grateful to the UNHCR and personally to you for assisting the Armenian Government in creating new opportunities here.

Nowadays, we face influx of more than 10 000 Syrian Armenians. The Government of Armenia has undertaken measures to facilitate their integration into our society and address their economic and social problems. We would welcome the support of the UNHCR in addressing the humanitarian needs of Syrian Armenians.

As in all other cases with displaced population, their human rights come first for the Armenian Government in seeking durable solutions.

We took note of development of the Protection Checklist for Internally Displaced Persons through joint cooperation between UNHCR, OSCE and the International Committee of Red Cross. As it was stipulated this cooperation is based on the Vilnius decision on conflict cycle which concentrates primarily on prevention of displacement. We understand that the elaborated checklist aims at ensuring availability of certain protection measures on the ground. In this sense we value the unimpeded access of the UNHCR to elsewhere in the OSCE region, including to the conflict zones.

In this regard we consider the cooperation between the OSCE and the UNHCR in ensuring humanitarian access very important one. Without fulfilling this basic requirement of protection, we will not be able to conduct inclusive dialogue on further enhancing the role of the OSCE in the issues of displacement.

Regrettably, the Azerbaijani authorities deny the humanitarian access of the UNHCR to the territory of Nagorno Karabakh and prevent any international assistance to the Armenian displaced population. These discriminatory practices of inflicting collective punishment on the population with a sheer political pretext shrank the humanitarian space and violate the OSCE commitments.

Speaking on durable solution for one group of displaced population and denying basic humanitarian needs of protection to another group goes against the very principles of reciprocity, human equality and fairness, concepts we need so much for constructive conflict resolution.

In conclusion, I would like to wish all success to Mr. Guterres in his important mission.

STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION AROUND KESSAB, SYRIA

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, March 27, 2014

The Armenian delegation expresses its grave concern over the last escalation of the situation in north-western Syria, around the ancient Armenian-populated town of Kessab. In the last days Kessab was attacked from the territory of Turkey by Al-Qaeda affiliated terrorist groups. The brutal cross-border attacks, which also targeted the civilian population, resulted in evacuation of local Armenian population to safer areas. The extremist groups occupied the town and desecrated Kessab's Armenian Apostolic and Armenian Catholic three churches.

We call on Turkey to take immediate and effective measures to prevent use of its territory by the terrorist groups to conduct attacks on Kessab.

The Permanent Delegation of Armenia has on many occasions raised the issue of the urgent need for the protection of religious minorities in the OSCE neighbourhood. The Christian minorities in Syria, including the Armenian community, have found themselves in extremely vulnerable situation and become the primary targets for the attacks in Syria.

We didn't have any intention to politicize the issue. The statement of the Delegation of Armenia is based on the real and proved facts. The geography of the town and its surroundings offers no other option of penetration of terrorists. The Turkish border troops allowed them to enter into the Syrian territory, and as a result we have sufferings of the Armenian population of Kessab.

We acknowledge the role of Turkey in providing humanitarian assistance to the Syrian refugees, but in this particular case it is difficult to imagine how the people could find a shelter in the territory, from where they were attacked.

We would like to reiterate once again our position. The Delegation of Armenia calls on the Turkish side to take measures to prevent the use of its territory by the terrorist groups to conduct attacks on Kessab.

**STATEMENTS ON THE ARREST OF JOURNALIST RAUF
MIRKADIROV AND HARASSMENT OF LEYLA YUNUS**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, May 8, 2014

We would like to share the concern of the EU delegation on further deterioration of human rights situation in Azerbaijan.

The Delegation of Armenia would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council that Azerbaijani journalist Rauf Mirkadirov and Director of the Institute of Peace and Democracy Leyla Yunus were participating in public diplomacy joint projects with the Armenian non-governmental organizations aimed at strengthening trust and confidence between the Armenian and Azerbaijani peoples. They had jointly created an Armenian-Azerbaijani site, which serves as a platform for dialogue between the societies.

We took note that the Chief of local Police overtly accepted the fact of intimidation and ill treatment of Leyla Yunus and justified it by attributing to her an Armenian origin.

In undertaking these actions, Azerbaijan clearly violates number of the OSCE commitments related to freedom of expression and tolerance and non-discrimination.

Moreover, Azerbaijan does not honour its commitments on the necessity of humanitarian contacts between Armenians and Azerbaijanis reached at the highest political level.

We call on Azerbaijan to stop arresting and intimidating representatives of its civil society who dare to raise their voices to advocate peace, mutual understanding and reconciliation. Reconciliation and peace are not only Armenian but universal values, and those Azerbaijanis who share these values are certainly not Armenian spies but responsible representatives of their own society.

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, May 15, 2014

We shared our views and concerns on further deterioration of human rights situation in Azerbaijan at the previous meeting of the Permanent

Council and we took note that the Azerbaijani Delegation failed to address our concerns.

We would like to recall that according to the Joint Declaration adopted on January 23, 2012 in Sochi “the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan reaffirmed that in the context of the Nagorno Karabakh settlement, the development of humanitarian contacts between the parties is part of the confidence building measures. With this regard, the Presidents expressed readiness to encourage the establishment of a subsequent dialogue between the representatives of intelligentsia, scientific and social circles”. In other words, Azerbaijan not only is not honoring its commitments but also prevents Track II initiatives on dialogue between civil societies of the parties to the conflict.

Apparently, dehumanization of Armenians and the Azerbaijani civil society members go hand in hand and take the deplorable form of racism and political repression.

Any attempt to justify repression against journalists and generally representatives of civil society by misusing Nagorno-Karabakh issue diminishes possibility of both conflict resolution and democratization.

We would like to reiterate our call on Azerbaijan to stop arresting and intimidating representatives of its civil society who dare to raise their voices to advocate peace, mutual understanding and reconciliation.

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, August 14, 2014

The Delegation of Armenia would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the further deterioration of human rights situation in Azerbaijan.

We are very concerned on the arrest and detention of Mrs. Leyla Yunus, Head of the Institute of Peace and Democracy in Azerbaijan and her husband Mr. Arif Yunus. Mrs. Yunus was participating in public diplomacy joint projects with the Armenian non-governmental organizations aimed at strengthening trust and confidence between the Armenian and Azerbaijani peoples and promoting dialogue between the societies.

The Delegation of Armenia shared its concerns on the arrest of journalist Rauf Mirkadirov and harassment of Leyla Yunus at the previous meetings of the Permanent Council and we took note that the Azerbaijani Delegation failed to address our concerns. On the contrary, the Azerbaijani side followed its usual practice of labelling everybody, who dares to disagree with its official policy as spy.

These developments clearly demonstrate how harsh and hostile are the conditions in which the Azerbaijani civil society strives to build bridges of confidence, trust and reconciliation with its Armenian neighbours.

Justification of repressions against representatives of civil society by misusing Nagorno-Karabakh issue and charging them with high treason and espionage undermines the dialogue between our civil societies and diminishes possibility of both conflict resolution and democratization.

Apparently, dehumanization of Armenians and the Azerbaijani civil society members go hand in hand and take the deplorable form of racism, glorification of hate crime perpetrators and political repressions. The Government, which demonizes Leyla Yunus, Rauf Mirkadirov, Akram Aylisli and on the other hand glorifies Ramil Safarov has certainly taken the wrong path of distorting human and moral values on which any society should be based.

We would like to reiterate our call on Azerbaijan to comply with the OSCE principles and norms, to honour its commitments on the development of humanitarian contacts between the parties to the conflict and encouraging dialogue between their respective civil societies and to stop arrests and intimidation of representatives of its civil society who advocate peace, mutual understanding and reconciliation.

**STATEMENT ON THE 69th ANNIVERSARY OF THE
VICTORY IN THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, May 8, 2014

We would like to thank the Delegations for their statements on the 69th Anniversary of the Victory Day.

On this very occasion we would like to extend our congratulations to the OSCE delegations. This anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe is important for all OSCE participating States. The Victory Day is a good opportunity to pay tribute to all those who through their enormous sacrifices eventually won the peace and dignity for future generations. The Armenian people alongside with peoples of the Soviet Union and other allied nations made its contribution in the victory of humanity.

We also would like to recall the centennial of the First World War which we are marking this year. The duty of memory to all victims of two World Wars should bring us together in promoting peace, security, human rights and providing guarantees of non-reoccurrence of mass atrocities in Europe.

In reference to the statement of the Azerbaijani Delegation, we are pleased to inform the Permanent Council that May 9 is celebrated in Nagorno Karabakh also as the Day of Liberation of the historic Armenian city of Shushi and establishment of the Defence Army of Nagorno Karabakh, which resisted the Azerbaijani aggression and saved the people of Nagorno Karabakh from complete annihilation.

Our position on the United Nations Security Council Resolutions in regard to the conflict is well known. Therefore, we would only like to stress that those Resolutions do not contain any single word about the so called «occupation of Azerbaijani territories by Armenia». We regret, that the Azerbaijani Delegation is still stuck in the early 1990s and completely ignores the ceasefire and subsequent 20 years of negotiations on the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

**STATEMENT ON THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1994
CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, May 15, 2014

On the occasion of the Twentieth Anniversary of the 1994 Ceasefire Agreement My Delegation would like to state the following.

The Ceasefire Agreement between Armenia, Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan marked the end of the military phase of the conflict. Its role was indispensable in establishing the necessary conditions on the ground for the launch of negotiation process for the political settlement of the conflict. These 20 years of peace provided us with the opportunity to build trust and confidence, create conditions for reconciliation, thus paving the way for the resolution of the conflict.

The Ceasefire Agreement was a product of long and difficult negotiations and was preceded by series of talks between parties concerned: first and foremost meetings between Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijani Republic and the Foreign Minister of Nagorno Karabakh on September 12-13, 1993 in Moscow, where a Joint Communique was adopted and followed by meeting of Vice Prime Ministers of Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan on the Line of Contact on September 25, 1993, as well as a number of other meetings in Moscow in late 1993 and early 1994. The culmination of these rounds of talks was the signing of the Bishkek Protocol between Speakers of Parliaments of Armenia, Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan and the Agreement on Ceasefire, reached on May 12, 1994 and signed by the Ministers of Defence of Armenia and Azerbaijan and the Commander of the Nagorno Karabakh Armed Forces.

We would like to refer to the recent statement of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, who stressed, that like the Minsk Group Co-Chair states, “we have many times urged to respect ceasefire agreement reached in May 1994. It is vital to exclude the use of force, thereby creating utmost favourable conditions for the success of the negotiation process. Sniper shootings along the Line of Contact, the human losses are unacceptable. Every new casualty deepens the gap of mistrust and

misunderstanding between our societies and further protracts political settlement of the conflict. The OSCE monitors were not able to have neither the mandate nor the resources to identify those responsible, to reduce the reported thousands of ceasefire violations every year”.

Unfortunately, Azerbaijan has rejected and continues rejecting numerous proposals made by Co-Chair countries to consolidate ceasefire, withdraw snipers from the Line of Contact, and create a mechanism of investigation of incidents and ceasefire violations.

The Azerbaijani side does not respect even its own commitments on maintaining and strengthening the ceasefire - not only according to the provisions of the Ceasefire Agreement, reached between Azerbaijan, Karabakh and Armenia on May 12, 1994, but also the Ceasefire Consolidation Agreement, reached in the same three-party format on February 4, 1995.

We resolutely agree that peoples should be prepared for peace, not war. Unfortunately, until now instead of preparing its people for peace the Azerbaijani leadership has been doing just the reverse. In spite of the several appeals of the international community to refrain from provocative rhetoric and actions, Azerbaijan continues its bellicose statements, glorification of murderers and persecution of peace advocates, the propaganda of xenophobia, intolerance and hatred, which leads to raising tension and escalation of the situation in the region.

Armenia on numerous occasions has commended and stressed the importance of the consistent efforts of the heads of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries – Russia, USA and France, in supporting the sides to the conflict to reach exclusively peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.

Like the Co-Chairs, we continue to believe that the elements outlined in the statements of the heads of the Co-Chair countries in L'Aquila, Muskoka, Deauville, Los Cabos and Enniskillen over the last years can be the foundation of reaching a lasting peaceful settlement of the conflict. We share the Co-Chairs' opinion, expressed many times, that those elements must be seen as an integrated whole and the attempts to give priority to some elements will make it impossible to reach the settlement.

Armenia has on several occasions reiterated and once again re-affirms its commitment to the principles of international law, particularly non-use of force or the threat of force, equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and territorial integrity. We have several times emphasized that without the full-fledged involvement of Nagorno-Karabakh in the negotiation process, it will be impossible to achieve the resolution of the conflict.

Together with the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs Armenia will consistently continue to exert joint efforts towards exclusively peaceful settlement of the conflict between Azerbaijan and Karabakh.

REMARKS AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE VIENNA ARMENIA CENTRE

Vienna, Embassy of the Republic of Armenia, June 11, 2014

On behalf of the Embassy and the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Armenia in Vienna, I would like to extend my warm welcome to the President of the Republic of Armenia, H.E. Serzh Sargsyan, and the members of his delegation.

Having been invited by H.E. Heinz Fisher, the President of Austria, the President of Armenia, Serzh Sargsyan is paying an official visit to Vienna. This visit is the outcome of a successful bilateral dialogue, which had started in 2012, with the official visit of the President Heinz Fisher to Armenia and was further enhanced through the bilateral talks, which took place during the working visit of the President Serzh Sargsyan to Vienna in November 2013.

Today, the President Serzh Sargsyan had successful meetings with the President of the Republic of Austria, H.E. Heinz Fischer, with the President of the National Council, H.E. Barbara Prammer, and with the Mayor of Vienna, H.E. Mr. Michael Häupl. Several agreements related to the bilateral cooperation in different fields have been concluded.

Tomorrow, the President Serzh Sargsyan will meet the Chancellor of Austria, H.E. Werner Faymann, the Archbishop of Vienna, His Eminence Cardinal Schönborn, the Executive Director of the UNODC, H.E. Yuri Fedotov, Director General of UNIDO, H.E. Li Yong, Director General of the IAEA, H.E. Yukiya Amano and the Executive Secretary of the CTBTO, H.E. Lassina Zerbo. Further on, on the course of his official visit, the President of Armenia, Serzh Sargsyan and the President of Austria, H.E. Heinz Fischer, will attend the opening ceremony of the Armenian-Austrian Business Forum.

In expressing gratitude of the Armenian people, the President of Armenia will lay a wreath at the statue of the writer, Franz Werfel, the author of the “40 Days of Musa Dagh”. The President of the Republic of Armenia will also visit the Mekhitarist Congregation, as well as the

Armenian Apostolic Holy Hripsime Church and the center of the Armenian Community.

Today, we are honored by the attendance of the President Sargsyan, to inaugurate the opening of the Vienna “Armenia” multifunctional Center, which is the first Armenian institution of this kind abroad. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to the President of Armenia, Serzh Sargsyan, for his decision to establish this center. I am proud to state that we have been able to materialize the decision of the President through the joint efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, the Central Bank of Armenia and the Embassy of Armenia in one year. My special thanks go to our compatriot, the member of the Armenian community of Austria, Mr. Armen Karamanlian who, was in charge of planning and constructing.

Number of tasks lie ahead of the activities of this Center: It is designed to promote the priorities of Armenia’s foreign policy in Europe, to develop and enhance the Austrian-Armenian bilateral relations, to further promote multilateral cooperation within the UN and the OSCE, as well as to coordinate the interaction with the Armenian community of Austria.

Now, let me invite Father Tiran Archimandrite Petrosyan, Pontific Legate for Central Europe and Scandinavia and Father Poghos Kodjanian, the Head of the Mkhitarist Congregation, to perform the blessing ceremony. Afterwards, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, Edward Nalbandian, and the Head of the Central Bank Arthur Javadyan will inaugurate the opening of the Center by ribbon cutting.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF
AMBASSADOR ANDREY SOROKIN, HEAD OF THE OSCE
OFFICE IN YEREVAN**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, June 19, 2014

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

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

The current report does not merely cover the implementation of the Armenia's OSCE commitments and the contribution of the Yerevan Office to that end. It entails a comprehensive assessment of Armenia's democratic development throughout last year and its consideration here in the Permanent Council tends to be transformed into a peer review of one participating state. On various occasions there were certain voices on necessity of voluntary peer review in the OSCE and yet only those countries undergo similar procedure who host full-fledged OSCE offices. It should be mentioned that the Yerevan Office remains the only fully fledged OSCE field mission in the South Caucasus. Without thoroughly dismissing merits of assessing country performance in general, we will encourage participating states to use any occasion for voluntary peer review on the implementation of their OSCE commitments as well.

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 and the solidarity of my Government, all political forces and the Armenian society

on the need to ensure further irreversible 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: The key programs of the OSCE Office in this dimension continue to focus on further strengthening trust and confidence between the society and the Police through enhancing the new model of community policing to the regions of Armenia and supporting modernization of Police educational institutions. The continuity and sustainability of our cooperation in the field of police reform and democratic policing is the key prerequisite of success of this program. Another important program in the first dimension continues to be strengthening 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, training of international humanitarian law and supporting the comprehensive security sector reform. We would like to commend the ability of the Office to coordinate the contribution of other international stakeholders in this area, namely the Geneva Center for Democratic Control of Armed Forces and the Government of Austria and creating synergy in their efforts.

We are proud to mention that these programs have already resulted in decrease of number of human rights violations in our Armed Forces. Therefore, they could serve as best practices for countries of our region and wider OSCE Area.

Economic and Environmental Dimension: In this dimension the flagship program, as Ambassador Sorokin eloquently mentioned continues to be the regulatory framework reform which already has positive impact on our GDP rate.

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 programs 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. While commenting the Office's activity in the third dimension we should also highlight the interaction and partnership with the OSCE institutions, in particular with the Representative on freedom of the Media.

In the end, 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.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF NAVI
PILLAY, UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, July 3, 2014

We would like to warmly welcome the distinguished UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Ms. Navi Pillay and thank her for the comprehensive presentation.

At the outset we would like to stress the high level of cooperation between the Government of Armenia and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, which we enjoyed during the whole period of able leadership of Ms. Pillay. We particularly appreciate personal engagement and dedication of Ms. Pillay in addressing the issues of human rights and fundamental freedoms, raised by our Delegations in New York and Geneva. We value UN Special Procedures and Universal Periodic Review Process of the Human Rights Council, which are important mechanisms for assessment of implementation of commitments by the UN member states. In the same vein we also acknowledge the high relevance of annual reports of Your esteemed Office. We would like to mention two important developments outlined in the last report of the OHCHR, namely the creation of a database on practical means to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and adoption by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination a general recommendation on combating racist hate speech. It is an important early warning signal, indicating that hate speech, if not prevented or halted, might lead to genocide. We also welcome attention of Ms. Pillay to the hate crimes in the OSCE area, which was manifested in the statements of the OHCHR. Genocide prevention and protection of ethnic and religious communities are among key priorities of my country and its interaction with the OHCHR. We appreciate participation and contribution of Ms. Pillay in the High-level Panel discussion dedicated to the 65th Anniversary of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide within the frames of the 25th Meeting of the Human Rights Council.

We also highly value the role and involvement of the OHCHR in addressing the issue of protection of ethnic and religious communities in Syria, particularly the Christian communities suffering from the terrorist attacks. We are grateful to Ms. Pillay for her operative and positive response in regard to the terrorist attack against the town of Kessab and surrounding villages, which resulted in forced displacement of its Armenian population. We fully share the view of Ms. Pillay that human rights violations are among the root causes of every form of insecurity. We would like to add that upholding human rights is the key to the settlement of conflicts. We were pleased to hear about the effective interaction between the OHCHR and the ODIHR. My Delegation would support closer cooperation between the OSCE and the OHCHR in such important spheres as freedom of media, freedom of expression, strengthening civil society institutions, combating impunity and hate speech. We share Your concern on addressing the problem of forgotten rights-holders, including people living in disputed territories. Their rights and fundamental freedoms should be upheld regardless the status of the territories they live in. In this regard we deem important ensuring unrestricted humanitarian access of the international community, in particular UN special procedures and the UNHCR to such territories. We encourage further cooperation also at the level of field presences. The latter are important assets, enabling us to reach practical results on the ground, supported by the host country authorities. In conclusion, we would like once again to extend our sincere gratitude for the fruitful cooperation with Ms. Pillay during her term and wish her all success in future endeavours.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF
AMBASSADOR ALEXIS CHAHTAHTINSKY, OSCE PROJECT
CO-ODINATOR IN BAKU**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, July 17, 2014

We would like to welcome Ambassador Alexis Chahtahtinsky and thank him for his report. We took note of the first period of activities of the Project Co-ordinator which as we understood mainly focused on the transformation of the Office itself.

My Delegation supports further engagement of the Office of Project Coordinator with the civil society and NGOs, which would help to better understand the needs of the host country in all three dimensions. Indeed, civil society can provide valuable contribution to the programmatic activities of the Office. This would certainly bring more regional coherence to the work of the OSCE.

We would like to reiterate our concerns regarding the inclusion of conflict related issues such as displaced population in the programme outline and programmatic activities of the Project Co-ordinator. We would encourage the Project Co-ordinator not to duplicate existing relevant OSCE mandates in this regard.

We took note of the four programmes of the Office approved by the Government of Azerbaijan. In that regard, we would like to inquire Ambassador Chahtahtinsky, how does he intend to address in his programmatic activities the recommendations of the OSCE institutions such as ODIHR and the RFoM, which are matter of regular discussions in the Permanent Council. In particular, we mean the recommendations in the field of freedom of expression, freedom of media, including protection of journalists, freedom of assembly and right to fair trial.

The report stipulates the existence of “historic traditions” of tolerance and non-discrimination in Azerbaijan which should be further developed through the assistance of the Office setting an objective of strengthening security and stability in the region as well. Leaving history and traditions to be discussed between the Office and the Government of Azerbaijan, we would like to encourage the Office to raise the issues of hate crime and its

glorification, racist public discourse, discriminatory practices of denying entrance to the country persons for their ethnic and national origin, an issue which was reflected in the ODIHR 2014 baseline study on cross border mobility in the OSCE region. We agree that addressing these problems of host country can contribute to the security and stability in the South Caucasus.

Lastly, Azerbaijan remains one of the few countries in the OSCE imposing local income tax which results in subsequent compensation paid by all participating states. We are concerned that this compensation is significantly higher than Azerbaijan's financial contribution to the organization as participating state. We expressed hope that during the negotiations of new mandate this issue would be addressed. In this regard, we would like to request information on the current state of play on this particular issue.

In conclusion, we would like to once again extend to Ambassador Chahtahtinsky our best wishes for all success in his future endeavours.

All our questions and concerns were addressed to the Project Coordinator and I am sure that Ambassador Chahtahtinsky is very able and experienced diplomat to address them.

We regret that the Azerbaijani Ambassador used this opportunity to repeat once again Azerbaijani baseless allegations against Armenia. We would recommend the Azerbaijani side to focus more on the process of negotiations.

**STATEMENT ON THE RECENT ESCALATION OF THE
SITUATION ALONG THE LINE OF CONTACT BETWEEN
NAGORNO KARABAKH AND AZERBAIJAN AND THE
ARMENIAN-AZERBAIJANI STATE BORDER**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, August 14, 2014

We would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the recent escalation of the situation on the Line of Contact between Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan and the Armenian-Azerbaijani state border.

In this regard the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia has stated the following:

We strongly condemn the provocative actions of recent days on the Line of Contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan and on the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which resulted in the loss of many lives and sharply raised the tension. We express our deepest condolences to the families and relatives of the victims of the Azerbaijani attacks.

Baku continues to grossly violate the ceasefire agreements from May, 1994 and February, 1995, ignore the calls of the Heads of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries to refrain from provocative actions and from the escalation of the situation, and the appeals of the international community that through the use of force the conflict cannot be resolved, and that only through negotiations stability and peace can be achieved. The recurrent adventurism of Baku pursues an aim to undermine the negotiation process.

Being the initiator and instigator of the provocations, Azerbaijan is trying to put its responsibility on the other sides. However, it is obvious that by rejecting the proposals of the international community on the establishment of a mechanism of investigation of incidents, Azerbaijan is assuming the whole responsibility for the ceasefire violations.

It is high time for the international community to sober the Azerbaijani leadership which has lost the sense of reality and is going against the value-system of the international community.

Together with the Co-Chair countries Armenia will take the necessary steps for halting the provocative acts, for the stabilization of the situation, for continuation of the negotiation process aimed at the settlement of the conflict exclusively through peaceful means.

We are deeply concerned on these incidents, and sorrow the lives of the killed young soldiers. An alarming development is that the Azerbaijani military has started to use heavy weapons, in particular artillery and continues to target border villages and civilians. One of the such deplorable incidents was opening fire on the vehicle of the International Committee of Red Cross, while the ICRC representatives were on visit to the Armenian border village of Chinari to assist in safe harvesting.

Along with continuous provocations and subversive actions, Azerbaijani authorities on August 8 publicly humiliated, tortured and killed Karen Petrosyan, a civilian from the Armenian Chinari village, who got lost in the forest and found himself on the Azerbaijani territory.

We would like to reiterate that Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh have constantly underlined the importance of implementation of the Sochi Agreement of 2012 between the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan on creation of the investigative mechanism into ceasefire violations on the Line of Contact. We deem highly relevant also the proposal of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs on withdrawal of snipers.

The clear and unequivocal commitment to the ceasefire and confidence building by the parties concerned will definitely serve as a crucial factor for creating conducive environment for the peace process as much as every new death of a soldier or a civilian on the Line of Contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan and on the borders between Armenia and Azerbaijan will create new difficulties towards that end.

We do hope that after meeting of Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, initiated by the President of Russia in Sochi on 10th of August, Azerbaijan will give up its belligerent and nationalistic rhetoric, stop provocations and subversive actions and will put its efforts to work towards peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, August 28, 2014

We took note of the statement of the distinguished Azerbaijani Ambassador.

In our statement, delivered at the 1013th PC meeting, on August 14, we highlighted the real circumstances of the escalation of situation along

the Line of Contact between Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan and the Armenian-Azerbaijani state border. Therefore, we will not go into details again, but will rather make some additional remarks.

We resolutely believe that peoples should be prepared for peace, not war. Unfortunately, until now, instead of preparing its people for peace the Azerbaijani leadership has been doing just the reverse. In spite of the several appeals of the international community to refrain from provocative rhetoric and actions, Azerbaijan continues its bellicose statements, glorification of murderers and persecution of peace advocates, the propaganda of xenophobia, intolerance and hatred, which leads to raising tension and escalation of the situation in the region.

My Delegation has stated on a number of cases that by rejecting the proposals of the Armenian side and the Minsk Group Co-Chair countries on strengthening the ceasefire regime through implementation of confidence and security building measures, such as withdrawal of snipers and creation of an investigative mechanism into ceasefire violations, the Azerbaijani side assumes full responsibility for the human casualties along the Line of Contact and the state border.

To our deep regret, the leadership of Azerbaijan continues to instigate hatred towards Armenia and Armenians, thus encouraging new military provocations.

Recently, the leader of Azerbaijan in his attempt to justify the military provocations of Azerbaijan stated: "If the Armenian fascist state does not give up its dirty deeds, the very existence of the Armenian state can be called into question. Today we know too well that the Armenian state was founded on historically Azerbaijani lands. The Erivan khanate, Zangezur, Goycha are all our historical lands. We, the Azerbaijanis, must go back to this land, and we will do that!".

We regret that unacceptable war mongering and instigation of hatred against Armenia and Armenians through distorting history has become one of the distinctive features, characterizing the Azerbaijani leadership. The latter sends a clear encouraging message to its army to violate the ceasefire and kill Armenian military servicemen and civilians.

The last such case was capture and killing of Karen Petrosyan, a civilian from Chinari village, who was captured, publicly humiliated, tortured and killed in Azerbaijani detention. In the note of the Armenian Delegation, distributed on August 15, we brought to the attention of the OSCE participating States the data and evidence, including from the Azerbaijani witnesses, clearly showing that Karen Petrosyan was alone, unarmed and was not wearing any uniform. We would like to commend the Minsk Group Co-Chair countries for expressing their concern on the death of Karen Petrosyan and their call to investigate that case.

We regret, that despite the clear facts, the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry resorted to obvious lie in its attempt to conceal that shocking violation of the humanitarian law.

Armenia is committed to continue the negotiation process within the existing OSCE format, aimed at the settlement of the conflict, exclusively through peaceful means in the basis of the principles of international law.

**REMARKS AT THE EVENT DEDICATED TO THE 23RD
ANNIVERSARY OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA**

Vienna, Sans Souci Palace, September 19, 2014

I would like to thank our guests - Ambassadors and diplomats, heads and staff of the international organizations, representatives of the Austrian Government, members of Parliament, academicians, representatives of the Armenian community of Austria for being with us today to celebrate the 23rd Anniversary of the Republic of Armenia.

On the 21st of September 1991, the people of Armenia went to polls and made an almost unanimous decision to have an independent and democratic country thus materializing their century-long goals and dreams.

Substantial progress has been made in laying the foundations for an independent statehood, by overcoming the consequences of the earthquake, war and blockade. Although security-related issues have always been in the focus of our attention, we have constantly been searching for ways to boost our economy, and we have achieved certain results. Along this way, we have been carrying out reforms and providing sustainable development for stronger democracy, good governance, the rule of law, and progress in all other areas.

It took the toil, industry and perseverance of the people of Armenia, as well as the support and cooperation of the friendly countries, international organizations to address many of these challenges.

Vienna is one of the most important capitals in this regard. Here we fruitfully cooperate with OSCE, IAEA, UNIDO, UNODC, OFED, CTBTO and other international organizations. Our relations and cooperation with Austria are very valuable and dynamic. The visit of the President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan to Austria in June, the visit of Minister Sebastian Kurz to Armenia in September, the opening of the Vienna Armenia Center, and the office of the Austrian Development Agency in Yerevan will bring new impetus to the friendly relations existing between our two countries.

Several days ago we have opened here in Palais San Souci the exhibition “Armenian Rugs and Textiles – An Overview of examples from four Centuries”, organized by the Armenian Rugs Society as part of the

International Conference on Oriental Carpets Tour Vienna – Budapest 2014, and because this cultural event coincides with the National Day of Armenia we decided to invite you here.

This is really an extraordinary occasion, as the exhibition is formed by the items from different museums of Armenia and private Diaspora Armenian collectors from the United States, France, Switzerland and Austria.

I would like to thank the Ministry of Culture of Armenia, represented here by the Director of the Center of People`s Art Hovik Hoveyan, the Armenian Rugs Society, Mkhitarist Congregation of Vienna as well as private donors who made this exhibition possible.

The exhibition presents items from the early 17th to early 20th centuries and is structured by 3 parts: 1. Rugs from Armenia, 2. Rugs and Kelims from the regions outside of Armenia, 3. Armenian Embroideries and Textiles.

STATEMENT ON THE NON-COMPLIANCE OF TURKEY TO THE OSCE COMMITMENTS

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, October 9, 2014

In the light of the on-going crises and challenges in the OSCE area, we reaffirm our perception of the role of our Organization as a platform for dialogue to tackle the problems in a peaceful manner, on basis of the OSCE values and fundamental principles and norms of the international law. During our discussions in Permanent Council and informal meetings we have stressed a number of times the need for political will, constructive engagement, seeking compromises and making good use of the vast OSCE toolbox in order to address long running problems on the basis of our common, agreed commitments.

Having said this, we would like to share our views and concerns on the current stalemate in Armenia's relations with Turkey and the reasons behind it. The attempt to normalize relations was made 5 years ago, when the "Protocol on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Turkey" and "Protocol on development of relations between of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Turkey" were signed on October 10, 2009 in Zurich as a result of intensive process of negotiations.

This process was initiated by the President of Armenia with the good faith and the aim to set the foundations for normalization of our bilateral relations, building trust and reconciliation between our societies. The expectations of international community were also high in this respect.

Regrettably, later developments chilled our optimism. Turkish government lacked political will and stepped back from the agreements. Thus, Turkey returned to its usual practice of setting preconditions for the establishment of diplomatic relations and lifting unilateral blockade, imposed more than 20 years ago.

The reasons behind such a policy become very obvious: the blockade of Armenia by Turkey is aimed at undermining the social and economic development of Armenia. There are no any legal grounds for Turkey to inflict such step, which constitute a flagrant breach of the international law

which we are bound to respect not only by its virtue but also through commitments undertaken in the Helsinki Final Act. Moreover, the Helsinki Final Act clearly states the inadmissibility of political, economic and other coercion exercised against other participating state.

This Illegal and unilateral blockade, which on countless occasions has been qualified by many as unacceptable do not belong to OSCE toolbox, refusal to have diplomatic relations cannot be perceived as constructive engagement and kinship solidarity has nothing to do with OSCE principles and values. With these medieval style instruments in its toolbox Turkey makes unsuccessful attempt to assume the role of a mediator in our Organization, while it needs mediators itself to interact with its neighbours.

Armenia`s president recently made yet another positive step and extended invitation to his Turkish counterpart to visit Armenia and participate in the events, commemorating the darkest page in the relations between our peoples. To restore its credibility Turkey needs to exert political will, to respect its agreed commitments.

**RESPONSE TO THE STATEMENT OF THE MINSK GROUP
CO-CHAIR COUNTRIES**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, October 30, 2014

Armenia would like to extend gratitude to the President of the French Republic, Francois Hollande for the organization of the presidential level meeting on Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

It is the third meeting on the settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict at the level of Presidents in the last three months, which shows the dedication and resoluteness of the Minsk Group Co-Chair countries and the personal efforts of their Presidents to continue the process of peaceful resolution of the conflict, which provide opportunity for the parties to better perceive each other's approaches and bring closer their positions.

Despite the continuing disagreement on several aspects of the settlement and the way to move forward in the negotiation process, the Armenian side assessed the meeting as useful, open and constructive.

The Armenian side welcomes the proposal of the French President, also shared by the other Co-Chair countries on the implementation of confidence building measures. We firmly believe that the practical implementation of confidence building measures, including the withdrawal of snipers, creation of mechanism on investigation of incidents along the Line of Contact and strengthening of the ceasefire regime can contribute to the consolidation of cease-fire and create favorable conditions for negotiation process. Progress in political settlement requires a necessary level of trust and confidence. We are pleased to note that our approaches in this regard are shared by the Co-Chair countries.

We are hopeful that a speedy adoption of the Basic Principles as it is agreed in the Joint Declaration adopted by the Presidents of Armenia, Russian Federation and Azerbaijan on January 2012 in Sochi, will lay the foundation for the negotiations on the peace agreement.

The high-level meeting in Paris reaffirmed once again the high relevance and efficiency of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs' format. It also reaffirmed at the highest level that there is no alternative to the negotiations, which will bring us to a peaceful settlement and a long-lasting peace and stability in the region.

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF BAN KI-MOON, UN SECRETARY GENERAL

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, November 4, 2014

We would like to extend our warm welcome to the distinguished UN Secretary General, H.E. Ban Ki-moon and thank him for the comprehensive address which is the reflection of high level of cooperation between our organizations.

We agree that in different parts of the world we are facing new security threats and challenges. The emergence of well-funded and powerful terrorist organizations who strongly benefit from the flow of foreign fighters and support of international network have posed existential threats at unknown gravity to states, many individuals and groups.

On many occasions and fora including in the OSCE Permanent Council Armenia brought up the imperative of international cooperation against international terrorist organizations such as ISIL and ANF. In our view, the efforts of international community should be developed within our commitments and obligations of preventing mass atrocities. Armenia as a country who pursues the agenda of genocide prevention in the international security and cooperation strongly supports UN SC resolution on foreign terrorist fighters and is ready to make its contribution towards its realization.

We particularly value the personal engagement of the Secretary General in forging international cooperation against this new scourge. We also highly appreciate statements of Secretary General on the urgent need of protection of religious and ethnic groups in Syria and Iraq including clear condemnation of violence perpetrated by Al-Qaida affiliated groups against the Armenian population of Kessab in Syria.

Human rights violations particularly hate crimes combined with constant threats to use force and instances of resorting to force contribute towards sustaining stalemates in resolving conflicts elsewhere in the world including OSCE region.

The calls of international community to ease tensions through building confidence and trust among all parties to the conflict are essential in preventing hostilities. We particularly appreciate the efforts of the

Secretary General to ease the tensions on the line of contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan and border between Armenia and Azerbaijan earlier this summer and his call on all parties to respect the ceasefire agreement and refrain from violence. In this context we would like to recall also his call to withdraw the snipers from the Line of Contact, which might have prevented loss of many lives of military personnel and civilians, if all the parties to the conflict followed that call.

We fully share the view of the UN Secretary General that all parties should respect the ceasefire agreement, refrain from further violence and commit themselves to immediate de-escalation and continuing dialogue aimed at finding peaceful political solution guided by the international mediators OSCE MG Co-Chairs, who are permanent members of the UN SC.

Armenia agrees with the international mediators that Nagorno-Karabakh conflict should be resolved based on the fundamental principles of the international law such as non-use of force, territorial integrity and equal rights and self-determination of peoples.

We acknowledge the unique role of the UN in peacekeeping. In recent years, Armenia has consistently consolidated its peacekeeping capabilities and contributed towards peace building missions in Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan. Soon. Armenian peacekeepers will be dispatched to the south of Lebanon within the framework of the UNIFIL mission under the auspices of the United Nations. We look forward to enhancing cooperation with the UN as security provider.

Peace, security and human rights are indispensable in achieving development and modernization. We believe that there is a great complementarity between United Nations and the OSCE to ensure effective framework of development. We are looking forward to continued leadership of the Secretary General in pursuing the new “Post-2015” development agenda which will continue addressing challenges of global nature within renewed international cooperation.

In conclusion, we would like once again to extend our sincere gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon and wish him all success in his future activities.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE CO-CHAIRMEN OF
THE OSCE MINSK GROUP, THE PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE OSCE CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE, AND THE HEAD OF
THE HIGH-LEVEL PLANNING GROUP**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, November 13, 2014

We would like to warmly welcome the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group Ambassadors Igor Popov, Pierre Andrieu and James Warlick, the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk and the Head of the HLPG, Colonel Markus Widmer to the Permanent Council and thank them for their comprehensive reports.

We highly appreciate the joint efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries – France, Russian Federation and the United States who have convened three consecutive summits in Sochi, Newport and Paris within three months to prevent escalation and advance the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. As recently as on October 27th, at the summit in Paris Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan reaffirmed that the existing format of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs is an active and effective format and that there is no alternative to the negotiation process aimed at the settlement of the conflict exclusively by the peaceful means.

Such meetings give an opportunity to the Presidents to better assess the approaches of each other and to clarify the framework of the possibilities to move towards the peaceful settlement. We believe that a speedy adoption of the Basic Principles will give an opportunity and become a basis for drafting the main agreement.

Yesterday, a helicopter of the Nagorno-Karabakh armed forces, while on a training flight was shot down by Azerbaijan in yet another gross violation of the cease-fire regime. Such aggressive actions threaten to further destabilize the situation and undermine the peace process.

We strongly condemn the shooting down of the helicopter.

Before and after every high-level meeting on the resolution of the issue, Baku is resorting to new provocations to undermine the negotiation

process, the efforts of Armenia and the international community aimed at exclusively peaceful settlement of the conflict.

The Azerbaijani side is grossly violating its commitments on the peaceful resolution of the conflict reached during the recent summits.

Such a criminal provocation demonstrates that Baku is not only ignoring the appeals of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries, the international community on non-use of force, consolidation of ceasefire, implementation of confidence-building measures, but is acting contrary to them bearing full responsibility for the escalation of the situation.

Armenia has continuously raised the issues of non-compliance by Azerbaijan with the 1994 trilateral cease-fire agreement. In 2014 the cease-fire violations have multiplied and intensified in such dangerous forms as subversive activities and infiltration attempts, targeting civilian population and resorting to heavy weaponry. These attempts of Azerbaijani armed forces claimed unprecedented high number of casualties on all sides and further undermined the negotiation process.

We had stressed many times and would like to reiterate once again that every casualty in the conflict zone deepens the gap between the peoples, increases the distrust and hinders the settlement process. Therefore, confidence and security building measures proposed by the Co-chairs on consolidation of the cease-fire regime, creation of investigation mechanism for incidents on the Line of Contact, withdrawal of snipers, if implemented would not only reduce the number of cease-fire violations and save lives, but would create conducive environment for achieving progress in peaceful resolution. Our approaches in this regard are shared by the Co-Chair countries. However, Azerbaijan refuses to implement CSBMs. According to their long-standing position the CSBMs can be implemented once the progress on the peace process is achieved. However, it's obvious that if a certain settlement is reached, there would not be a need for the CSBMs to this extent.

By the pattern of blatant cease-fire violations and by the refusal to adopt CSBMs Azerbaijan bears the whole responsibility for the escalation of the situation.

It is clear that without mutual confidence no solution is possible. Armenian representatives have seized all possible opportunities to have people-to-people contacts with their Azerbaijani counterparts and the participation of the Armenian Parliamentary Delegation to the Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Baku is a good case in point.

Regrettably, the arrests of civil society representatives who have been involved in international projects on confidence building measures under the absurd allegations of espionage activities casts doubt on sincerity of Azerbaijani side to pursue humanitarian contacts between our societies.

We will continue joint efforts with the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk group, aimed at the exclusively peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Reply

There is a significant gap in the perception of the problem and the ways to resolve it between Armenia and Azerbaijan. We stress the importance of settlement of the conflict through full upholding of human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people of Nagorno Karabakh, in particular the right to freely choose their own destiny. Azerbaijan puts the focus on forceful imposition of its will on Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh by using the wide spectrum of military, economic and other forms of oppression. In other words, we focus on human rights, while our neighbours focus on power politics.

The people of Nagorno Karabakh is de-facto independent since the last 23 years and they should be the masters of their future. Should the human rights of people of Nagorno Karabakh including right to freedom of movement, right to vote and finally right to self-determination be respected, then our region can move towards greater prosperity and respect of human rights in general.

When it comes to the UN SC resolutions referred here by the Ambassador of Azerbaijan, it should be mentioned that they were adopted during the military phase of the conflict and did not lead to immediate cease of hostilities due to the position of Azerbaijan. Today after 20 years

of ceasefire Azerbaijan refers to single element of resolutions by downplaying all others such as lift of blockade or neglecting parties of the conflict referred in the resolutions. All the UN SC Resolutions have clearly recognized Nagorno-Karabakh as a party to the conflict. If Azerbaijan is willing to implement the UN SC resolutions it should first and foremost reach authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh in achieving progress on the conflict resolution.

As for the recent military exercises held in Armenia, we would like to inform that Armenia in the spirit of transparency has duly issued prior notification, according to its commitments under Vienna Document. What regards the military exercises, held by Nagorno Karabakh, we would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council that the Nagorno Karabakh authorities in the spirit of transparency had made them public. We see opposite trend in Azerbaijan, which continuously fails to notify its military exercises, particularly those, being held along the Line of Contact.

**STATEMENT ON NON-COMPLIANCE OF AZERBAIJAN
WITH THE INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, November 20, 2014

We would like to invite the attention of the participating States to non-compliance of Azerbaijan with the international humanitarian law.

At the last session of the Permanent Council, the Armenian delegation referred to the shooting down by the Azerbaijani armed forces of MI-24 helicopter of the Nagorno-Karabakh Defense Army, which was conducting a training flight.

The Azerbaijani side continues to prevent the attempts of rescue teams to approach the helicopter by consistently firing and attacking them.

Likewise, the attempts to engage the ICRC and the Personal representative of the OSCE CiO for evacuation of the members of the crew and the observation of the site has been so far rejected by Azerbaijan. Thus, Azerbaijan has been explicitly violating "Geneva Convention on the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field". Article 15 of the Convention stipulates an obligation to all parties to the conflict, without delay, to "take all possible measures to search for and collect the wounded and sick, ... and to search for the dead and prevent their being despoiled".

Armenia calls on Azerbaijani authorities to comply with the international humanitarian law and cease military activities aimed at denying access to the crew. Azerbaijan holds all responsibility for the escalation of the situation on the ground.

ARMENIA – A PROMISING COUNTRY WITH RICH HISTORY

Vienna, Interview to "Cercle Diplomatique", No. 301, Autumn, 2014

Ambassador, how would you describe the current relationship between Austria and Armenia?

Over the past few years, the bilateral relations between Armenia and Austria have been strengthened through the growing number of high-level official visits. The 20th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, at first, provided a renewed impetus in the political dialogue between both countries. These were further enhanced by the official visit of the Austrian President Heinz Fisher to Armenia in 2012, during which he devoted special time to explore the country and its infinite cultural heritage and the working visit of the President Serzh Sargsyan in Vienna, the following year, in November 2013. Furthermore, the Austrian Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz – despite his very first time in office – emphasized on visiting Armenia. These official steps highlight the good relations between our countries and do not only strengthen the existing ties but also create new perspectives for Armenia.

In June 2014 H.E. Serzh Sargsyan, President of Armenia paid an official visit to Austria. What was the purpose of his visit and whom did he meet with?

The main objective of the official visit of the Armenian President to Austria consisted in both strengthening the ties and boosting economic cooperation between our countries, which has been underpinned by the opening of the Armenian-Austrian Business Forum. During his visit, the President Serzh Sargsyan held successful meetings with the President of the Republic of Austria, H.E. Heinz Fisher, the President of the National Council, H.E. Barbara Prammer, the Chancellor of Austria, H.E. Werner Fayman, the Mayor of Vienna, H.E. Michael Haupl and the Archbishop of Vienna, His Eminence Cardinal Schonborn, and reached several bilateral agreements within different fields. Moreover, the visit aimed at increasing and fostering the active cooperation with international organizations. As such, the President Sargsyan held important meetings with the Executive

Director of the UNODC, H.E. Yuri Fedotov, the Director-General of the UNIDO, H.E. Li Yong, the Director-General of the IAEA, H.E. Yukiya Amano and the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission of the CTBTO, H.E. Lassina Zerbo.

During his visit, the President also laid a wreath at the statue of the outstanding Austrian writer and humanist Franz Werfel whose remarkable book entitled "The 40 Days of Musa Dagh" played an indispensable role in revealing truth about one of the most painful and atrocious crimes against humanity, the Armenian Genocide, which will mark its 100 Anniversary in 2015. It's worth mentioning that the statue was erected owing to the donations of the Armenian community, in tribute to the writer and in gratitude for the Austrian people. In addition, he visited the premises of the Mekhitarist Congregation, the Holy Hripsime Armenian Apostolic Church and the Centre of the Armenian Community.

We were honoured by the attendance of the President Sargsyan to inaugurate the opening of the Armenia Centre in Vienna, which is the first Armenian institution of this kind abroad. Number of tasks lie ahead of the activities of this Centre: it is designed to promote the foreign policy agenda of Armenia in Europe, to develop and enhance the Austrian-Armenian bilateral cooperation, to further promote multilateral tasks with the UN and the OSCE, as well as to coordinate the interaction with the Armenian community of Austria. The Vienna Armenian Centre, is, indeed, a multifunctional institution that can serve as a place for art exhibitions, music concerts and social events.

The Centre is also may be used for arranging bilateral business talks, join scientific conferences and thematic workshops, thus, bringing the two friendly nations even closer to one another and strengthening their humanitarian ties. We are convinced that the opening of the Centre will greatly contribute to the deepening of bilateral cultural and economic cooperation.

Ambassador, you mentioned above that Sebastian Kurz, Austria's Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs recently visited Armenia. What were the accents of his visit and what topics were

introduced/touch upon during the talks with his Armenia's counterpart?

During his visit to the Republic of Armenia, H.E. Sebastian Kurz was accompanied by number of businessmen, entrepreneurs and officials from different economic sectors, more specifically, a group of specialists in the sphere of energy. The group composition clearly illustrated the mutual willingness to pave the way for implementing the agreements attained between the two Presidents and thus stimulating multidimensional cooperation. At the meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Edward Nalbandian, the interlocutors emphasized the importance of further extending the bilateral legal-contractual framework, which currently consists of approximately 20 agreements strengthening decentralized cooperation among local authorities and municipalities, encouraging inter-parliamentary ties and, finally, holding regular consultations among our foreign ministries. The Ministers jointly attended the opening ceremony of the Austrian Development Agency office in Yerevan.

In the course of his visit Minister Kurz also visited the Austrian Children's Hospital, the "Emily Aregak" Caritas Care Centre for children with disabilities in Gyumri and the Armenian Red Cross Society. Further he got acquainted with the successes of the program "Support to Syrian Armenians" carried out with the assistance of the Austrian Government.

So far Armenia is sheltering 12000 refugees who left Syria. Tell us, please, what measures are taken by the Government to improve their situation?

From the very outbreak of the Syrian crisis the Armenian Government has joined international efforts to help sustain Syrian refugees, including those of Armenian descent who were urged to flee thereby abandoning their home towns comprising numerous traces of Armenian presence, including shrines and monuments of Armenian cultural heritage. In addition, the Armenian Parliament dispatched a special fact-finding mission to Syria to get first-hand information on the entire situation, especially, with regard to the displaced population of Kessab. Meanwhile, in accordance with the Prime-Minister's decree, an interagency committee coordinating issues of Syrian Armenians has been established to work out and align targeted

projects and facilitate the activities of Armenian institutions, non-profit charitable organizations delivering humanitarian aid and rendering material and in-kind assistance. Thanks to such concerted action, a large number of qualified teachers, doctors and other profile specialists have found employment in different regions of Armenia. Another priority pursued by the Government aims at encouraging and development of small and medium-sized businesses and entrepreneurship especially taken into consideration that there are many talented craftsmen among refugees who need to be provided with necessary tools and facilities.

Nevertheless, housing remains the main challenge that still needs, to be addressed. An ambitious project of founding the New Aleppo district in the city of Ashtarak has been launched. Municipal authorities have already provided 5-hectare territory for the construction of multi-apartment residential buildings complex designed for more than 5000 residents.

Notwithstanding all these measures, activities and endeavours initiated to relieve the hardship of these settlers, the Armenian Government relentlessly continues raising the issue of forcefully displaced Armenians and other Christians undergoing enormous sufferings. In this regard, a letter by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia was addressed recently to the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Armenia calls on the international community to undertake resolute efforts to end the religiously -motivated violent extremism led by overt terrorists and ensure the safe, secure and dignified return of displaced people to the places of their permanent residence.

How does Armenia view the issue of joining the Eurasian Economic Union?

The statement delivered by the President Sargsyan in the course of the Armenia-Austria Business Forum once again reaffirmed that Armenia's joining to the Eurasian Economic Union neither implies an alienation from the EU nor sets artificial obstacles on the way towards closer cooperation, particularly, in the frame of Eastern Partnership and association. Armenia has never regarded these two initiatives as being incompatible and mutually exclusive. Rather Armenia is, determined in advancing a comprehensive political dialogue and cooperation with EU to the extent possible, thus

serving as bridge between the two integration-based entities and offering our European partners new opportunities for investments. The view, based on the principle “both this and that” and not on “either this or that”, has found general comprehension and is largely shared by our European colleagues, including the Austrian political establishment.

What is your Government’s approach to creating new opportunities for development?

The 2008-2009 global financial crisis had a significant impact on Armenia’s economy. After its independence, Armenia went through a serious path of reforms, the results of which emerged to be a solid foundation for further sustainable development. In the post-crisis period, our economic recovery has created room for more optimistic growth expectations. Similar to the rest of the world, Armenia has reviewed its priorities, shifting the development vector from growth toward a development agenda with the aim of boosting resilience to external shocks. In this regard, it’s obvious that significant investment flows into the real sector of economy are presumed.

We consider investments not only as financial resources but also as an efficient mechanism for know-how sharing. In order to expand the ability of our country to absorb such investments, the creation of a favorable business environment with well-established institutions and a developed infrastructure gets increasingly important. In this sense, promoting a competitive economy through a favorable business environment is the focus of our reforms.

Currently, Armenia experiences a strong economic growth in the agricultural and industrial sectors, which hold prevailing shares in terms of GDP. Moreover, growing development rates have been recorded in technology-based and skilled-labour requiring industries.

Ambassador, could you tell us, please, about the development of tourism sector in Armenia?

As one of the most ancient countries in the world, Armenia with its mountain ranges and pristine landscapes, a very famous touristic destination. In increasing and diversifying investments opportunities (hotels, restoration projects, boutique wineries and mountain getaways), the

Government strongly seeks at encouraging the development of tourism in the country. Armenia is an ideal destination for intellectual and extreme tourism. In warmth and hospitality allow travelers to feel familiar and homey very quickly. With its rich cultural heritage, unique nature as well as old customs and traditions the Armenian tourist industry has great potential for development. With our targeted tourism support policy, we expect to ensure 5-10 percent annual growth of the frequency of tourists.

Ambassador, last year you organized the Armenian brandy presentation in Vienna. Tell us about brandy-making tradition in Armenia?

In 2011 archeologists discovered the world's oldest wine-making facility in an Armenian cave dating back to 6100 BC. The seeds found on the cite were from *vitis vinifera* grape, which is still used in actual wine production. Brandy is the only product of which Armenia gas a sizeable percentage share of world exports, representing no less than 2.8 percent of global brandy exports. The best known of all Armenian brandies, ArArAt, has been in the market since the end of the 19th century. ArArAt has become a common symbol of Armenia. It is extremely popular in the region. 90 percent of the company sales are made in Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and in other traditional markets. Having recognized the brand's potential, Pernod Ricard acquired, in 1998, the Yerevan Brandy Company.

At your National Day reception, you presented also old Armenian rugs and embroideries. What is the history behind it?

Being one of the traditional domains of art Armenian carpets, rugs, embroideries and tapestries demonstrate not only the richness of applied decorative-ornamental solutions varying from one region to another but also the unique perception and interpretation of Christian ideological linchpins and major symbols.

The exhibition "Armenian rugs and textiles – An overview of examples from early 17th to early 20th centuries" was organized by the Armenian Rugs Society as part of the International Conference on Oriental carpets tour Vienna-Budapest 2014. The exhibition was formed with items gently provided by different museums from Yerevan and Stepanakert, as

well as by private Armenian collectors from the United States, France, Switzerland and Austria. The exhibition was, indeed, a huge success enabling Austrian and foreign visitors to discover Armenia and its culture from this perspective.

The Armenian community in Austria is developing. How important is the role of the Armenian Church?

Under the rule of varied foreign conquerors and invaders, Armenian people had lost for centuries their political independence and statehood.

The only institutional entity capable of preserving and upholding the national identity, as well as the cultural traditions was the Armenian Apostolic Church. Similarly, nowadays both in Armenia and in foreign countries with significant Armenian communities the Church continues fulfilling this highly responsible mission in good faith. In Austria this unifying-consolidating role was further enhanced thanks to the activities of the Armenian Apostolic Church and the Mekhitarist Congregation, which was founded more than two centuries ago. This religious and scientific-educational centre does not only retain a vast collection of age-old Armenian manuscripts and writings, first copies of the earliest published books, which renders it a genuine treasury for studies in the realm of Armenology, but also fosters cooperation with the Austrian Catholic Church in carrying out numerous cultural-educational programs.

**STATEMENT ON THE COMMEMORATION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, January 22, 2015

We would like to thank Sir Andrew Burns and Ambassador Roksanda Ninčić for their thoughtful presentations in Commemoration of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

On 27 of January the humanity will pay tribute to 6 million Jews, exterminated under Nazi regime. By commemorating the victims of Holocaust Remembrance Day, we should reassert our commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms and particularly to the protection of racial, religious, ethnic and national groups. We must also make sure that the new generations know their history and horrors of crimes against humanity.

Holocaust as a genocide of the 20th century established important standards for addressing the issues of genocide denial and remembrance. Education on and remembrance of the Holocaust and other genocides is key to understanding and preventing future genocides. Likewise, disregarding the lessons of history, the genocide denial, not only allow crimes to go unrecognized and unpunished, but also may encourage other dictatorial regimes to perpetrate new crimes against humanity.

It is useful to recall the statement of Adolf Hitler pronounced on August 22, 1939 in Obersalzberg at the eve of Nazi genocidal actions “Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?”

In this regard the Nobel Peace Prize Winner, Most Reverend Archbishop Emeritus Desmond M. Tutu wrote: “And yet it is possible that if the world had been conscious of the genocide that was committed against the Armenians, the first genocide of the twentieth century, then perhaps humanity might have been more alert to the warning signs that were being given before Hitler’s madness was unleashed on an unbelieving world.”

Duty of memory and right to the truth are indispensable for preventing crimes against humanity and paving the path of reconciliation.

**STATEMENT ON THE CASE OF MURDER
OF HRANT DINK**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, January 22, 2015

We took note of the statement of the Turkish Delegation on commemoration of Mr. Hrant Dink and would like to state the following.

First let me refer to the personality of Hrant Dink, a Turkish Armenian intellectual, editor in chief of bilingual *Agos* newspaper being published in Istanbul. Hrant Dink was a long-standing champion of defending human rights of the Armenian community of Turkey which has been subjected to genocide and further stigmatization throughout the century. His truth-seeking efforts made him target of intimidation, smearing, criminal prosecution and finally assassination. His courageous stance on Armenian Genocide earned him indictment under the article 301 of Turkish Penal Code as a criminal offence against Turkishness. The European Court of Human Rights clearly established the liability of Turkish authorities in failing to prevent this murder and after 8 years this attitude of covering up the crime still needs to be overcome.

Second, we took note of some developments in the investigation of the case, although we are concerned that eight years after this heinous crime the masterminds have still not been called to justice. The Delegation of Armenia brought this issue to the attention of the Permanent Council three times, but always was getting advice by the Turkish Delegation not to politicize the issue and wait for the results of legal proceedings. We expect that the Turkish authorities can finally conduct effective investigation into this crime and it will not take another 8 or more years. We would like to see in the mentioned statement of the Turkish Prime Minister expression of the willingness of Turkish Government to bring perpetrators to justice.

We also took note of the peaceful rally organized in Istanbul, in commemoration of murder of Hrant Dink, which clearly showed the public demand for bringing the masterminds of the crime to justice. Regrettably, another rally in Ankara was forcefully dispersed by police.

Now let me refer to some points of the Appeal of the Prime Minister of Turkey. Unfortunately, Turkish Government again failed to name

annihilation of entire nation in the Ottoman Empire and its perpetrators. Describing Armenian Genocide as “the inhumane consequences of relocation policies essentially enforced under wartime circumstances” is a further manifestation of policy of denial. The propagation of this approach in the statement commemorating Hrant Dink who dedicated and eventually sacrificed his life to fighting this policy of denial is certainly regrettable.

We assess the sincerity of the Turkish authorities to promote dialogue and friendship between Armenian and Turkish peoples by concrete actions. In this regard the invitation from the President Erdogan to President Sargsyan to jointly celebrate the victory of the Ottoman Army on the very day of the centennial of the Armenian Genocide, April 24, discredits call of Turkish Government for a new beginning.

**STATEMENT ON THE CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS BY
AZERBAIJAN ALONG THE LINE OF CONTACT BETWEEN
NAGORNO KARABAKH AND AZERBAIJAN AND THE
ARMENIAN-AZERBAIJANI STATE BORDER**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, February 12, 2015

We strongly condemn the provocative actions of Azerbaijan entailing incursions and targeting civilian areas on the Line of Contact between Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan and on the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which resulted in the loss of many lives and sharply raised the tension. We deeply sorrow the lives of the killed young soldiers and civilians.

We would like to recall that the Armenian Delegation has regularly raised the issue of ceasefire violations at the Permanent Council meetings and has also indicated readiness of Armenia to accept proposals aimed at strengthening the ceasefire, including through withdrawal of snipers, creation of investigative mechanism into ceasefire violations and returning to peaceful dialogue.

All the proposals of international mediators, even those agreed at the level of Presidents, were rejected by Azerbaijan. We are convinced that every new casualty harms the peace process and prevents progress in settlement of the conflict.

The time of ambiguity has passed and the international community clearly indicated the source of tension by calling Azerbaijan to observe its commitments to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. In this regard we welcome the press-release of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs, made on January 27, 2015, in which they called on Azerbaijan to observe its commitments to a peaceful resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. We expect stronger language and unequivocal condemnation of these actions by the OSCE.

It is truly regrettable that Azerbaijan comes up with accusatory language to the OSCE and its executive structures, field operations and negotiation formats. Criticizing international community for non-acceptance of its power politics both in foreign and domestic affairs is non-conducive towards any positive outcome.

We can assure the Azerbaijani delegation that the assumption of the Azerbaijani leadership that it can impose its negotiation positions on Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh through use of force and military pressure is a dangerous misperception.

We would like to encourage our Azerbaijani partners to engage in genuine and constructive dialogue in good faith and demonstrate willingness to observe its commitments to a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

TALK WITH AMBASSADOR: ARMAN KIRAKOSSIAN

Armenian News Agency, February 21, 2015

Armenian News Agency together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia launches a new series of interviews titled “Talk with Ambassador”. The first interview is with Armenia's Ambassador to Austria, permanent representative of Armenia to OSCE Arman Kirakossian.

How are the relations between Armenia and Austria developing in recent years?

Over the past three years Armenia-Austria relations have reached a qualitatively new level as a result of mutual high-level visits. In 2012 President of Austria Heinz Fischer paid a visit to Armenia that was marked as the first high level visit of an Austrian official and was dedicated to the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of bilateral relations. The visit was important in terms of strengthening of economic component of the bilateral cooperation: a business forum, signing of a number of agreements. As a result, we enhanced relations with the Austrian Development Agency that is carrying out several projects in Armenia. Among the most successful ones is repairing of the Opera and Ballet Theater, funding of the program on optimization of legislation, support of Armenian-Syrian refugees, Austrian hospital in Gyumri.

In April 2014, the regular meeting of Armenia-Austria inter-governmental commission was held where the sides discussed prospects of cooperation on agriculture, tourism, culture and energy.

Finally, in late June 2014 President Sargsyan paid an official visit to Austria when a Declaration on friendly relations and partnership was signed.

During the visit, an agreement was reached on the implementation of programs to re-equip the Aram Khachaturian Concert Hall and repair the building of the Academic Theatre after Sundukyan. During the visit, the opening of “Armenia” multifunctional center was held in Vienna that will contribute to the development of the Armenian-Austrian relations in the financial, economic and cultural sectors.

Presidents Serzh Sargsyan and Heinz Fischer participated in the Armenian-Austrian business forum in the Chamber of Commerce of Austria.

In September 2014 the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Austria Sebastian Kurz traveled to Armenia where he held meetings with Armenia's leadership. He took part in the opening ceremony of the office of the Austrian Development Agency, met with representatives of Syrian Armenian refugees, visited the offices of the Red Cross in Armenia, mother and child hospital in Gyumri.

In January 2015 Minister of Culture Hasmik Poghosyan traveled to Austria where a memorandum on cooperation in art and culture was signed.

In 2015, the documents will be signed on cooperation in the fields of education and agriculture.

The Armenian communities in German-speaking countries are not that large. How long do they live in Austria and what contribution do they make?

There are nearly 5,000 Armenians in Austria. The overwhelming majority live in Vienna and the outskirts of the capital, a small group live in Salzburg, Linz and Graz. The Armenians first settled in Austria in the seventeenth century, while the Mechitarists [Congregation of monks of the Armenian Catholic Church founded by Abbot Mkhitar Sebastatsi] moved to Vienna in 1810 after separation from the Venice order. There are Armenians from Turkey, Iran, Lebanon and Syria. In 1990s Armenians from Azerbaijan and Armenia moved to Austria. The Armenians are engaged in industry, construction, trade and services, as well as in arts.

A prominent center of preservation of Armenian cultural values and the Armenian studies is the Order of Mkhitarists, the monastery and church of which is located in Vienna. The Order has a library of manuscripts which contains about 2,600 texts in the Armenian language, a rich collection of Armenian media articles.

There is the Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church with the church administration and pastor. In the 1960s the church of St. Hripsime was built where the Sunday school of the Armenian community opened. There is a number of NGOs and unions.

We pay great attention to the development of relations and cooperation with the Armenian community of Austria. While in Vienna, the President of Armenia, among other places, visited the Order and the Church of Mkhitarists and Hripsime Armenian Apostolic Church.

Franz Werfel, an Austrian writer famous for his novel about Genocide, had to flee the Holocaust. This year marks the 125th anniversary of his birth. Will the Armenian side participate in the events? What events will take place in Austria ahead of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide?

A commission dealing with the coordination of events on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide has been working since early 2014. The commission is headed by Armenia's Ambassador and consists of representatives of the Armenian organizations. Numerous events have been held since last April. For example, the Armenian organizations of Austria submitted a petition on Armenian Genocide recognition to the Austrian deputies, NGOs and journalists.

I would like to note this year's events: parliamentary discussion in the European Union House, the 125th anniversary of Franz Werfel that will be marked in the National Library, a musical festival "Echo of Armenia", exhibition dedicated to Armenian Genocide, screening of a film, scientific forum and classical music concerts. The events will be widely covered by the Armenian and Austrian media.

You are representing Armenia not only in Austria, but the international organizations located in Vienna, including in OSCE. How do you assess Armenia's participation in the work of organization?

First of all, I would like to note that OSCE is one of the major regional organizations in the world and unites 57 countries in the territory stretching from Vancouver till Vladivostok. The organization is a platform of a political dialogue for security issues, including the settlement of conflicts.

Armenia is actively participating in the multilateral cooperation within OSCE that is first of all conditioned by the fact that the negotiations on resolution of Karabakh conflict continue within the OSCE in the format of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs.

Armenian leadership has consistently promoted the view that the conflict resolution should be based on the rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to self-determination. The OSCE member states are briefed on the approaches of Armenia and Karabakh (Artsakh). Armenia uses OSCE platform in order to raise issues of Turkey's policy of denial of the Armenian Genocide, its rejection of diplomatic relations with Armenia, the blockade. OSCE concept of security is comprehensive, including military-political, economic, environmental field, the sphere of human rights. Mission of Armenia to the OSCE is involved in dialogue in all planes. Priorities of our state are strengthening the regime of conventional arms control in Europe, the establishment of equal and mutually beneficial regional economic cooperation, protection of rights and fundamental freedoms. With the help of the OSCE Office in Yerevan, programs are conducted in all these three areas to strengthen democracy in Armenia, the rule of law and human rights, security sector reform and sustainable economic development.

How active is Armenia's cooperation with other organizations based in Vienna?

As you know, the United Nations Office as well as the headquarters of other international organizations are based in Vienna, and one of the important components of my work is the role of the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the following international organizations: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

I would like to note that the Permanent Mission of Armenia is actively cooperating with these organizations, in particular with UNIDO. A number of joint programs for the development of industry and strong economic growth in Armenia are being implemented. We have effective cooperation with the IAEA to meet the commitments on the safe operation of the power unit of Metsamor NPP. Armenia is working with UNODC in the fight against organized crime, corruption and illicit drug trafficking.

In 2013, at the invitation of Armenian Foreign Minister UN Deputy Secretary General, the head of the UN Office in Vienna, Director of UNODC Yuri Fedotov visited Armenia. During the visit, Fedotov praised the mission of the Armenian leadership in the struggle to achieve international goals of the UN.

We also have cooperation with the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID) located in Vienna, as well as with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development. The goal of Armenia's mission is to serve as a bridge between the Armenian authorities and all these structures.

Historic works of your father telling about the Armenian Genocide are one of the first such publications in the Soviet Armenia. How much were you affected by the work of your father? When did you realize you want to choose the path of diplomacy?

Although my father, a historian and politician John Kirakossian, served as a Minister of Foreign Affairs of Soviet Armenia in 1975-1985, I did not have any desire to become a diplomat. I was very impressed by the work of my father in the field of Armenian political studies. I chose the profession of a historian, in particular the diplomatic history of the Armenian question, and joined the Scientific Information Center of Social Sciences of the Academy of Sciences. Perhaps my close cooperation with my father and the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the publication of modern materials on the Armenian question played a role in appointing me to the post of the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs immediately after Armenia's independence.

RESPONSE TO THE STATEMENT OF THE MINSK GROUP CO-CHAIR COUNTRIES

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, February 26, 2015

We took note of the statement by the Minsk Group Co-Chair countries on the recent visit of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs to the region and their meetings with the leadership of Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan.

We welcome the efforts of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs to consolidate and strengthen the ceasefire regime along the Line of Contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan and the Armenian-Azerbaijani border in light of the recent provocative actions by Azerbaijan, including incursions and targeting civilians.

We hope the Azerbaijani side will rightly perceive the message by the international community to recommit itself to the peaceful resolution of the conflict.

We would like to reiterate once again our firm position that violence and casualties harm the negotiation process of the peaceful settlement.

The Armenian Delegation has regularly brought the issue of ceasefire violations to the attention of the Permanent Council meetings and will continue to do so. We always supported and continue to support the investigation to ceasefire violations in order to identify the party who is responsible for concrete incident. Armenia also agreed that the OSCE and its field operation can lead the investigative mechanism into ceasefire violations. This idea has been agreed at the level of the Presidents in March 2011. However, Azerbaijan later rejected the proposal to set up an investigative mechanism along with other confidence and security building measures aimed at consolidating the ceasefire, including withdrawal of snipers. This clearly indicates that Azerbaijan is not interested in consolidating ceasefire and bears all responsibility for deterioration on the ground. Any counterclaims as it was suggested by the Azerbaijani note verbal distributed yesterday is mere a blatant misrepresentation and an attempt to engage the organization into blame game. Our intentions and actions are clear. We are ready to go along with the investigative and

verification measures of the ceasefire consolidation as proposed by international mediators.

Finally, we have noticed that Azerbaijani side again initiated a current issue under the title which distorts the nature and essence of the conflict and undermines the peace process.

My delegation has indicated this at the previous meeting of the Permanent Council and yet Azerbaijani delegation acted in the same non-constructive spirit which creates accusatory monologues instead of inclusive dialogue. Hence, we did not take floor under that current issue and we certainly reject all protracted and new allegations which were brought under that agenda item.

STATEMENT ON THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN NAGORNO-KARABAKH

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, March 19, 2015

We would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the circulated in the OSCE note verbal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic on the upcoming Parliamentary elections in NK.

The right to vote and form Governments is an alienable human right and no any people should be deprived of this right in the OSCE area. By the virtue of the Universal Declaration for Human Rights people are entitled to enjoy all human rights regardless of the status of their territory. In the OSCE area there is no any other way of forming government but through democratic elections.

The elections of the representatives of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh are essential for the conflict resolution. The Prague Decision of the Committee of Senior Officials dated February 28, 1992 notes the legitimate will of the population of Nagorno-Karabakh to enjoy all their human rights including those contained in the Principles of the Helsinki Final Act. The same decision singles out the authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh among interested parties of conflict resolution. Likewise, the elected authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh are referred as interested party in the March 24, 1992 Helsinki Decision which initiated Minsk Process. Since the beginning of the Minsk Process, the elected representatives of the Nagorno-Karabakh have been involved in the conflict settlement efforts of international mediators.

It should be also recalled that the international mediators acknowledged the need of the Nagorno-Karabakh to form the elected authorities. In the statement dated July 20, 2012 in relation of elections in Nagorno-Karabakh the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs inter alia stressed “The Co-Chairs acknowledge the need for the de facto authorities in NK to try to organize democratically the public life of their population with such a procedure”.

Armenia supports the realization of human rights of the people of NK and we reserve our right to come back to the different aspects of this issue on appropriate occasions.

First Reply

We raise this current issue, because elections in Nagorno-Karabakh are in line with our perception of the settlement of the conflict through full upholding of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulates that in applying the Declaration “...no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty”. As far as rights to vote or participation in the governing bodies are concerned, they are fully enshrined in the article 21 of the Declaration.

The reaction of the Azerbaijani Delegation regarding the exercise by the people of Nagorno-Karabakh of their human rights didn't come as a surprise to us. It goes in line with the attempts of the Azerbaijani side to present Nagorno-Karabakh as a “grey zone” where anarchy and crime are flourishing. The regular conduct of elections in Nagorno-Karabakh comes to prove that such attempts are futile.

Once again, every conflict is unique. As I have stated many times, Nagorno-Karabakh has never been part of independent Azerbaijan. Authorities of Soviet Azerbaijan grossly violated the fundamental rights of the Armenian population of NK and 27 years ago embarked on mass-pogroms, deportations, abolishment of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region and finally, large scale aggression unleashed against Armenian people of NK.

Second Reply

We are disappointed to see negative remarks by delegations of certain participating States, who appear to be parts to certain conflicts. In this regard, we would like to stress that, first, every conflict is unique in its nature and root causes and the simplistic approach to view them through the same prism leads to distortion of the essence of these conflicts. Certain points in the statements of some of our colleagues we hear regularly in the exact way, but in different context.

Thus, drawing parallels between conflicts is unacceptable.

REMARKS AT THE EVENT DEDICATED TO THE CENTENNIAL OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Vienna, Representation of the European Commission, April 7, 2015

On April 24, the Armenian people will commemorate the Centennial of the events that marked the beginning of the mass atrocities of the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire. During more than forty years, the governments of the Ottoman Empire succeeded in the cleaning out indigenous Armenian population from the entire territory of the Empire by carrying out a genocidal policy of massacres and deportations, the culmination of which was the act of Genocide during the First World War.

The scale and scope of atrocities committed by the Young Turk government made it an unprecedented historical tragedy, aimed at the total annihilation of a whole nation and claiming one and a half million Armenian lives.

The Centennial of the Armenian Genocide is a noble and sad occasion for the Armenians throughout the world, as it singularly represents the inglorious and frequent persecution of my nation. The Genocide has left deep scars in the psyche and body of Armenians. Our people are scattered all over the world since the Genocide has led to creation of a Diaspora which is mostly descended from men and women who had lived in their ancestral homeland for millennia before they were uprooted and cleansed away.

The horrors of the Armenian Genocide served as a strong impetus for legal scholars, and historians to define a term to properly describe this nastiest crime against humanity and codify it into the international law. In his 1944 work *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* Polish lawyer Raphael Lemkin created the word “genocide” in order to designate the scale of atrocities and identify the mass scale atrocity that targets a people. He recognized that planned and coordinated destruction of a people or a nation aims not solely or even primarily at outright killing but also at the destruction of culture, language, traditions, social and political infrastructures. The crimes against humanity that inspired Lemkin to fight for international laws barring acts that intend to destroy a nation or people were mass-killing of Armenians and Nazi atrocities during the World War

II. His work resulted in adoption of the special convention of UN General Assembly in 1948 “On Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide”. Later on, the events of the 1915-1916 were characterized in UN Human Rights Commission reports as “the first Genocide of the Twentieth century” (1973) and “as an example of Genocide” (1985).

The international community has joined the people of Armenia in expressing its solidarity and compassion on this solemn occasion of commemoration the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide. High-level delegations from many countries will pay tribute to the victims of the Genocide with a strong determination to prevent new crimes against humanity. The global forum “Against Crime of Genocide” is going to take place in Yerevan. It will bring together many genocide scholars, historians and lawyers.

The Armenian Genocide was a sad precursor to the Holocaust during the Second World War, and other genocidal campaigns. It reminds us of the risks of not learning the lessons of history, the dangers of genocide denial, and the long-term negative consequences of allowing crimes to go unrecognized and unpunished. Recognition of past genocides is a key to understanding and preventing future genocides. We consider the Armenian Genocide to be not only a tragedy for our nation, but also a crime against humanity of a global scale which was internationally recognized at the time and, if honestly acknowledged could have helped to prevent future atrocities.

Although there is a 1948 United Nations convention aimed at prevention of the genocides, we feel that this or any other document cannot be properly enforced unless the previous massacres are exposed and examined. Armenia continues to work actively with the United Nations and other international fora to achieve a universal condemnation of such acts in any part of the world. An international recognition of the Armenian Genocide will serve the dual purpose of exposing the first Genocide of the XX century and prevention of new Genocides.

It is symbolic that on the eve of the Centennial the Genocide Prevention Resolution initiated by the Republic of Armenia, was adopted at the 28th session of the UN Human Rights Council. The resolution highlights that public denials or attempts to justify the crime of genocide

undermine the fight against impunity and genocide-prevention efforts. The Resolution calls upon all UN member-states, in order to deter future occurrences of genocide, to cooperate in strengthening collaboration among existing mechanisms that contribute to the prevention of massive, serious and systematic violations of human rights that could lead to genocide. The document emphasizes the important role education can play in genocide prevention, and further encourages Governments to promote, as appropriate, educational programs and projects that contribute to the prevention of genocide. The resolution invites States as a preventive measure to establish national days of remembrance of victims of genocide, to ensure that such horrendous crimes are never forgotten and provide an opportunity for everyone to learn lessons from the past and create a safer future.

The remembrance days of the victims of Mets Yeghern, Shoah, genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Darfur and other genocides should be approached with universal willingness to move towards recognition and reconciliation. This requires political commitments by the governments without subordinating that noble humanitarian cause to any bilateral or geopolitical calculations.

Armenia's renewal of independence was an opportunity to begin a new era in relations with Turkey, but Turkey's attitude towards the newly independent Armenia was anything but friendly. Despite Armenian Government's visionary position, Turkey refused to establish diplomatic relations, closed the borders with Armenia, maintains an economic blockade, denies and falsifies history. As long as the last section of the Iron Curtain, the Turkish-Armenian border, remains closed, this will impede development and regional integration of the Caucasus region, and will introduce a constant element of instability.

Future of the Armenian-Turkish bilateral relations can be based on the historic rapprochement between the two nations. Unfortunately, denial and rejection have taken deep root in Turkish society. They've been justified by rhetoric of Armenian treachery, aggression, and territorial ambition. Yet 28 years ago, in the preamble of the European Parliament resolution "On the political solution of the Armenian Question" it was pointed out that "the Turkish Government, by refusing to this day to acknowledge the Genocide

of 1915, thus continues to deny the Armenian nation the right to have its own history..., that the historically proven Genocide hasn't got neither political condemnation nor appropriate compensation..., that the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by Turkey will from now on be considered to be a humane treatment of moral rehabilitation towards Armenians which will only do honor to the Turkish Government.”

In our believe acceptance of the historic truth can heal the deep-running discord between the Armenian and Turkish people. Recognizing the Armenian Genocide can in no way be viewed as a humiliation, threat or attack on the Turkish people. Many Turkish intellectuals, writers and academics have begun down that difficult road to introspection and study. Some are doing this publicly and with great transparency. In this context, it is essential that the international community doesn't turn a blind eye, but instead consistently extends its hand, its example, its history of transcending.

Duty of memory and right to the truth are indispensable for paving the path of reconciliation while condoning, trivializing, denying and even justifying such crimes strenghtens dividing lines in the European continent.

**REMARKS AT THE EVENT DEDICATED TO THE 125TH
ANNIVERSARY OF FRANZ WERFEL**

Vienna, National Library of Austria, April 9, 2015

On April 24, the Armenian people will commemorate the Centennial of the events that marked the beginning of the mass atrocities of the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire. The scale and scope of the crimes committed by the Ottoman government made it an unprecedented historical tragedy, aimed at the total annihilation of a whole nation and claiming one and a half million Armenian lives.

It is symbolic that the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide coincided with another important date for all of us – the 125th Anniversary of Franz Werfel, an Austrian-Bohemian novelist, playwright, and poet whose career spanned the difficult years of World War I, the Interwar period, and World War II. One of his monumental works, the novel *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*, is one of the most required books for every Armenian, in Armenia, or in Diaspora.

Werfel's commitment to the Armenian cause was unequivocal. It was during his trip through the Middle East in 1930, which took him and his wife through Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Lebanon, that he came face to face with the issue. In Damascus he saw groups of abandoned, dirty, hungry children, whose huge dark eyes haunted him. When he asked who they were, he learned that they were the survivors of the Armenians massacred by the Turks, and that no one was caring for them. Werfel could not get their images out of his mind and the idea for the book "became virulent."

In addition to researching the saga of the resistance, Werfel also drew on his extensive knowledge about the Armenian churches. Werfel was familiar with the Armenian churches and cloisters in Venice and Vienna, and the documents in the Mekhitarist archives provided him with valuable source material.

The novel was translated into eighteen languages and played very important role in the process of the world recognition of the Armenian Genocide. *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* made history, not only as a work of art, but as a political message. The political impact of Werfel's work is still felt today, in the form of the continuing strife around Turkish recognition of the past, and the support to the expanding debate in Turkish civil society around the Genocide.

**STATEMENT ON ONGOING VIOLATIONS OF THE
INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW BY AZERBAIJAN**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, April 16, 2015

We would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council on the ongoing violations of international humanitarian law by Azerbaijan in the context of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. These violations are perpetrated equally against the civilian population and prisoners of war.

In recent years there have been a number of cases of torture and killing of the Armenian civilian hostages and prisoners of war in Azerbaijani captivity. Two civilians from borderline settlements -namely 20-year-old Manvel Saribekyan and 32-year-old Karen Petrosyan, have been publicly humiliated, tortured and killed. Another civilian – 77-year-old Mamikon Khojoyan, died immediately after release because of injuries incompatible with life inflicted on him during captivity.

The torture and killing of Karen Petrosyan is shocking both by its brutality and personal involvement of an Azerbaijani high ranking military officer. The Azerbaijani media broadcasted video images of degrading treatment of Karen Petrosyan in the presence of Azerbaijani lieutenant general Rovshan Akperov. A number of OSCE participating states expressed their concern over this case. The U.S. Department of State in particular «called on the Government of Azerbaijan to conduct a full and transparent investigation into this incident and to make its findings public».

However, the Azerbaijani authorities have not held anyone accountable in connection with this murder. Forensic examination of body of Karen Petrosyan revealed clear signs of torture that led to his death.

The public humiliation and torture have also been practiced against Armenian prisoners of war. The Armenian prisoner of war Hakob Injighulian was compelled to participate in the fabricated interview on Azerbaijani TV which is a blatant violation of Geneva Conventions. Later the secret video materials of interrogation of Mr. Injighulyan by Azerbaijani special services have been confiscated from an Azerbaijani saboteur group, which together with the testimony of the prisoner of war

himself stand as yet another clear evidence of brutal treatment of Armenian hostages in the Azerbaijani captivity.

We do realize that overall human rights standards are poor in Azerbaijan. Rejection to accept the delegation of the United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture last September is very illustrative in this regard. However, there could not be any excuses to the gross and systematic violations of the international humanitarian law. As the Convention itself stipulates, it must be fully applied in all circumstances to all persons who are protected by those instruments.

The Azerbaijani practice of torturing and killing of the Armenian hostages should be adequately condemned and efforts should be undertaken to stop this deplorable practice.

The humane treatment of Azerbaijani civilians and prisoners of war by Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh should serve as an invitation to follow the suit and equally respect the international humanitarian law. Azerbaijan should not take them as encouragement for impunity.

The Armenian sides have always endorsed the cooperation on humanitarian issues. Exchange of information on the missing persons has been one of those issues on which Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh have a long history of close collaboration with the ICRC both before and after establishment of the cease-fire regime in 1994.

The Armenian sides have tried to contribute in a good faith to this highly important humanitarian issue and have also used good offices of ICRC to submit to Azerbaijani side the inquiry of whereabouts of 94 persons which went missing in the context of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and were reported by various channels to be under the Azerbaijani captivity. For the record - overall there are 413 registered missing persons in Armenia and another 425 in Nagorno-Karabakh. Regrettably, the practice of the past two decades has demonstrated that in this case again Azerbaijan refuses to exchange information or provides only fragmented or incomplete information on the missing persons, thus hampering the humanitarian efforts and continuing to cause sufferings for the families of the missing persons.

In our view the Red Cross Offices in Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert can play crucial role in gathering information on the missing persons. Armenia supports the project of collecting DNA samples from the relatives of missing persons which is being implemented by the ICRC. Yet, it would be very difficult for the ICRC alone to effectively address this issue. Therefore, Armenia keeps strongly advocating for the resumption of the meetings between state commissions on hostages, prisoners of war and missing persons. However, Azerbaijan rejects all proposals to meet ever since 2006 when the last joint meeting of the state commissions had taken place.

Armenia has welcomed and supported the initiative of ICRC to monitor respect for International Humanitarian Law at borderline villages particularly in the time of harvest. Regretfully, Azerbaijan systematically impedes ICRC activities in this regard. Recently, it has even resorted to target the vehicles clearly bearing the signs of the Red Cross on the Armenian side of the state border, in the vicinity of Chinari village. Needless to say, that the full and unimpeded exercise by the ICRC of its duties is instrumental for contributing to the humanitarian situation on the ground especially since Azerbaijan refuses to engage in any type of cooperation with the Armenian side.

Finally, it should be stressed that Azerbaijan did not sign and ratify First and Second Additional Protocols to Geneva Conventions Relating to the Protection of Victims of International and Non-international Armed Conflicts. The reluctance to join international community in adopting legal obligations on issues of protection of victims of armed conflicts singles out Azerbaijan in the OSCE and vividly demonstrates its attitude towards the humanitarian issues. If Azerbaijan is sincere about its proclaimed adherence to the humanitarian issues probably it may start from acceding to relevant international framework.

In conclusion, let me underline that Armenia will continue its cooperation both with the Minsk Group Co-Chairs and the ICRC on humanitarian issues.

**STATEMENT ON THE CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS ALONG
THE LINE OF CONTACT BETWEEN NAGORNO-KARABAKH
AND AZERBAIJAN**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, April 30, 2015

We would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the continued ceasefire violations along the Line of Contact between Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan.

On April 21st a military vehicle, transporting military personnel, was hit by distant explosion of radio-controlled mine. As a result, servicemen of Nagorno-Karabakh Defense Army were wounded.

This deliberate military provocation was carefully planned. To inflict the highest possible number of casualties the Azerbaijani military leadership exercised video control of the terrain by UAV. Later on, the video shooting was distributed via social networks. This deplorable practice of promotion of violence through social networks is in line with the best “practices” of terrorist organizations in the Middle East.

It is noteworthy that Azerbaijan does not conceal its ceasefire violations but even publicize them. Moreover, the Azerbaijani Minister of Defense did not shy away to openly acknowledge that ceasefire violations are taking place in line with his orders. At the meeting with Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office he claimed that he had ordered armed forces to immediately attack any moving military object in complete disregard to the calls of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs to strictly adhere to the 1994 ceasefire agreement

In response to our previous statements the Azerbaijani delegation pointed out that the Minister of Defense of Azerbaijan is young and newly appointed. However, the level of maturity of Azerbaijani highest military leadership cannot justify steps aimed at deteriorating security situation. To the contrary, this type of extremely important position should be entrusted to a person of high integrity and responsibility in order to prevent reckless adventures. And we reiterate here that the Azerbaijani side bears all the responsibility for the consequences of its military provocations.

**STATEMENT ON THE COMMEMORATION OF THE
CENTENNIAL OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, April 30, 2015

The Remembrance and Education of Genocide is an important part of the OSCE human dimension commitments, and we would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the worldwide commemoration of the centennial of the Armenian Genocide.

The commemorative events took place worldwide including in the OSCE region from Vancouver to Vladivostok. Numerous conferences, religious services, commemorations, rallies have been held at the governmental, parliamentary, community and civil society levels. Political statements commemorating victims of the Armenian Genocide were delivered by world leaders, Parliaments, and representatives of international organizations

The commemorative events evolved around four themes: remembrance, gratitude, prevention and revival.

There were three key remembrance ceremonies that delivered worldwide message of memory and truth. The major religious services have been held respectively by His Holiness Pope Francis in the Saint Peter's Cathedral on April 12th and by His Holiness Catholicos of All Armenians in Etchmiadzin on April 23rd. The Pontific and the Catholicos paid tribute to the Armenian martyrs of the first genocide of the 20th century. The Armenian Apostolic Church canonized the one and half million victims of Genocide thus recovering dignity of people who were killed because of their religious and ethnic distinctiveness.

On April 24th the representatives of 60 delegations including heads of states, parliaments, governments and ministers paid tribute to the perished innocent at the Memorial of the Victims of Genocide in Yerevan. Along with the President Sargsyan, President Anastasiades of Cyprus, President Nikolic of Serbia, President Holland of France and President Putin of Russia delivered statements that shared pain and memory with the descendants of victims through acknowledging crime perpetrated against them.

The memory and truth are essential in overcoming the pain and healing the scars of genocide. As it was stressed by Pope Francis at April 12th religious service: “It is necessary, and indeed a duty, to honor their memory, for whenever memory fades, it means that evil allows wounds to fester. Concealing or denying evil is like allowing a wound to keep bleeding without bandaging it!”

This powerful message is credible because it is true. It guides us through despair and crude realism of geopolitical calculations into perspectives of humanity and unity of international community in truth. The past days showed to what extent the international community can unite itself just for pronouncing the truth regardless of political or ideological considerations. The statements of German President Joachim Gauck as well as the declaration of the Austrian Parliament showed that nations who were 100 years ago allies of the Ottoman Empire are ready to face their part of history just for the sake of truth.

We have approached the centennial of Armenian Genocide with the renewed faith in humanity and gratitude to all those who stood by us to this day. As it was pointed out by President Sargsyan: ”Human memory is a unique sieve of history. History shall always remember and cherish all the individuals, countries, and international organizations that came to help at the hardest times and saved not only the physical existence of millions of people, but also their ruined faith in humanity”.

We remember with gratitude those brave French sailors who saved the Armenian population of Musa Dagh, those representatives of Russian intelligentsia who tried to save cultural heritage of the Armenian people, the American Near East Relief organization which literally gathered thousands of orphans from the desert of Syria and gave them new life, German missionaries, who documented the Genocide and published their reports despite censorship. We haven't forgotten neither the Turkish officials, nor the ordinary Turks, who courageously displayed their morality and openly defied the cruel orders while protecting Armenians.

We are grateful to all those who associate themselves with humanists such as Fridtjof Nansen, Johannes Lepsius, Maria Jacobsen and many

known and unknown representatives of Red Cross, missionaries and all people of good will.

Armenia committed itself to the prevention of the crime of genocide and made it as a priority. The protection of the population which can be a subject of genocide is firmly embedded in the Armenian security strategy.

The Global forum against crime of Genocide which brought together 600 parliamentarians amongst them Presidents and Vice-Presidents of Parliaments, practitioners, diplomats, academicians, prominent genocide scholars from over 50 countries addressed the issue of prevention on April 22-23 in Yerevan. Senior representatives of international organizations including Thorbjorn Yagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe also attended and addressed the forum. The Global forum adopted an important declaration that was circulated by my delegation in the OSCE.

Participants of the forum widely acknowledged that the denial of genocides profoundly hampers prevention efforts. The current genocidal acts perpetrated against Christian and other communities by terrorist organizations in Syria and Iraq on exactly the same territories where final phase of the Armenian Genocide took place are stark reminders that denial of the crime and dehumanization of victims do not merely belong to history.

The UN Human Rights Council resolution on genocide prevention adopted a month ago clearly establishes that attempts to deny or justify genocide may risk undermining the fight against impunity, reconciliation and efforts to prevent genocide.

The idea of revival has always guided us in our efforts to overcome consequences of genocide. Peace, human rights and opportunities of economic and sustainable development should be secured to create enabling environment to this end.

We firmly believe that Turkey has a better choice than to justify or associate itself with those who perpetrated Genocide.

Turkish civil society shows a brave example here. I remember that at the funeral of Hrand Dink hundreds of thousands of Turks were shouting “we are all Hrand, we are all Armenians.” Recovering the dignity of

victims not making excuses for perpetrators can lead us to much anticipated reconciliation.

First Reply

We thank the Delegations of United States, Russia, France, Greece, Cyprus and Germany for their statements and paying tribute to the memory of the innocent victims of the Armenian Genocide.

In reply to the statement of the distinguished Ambassador of Turkey we would like to convey some remarks.

We acknowledge that not only Armenians suffered hundred years ago in the Ottoman Empire. We can never agree to equalize premediated, massive and grave mass atrocities that completely annihilated indigenous population of Anatolia and Eastern Part of Ottoman Empire with lawful military casualties inflicted by war in which Ottoman Empire entered voluntarily.

We cannot agree with the claim of Turkish delegation that it is up to historians to define or condemn the crime perpetrated against Armenians. The Armenian Genocide has been referencing case for the 1948 Genocide Convention and the name of Lemkin today was pronounced also by the US delegation today who presented the statement of the President Obama.

The whole body of genocide studies is established on the case of the Armenian Genocide as a first case of modern or industrial mass. It is a public knowledge. We just circulated references of leading specialists in the field of genocide studies on the Armenian Genocide. Hence there is no need for such discussions.

Genocide denial and justification lead to impunity and repetition of crimes again humanity. Hundred years after the Armenian Genocide Christians, including Armenians and Assyrians continue to face massacres in Middle East and their cultural heritage is being destroyed in an attempt to erase their civilization from the region.

It is not coincidence that the Independence Day of Armenia last year was marked by the destruction of the Saint Martyrs Armenian Church, the sanctuary for the remains of many victims of the Armenian Genocide in Syrian town of Deir el-Zor by terrorists in a sad, yet symbolic link between

past and present crimes against humanity. And just next day of commemoration alt Armenian cathedral of Aleppo was destroyed.

We understand the desire of Azerbaijan to use the opportunity to yet again demonstrate its kinship solidarity even in deplorable deeds. We also understand the frustration of Azerbaijani authorities, who were unable to carry out the same crime against humanity against Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh. I would like to stress that my country will never allow the Nagorno-Karabakh people to be a subject of such crime. Armenia will continue to guarantee physical security of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh

World War I is one of the darkest pages of humankind, which claimed millions of innocent lives, both military and civilian. Under its cover and pretext first crimes against humanity were committed.

An artilleryman of Armenian descent, Captain Sargis Torosyan also joined the troops of the Ottoman Empire in the Battle of Gallipoli. He was an officer, dedicated to the defence and security of the Empire, like tens of thousands of Armenians, serving in the Ottoman Army. Sargis Torosyan was decorated with Ottoman military awards for his loyalty and heroism. Nevertheless, in that same year, marking the culmination of mass killing and forced deportation, preliminary planned and perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire, the wave of massacres did not bypass even Sargis Torosyan. His parents, brutally killed, and sister, perished in the Syrian Desert, were among 1.5 million Armenian victims of Genocide.

We firmly believe that peace and friendship first and foremost shall be based on the courage to confront the past, as well as on recognition of full-fledged universal memory.

Having said this, we regret that the Turkish side even distorted the history one more time by shifting the day of Gallipoli commemoration to April 24. This sad development showed to what degree Turkish authorities are ready to face own past.

Second Reply

We would like to summarize our points. What message we are trying to deliver here is that duty of memory and right to the truth are indispensable for paving the path of reconciliation; that acceptance of the

historic truth can heal the deep running discord between the Armenian and Turkish societies; that recognition of the past can in no way be viewed as humiliation or attack on the Turkish people.

In my statement I mentioned many good things about Turks and the Turkish society. What is wrong with that? Statements of the Turkish leaders came under the tremendous pressure of the international community for the first time in 100 years. What really the leadership of Turkey thinks was expressed by the President Erdogan just two weeks ago as a reaction to the international remembrance events, when he stated that the Turkish Government could deport Armenians living today in Turkey, but it is not doing that. It means that the threat of deportation of Armenians is still in the minds of the Turkish leaders.

We invited President Erdogan to visit Armenia on 24th of April to offer apology and pay tribute to the memory of victims of Genocide. What happened next, we all know. The real aim behind the commemoration of the Battle of Gallipoli was hijacking the international attention from the Armenian Genocide Commemoration from the Genocide commemoration on 24th of April, the day when 250 representatives of Armenian community of Istanbul, members of the Ottoman Parliament, writers, composers became the first victims of the deportation and massacre. Today Turkey continues its anti-Armenian policy by refusing to establish diplomatic relations and imposing land blockade.

**STATEMENT ON THE 21ST ANNIVERSARY OF THE
CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, May 21, 2015

The Ceasefire Agreement of 1994 between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan, to which Armenia has also joined, marked the end of large-scale hostilities. Its value was indispensable in establishing the necessary conditions for the political settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, providing an opportunity to prepare societies for lasting peace. The fact that these opportunities have not been sufficiently used, should not diminish the value of ceasefire since there is no alternative to the peace. While the comprehensive resolution of the conflict is still pending it remains the only agreement signed by all parties to the conflict

The Ceasefire Agreement was an outcome of long and difficult negotiations and had preceded by series of talks between parties concerned. The result of these talks led to the first exchange of letters between Ministers of Defense of Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan. Then on September 3, 1993 Heydar Aliyev, the President of Azerbaijan, issued a signed authorization, among other officials, to Afiyeddin Jalilov, the Deputy President of the Parliament, “to negotiate the arrangement of the meeting of the highest authorities of Azerbaijan and NKR”. Arkadi Ghukasyan, the Foreign Minister of NKR, received a similar authorization. Consequently, the meetings between Deputy President of the Azerbaijani Parliament and the Foreign Minister of Nagorno-Karabakh took place on September 12th and 13th 1993 in Moscow, where a joint communiqué was adopted. As a result, the first meeting between Robert Kocharyan and Heydar Aliyev, the Leaders of NKR and Azerbaijan was held in Moscow on 25 September, 1993.

The direct negotiations between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan prepared a ground for the signing of the Bishkek Protocol between the Speakers of Parliaments of Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan followed by the Agreement on Ceasefire, reached on May 12, 1994 and signed by the Minister of Defense of Azerbaijan, the Commander of the Nagorno-Karabakh Armed Forces, as well as the Minister of Defense of

Armenia. On February 4, 1995 the Agreement on Ceasefire Consolidation was concluded in the same trilateral format. The successful conclusion of ceasefire agreement clearly demonstrates that breakthrough is possible even under very difficult circumstances once Azerbaijan recognizes Nagorno-Karabakh as an equal party to the conflict and enters into meaningful dialogue.

The negative dynamics of recent years, which is marked by subversive actions, and targeting civilian population show that we cannot take the ceasefire for granted. Constant steps need to be made in order to strengthen and consolidate the ceasefire regime, avoid ceasefire violations and human casualties, completely exclude possibility of new large-scale hostilities. The OSCE is directly involved in ceasefire monitoring through the presence of Personal Representative of Chairman-in-Office. We value this presence and always advocate for the expansion of this mandate in accordance with the evolving security needs.

We fully concur with the views of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs, who have constantly underlined the importance of implementing confidence and security building measures between the parties to the conflict. We have always stated that CSBMs, even if modest but necessarily incremental, can play an important role in narrowing the gap and building understanding between parties to the conflict.

Our consent to the proposals of the OSCE Co-Chairs relating to the consolidation of the cease-fire regime, withdrawal of snipers from the Line of Contact and the setting up of the investigative mechanism into ceasefire violations is still standing.

Together with the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs Armenia will consistently continue to exert joint efforts towards exclusively peaceful settlement of the conflict between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh.

Reply

In response to the statement of the distinguished Ambassador of Azerbaijan, we would like to repeat one more time that Nagorno-Karabakh never was a part of independent Azerbaijan. Thus, the points of the distinguished Ambassador of Azerbaijan regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict are absolutely groundless and baseless.

Unfortunately, until now instead of preparing its people for peace the Azerbaijani leadership has been doing just the reverse. In spite of the several appeals of the international community to refrain from provocative rhetoric and actions, Azerbaijan continues its bellicose statements, glorification of murderers and persecution of peace advocates, the propaganda of xenophobia, intolerance and hatred, which leads to raising tension and escalation of the situation in the region.

Armenia is committed to the peaceful settlement of the conflict on the basis of the principles of the international law, namely non-use of force or the threat of force, equal rights and self-determination of peoples and territorial integrity and stands ready to continue negotiations based on the proposals of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs.

When it comes to the UN SC resolutions referred here by Azerbaijan, it should be mentioned that they were adopted during the military phase of the conflict and did not lead to immediate cease of hostilities due to the position of Azerbaijan. Today after 20 years of ceasefire Azerbaijan refers to single element of resolutions by downplaying all others such as lift of blockade or neglecting parties of the conflict referred in the resolutions. All the UN SC Resolutions have clearly recognized Nagorno-Karabakh as a party to the conflict. If Azerbaijan is willing to implement the UN SC resolutions it should first and foremost reach authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh in achieving progress on the conflict resolution.

Not only there is no any reference to the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia in those Resolutions, but they clearly indicate that the territory of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic and the surrounding military security zone are in control of the Nagorno-Karabakh Defense Army. The Resolution 822 (1993) refers to “local Armenian forces”.

Moreover, the Resolutions in point, inter alia, include the following provisions: condemnation of the violations of cease-fire, demand for immediate cessation of hostilities and hostile acts with a view to establishing a durable cease-fire, calls for restoration of economic, transport and energy links in the region and unimpeded access for international humanitarian relief efforts in the region. All these measures were clearly and unequivocally addressed to Azerbaijan and unabashedly rejected by that country further escalating the military situation.

RESPONSE TO THE STATEMENT OF THE AZERBAIJANI DELEGATION

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, May 21, 2015

We took note of the statement of the Azerbaijani delegation. It is remarkable that Azerbaijan attaches importance to foreign visits of the representatives of authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh and even advertises these visits in the OSCE.

The leadership of Nagorno-Karabakh pays visits to many OSCE participating States. If Azerbaijani delegation visits the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of NKR, it will find full information about international contacts of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Therefore, we do not see any relevance for this current issue. If we proceed through the line of arguments of Azerbaijani delegation then every Thursday, we should discuss international agenda of the authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh. If Azerbaijani delegation raises this issue in anticipation of having direct contacts with the authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh somewhere in the third country then perhaps there is a sense to these discussions.

Finally, we would like to draw the attention of the Azerbaijani Ambassador to our previous statement, in which we referred to the meeting of the president Heydar Aliyev, who is considered as national leader of Azerbaijan with the leader of NKR.

We invite the current leaders of Azerbaijan to follow this good example, if they are interested in peaceful settlement of the conflict.

REMARKS AT THE ARMENIAN BRANDY PRESENTATION

Vienna, Hotel Kempinski, May 28, 2015

First, I would like to thank you all for coming to our Armenian Brandy presentation event. Especially I would like to welcome the Executive Secretary of CTBTO Lassina Zerbo, Director of OSCE Secretary General's Office Ambassador Marcel Pesko, my dear colleagues Ambassadors, Father Tiran Petrossian of the Armenian Apostolic Church, representatives of the Armenian community.

This is our second presentation of the Armenian Brandy in Vienna, first one was organized two years ago at the Hotel de France. Today's presentation is very special because of two reasons. First, this event is dedicated to the 97th Anniversary of the First Armenian Republic. It was an important milestone in the history of the Armenian nation. After 6 long centuries of dependence the Armenian national statehood was restored in 1918. And the second reason. The Yerevan's Brandy Company recently opened its representation here in Vienna, headed by Mr. Lucas Greser, and we hope that the Armenian Brandy will expand its market in Austria.

I would like to thank you Mr. Greser, the head of the Yerevan's Brandy Company Harutiun Isayan and representative of the Central Bank of Armenia Karapet Gevorkian for their assistance in organizing tonight's event.

My intelligence sources had informed me that today there is a couple among us which is celebrating an important date, wedding anniversary. Our congratulations go to Ambassador of Slovenia Andrej and his wife Polona Rahten.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF
AMBASSADOR ANDREY SOROKIN, HEAD OF THE OSCE
OFFICE IN YEREVAN**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, July 16, 2015

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 programs 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, the flagship program continues to be the regulatory framework reform which already has positive impact on the GDP rate. We support cooperation between the Office and Aarhus centers, 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 programs 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 endeavors.

**STATEMENT ON THE ESCALATION OF THE SITUATION
ALONG THE LINE OF CONTACT BETWEEN NAGORNO-
KARABAKH AND AZERBAIJAN AND THE ARMENIA-
AZERBAIJAN BORDER**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, September 10, 2015

We would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the recent escalation of situation along the Line of Contact between Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan and the Armenia-Azerbaijan border, which resulted in the loss of lives and sharply raised the tension.

An alarming development is that the Azerbaijani military has started to use heavy weapons, including 120 mm. mortars, as well as 107 mm. rockets. The Azerbaijani military units continue to deliberately target border villages and civilians. Two civilians were wounded in recent days.

The escalation of situation along the Line of Contact was accompanied by large-scale military exercises in close vicinity to the Line of Contact and the border of Armenia with participation of 65 000 military, including 6000 reservists and hundreds of battle tanks, ACVs, artillery units and air forces.

We are deeply concerned and strongly condemn these provocative actions, which fuel military tension in the region. In undertaking these actions the Azerbaijani side once again demonstrated its attitude towards the calls of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs addressed to the official Baku to strictly observe the ceasefire and refrain from steps escalating the situation.

The military provocations go hand in hand with the continuous efforts of Azerbaijan to reduce the OSCE presence in the region in general and the conflict zone in particular, which undermines the early warning capacity of the Organization and serves to facilitate gradual transition from ceasefire regime to the state of large-scale hostilities.

Armenia calls on Azerbaijani side to observe its commitments to a peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and refrain from the actions that will further escalate situation on the Line of Contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan and Armenia-Azerbaijan border.

By rejecting the proposals of the international community on the establishment of a mechanism of investigation of incidents, Azerbaijan is assuming the whole responsibility for the ceasefire violations.

We reiterate our firm position that the clear and unequivocal commitment to the ceasefire and confidence building by the parties concerned is the only way for creating conducive environment for the peace process.

**STATEMENT ON THE ESCALATION OF SITUATION ALONG
THE LINE OF CONTACT BETWEEN NAGORNO-KARABAKH
AND AZERBAIJAN AND THE ARMENIA-AZERBAIJAN BORDER**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, October 8, 2015

We took note of the statement made by distinguished representative of France on behalf of the Minsk Group Co-Chair countries.

We would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the Note Verbal of the Permanent Delegation of Armenia, dated September 28, in regard to the recent escalation of situation along the Line of Contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia-Azerbaijan state border.

The last escalation introduced new alarming trends. First, it was characterized with high the number of casualties among both civilian and militaries. Three Armenian civilians from two borderline settlements of Armenia were killed by Azerbaijani armed forces which shelled borderline villages from mortar launchers. All killed civilians were women, two of them elderly. They were killed in their own houses and farms, far from military positions.

Second, Azerbaijani armed forces shelled the military infrastructure of Nagorno-Karabakh Defence Army located five km away from the Line of Contact using 120 mm. mortars, 107 mm. rockets and 122 mm. D-30 howitzers. The latter was used for the first time since signing of the ceasefire agreement in 1994. The heavy shelling resulted in 4 casualties and 16 wounded of the Nagorno-Karabakh Defence Army.

Killing civilians in borderline territory and shelling military infrastructures far away from the Line of Contact indicate that Azerbaijan has deliberately chosen to escalate situation into new a stage of confrontation.

The intentional targeting of civilians along with systematic torture and killings of the civilians from borderline territory of Armenia under the Azerbaijani custody may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity and these crimes should not go unpunished. We call on participating states to condemn in strongest terms the crimes perpetrated against civilians.

It should be stressed that the timing of this deliberate escalation is certainly not accidental. We strongly condemn the recent ceasefire violation by Azerbaijan, which has developed an ill practice of escalating the situation, even at the expense of human casualties ahead of important visits to the region and high level meetings, thus undermining the meetings and impeding the negotiation process and this yet another provocation by Azerbaijan came as a response to the expectation, expressed by the Minsk Group Co-Chairs on holding productive talks between Armenian and Azerbaijani Foreign Ministers in New York.

We agree that the introduction of the investigative mechanism to cease-fire violations is essential in maintaining ceasefire and stopping blame game. Indeed, Armenia has agreed to introduce an investigative mechanism while Azerbaijan consistently refused to do so. This fact, which is acknowledged by the Co-chairs of the Minsk Group themselves in their last press releases of September 26th, clearly indicates who is interested both in cease-fire violations and blame game.

The consistent efforts of Azerbaijani side to downsize the presence of the PRCiO Office on which my delegation made a point earlier today also fits into overall policy of Azerbaijan to prevent consolidation of ceasefire.

It is apparent that when Baku is interested in ceasefire, as it was the case during European games, held in that country, Azerbaijani armed forces are able to maintain it quite efficiently. The data on ceasefire violations before, during and after this event is very illustrative in this regard. This fact makes absolutely clear which party initiates ceasefire violations.

We firmly believe that process of political settlement of the conflict requires a conducive atmosphere on the ground. To reach fair, lasting and negotiated peace, we urgently need to consolidate the ceasefire and put an end to human casualties.

**REMARKS AT THE EVENT DEDICATED TO THE 24TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIA'S INDEPENDENCE**

Vienna, Musikverein, September 21, 2015

I would like to thank all our guests - Ambassadors and diplomats, members of the Austrian Parliament, representatives of the Government, Municipality of Vienna, international organizations, Armenian community of Austria for being with us today to celebrate the National Day of Armenia, 24-rd Anniversary of the Third Armenian Republic.

On the 21st of September 1991, the people of Armenia went to polls and made an almost unanimous decision to have an independent and democratic country thus materializing their century-long goals, and dreams. Progress has been made in laying the foundations for an independent statehood, by overcoming the consequences of the devastating earthquake, conflict, war and blockade. Although the security-related issues have always been in the focus of our attention, we have constantly been searching for ways to boost our economy, strengthen democracy, good governance, and the rule of law. It took the toil, industry and perseverance of the people of Armenia, as well as the support and cooperation of the friendly countries, international organizations to address many of these challenges.

Vienna is one of the most important capitals in this regard. Here we fruitfully cooperate with the OSCE, IAEA, UNIDO, UNODC, OFED, CTBTO and other international organizations. Our relations and cooperation with Austria are valuable and dynamic. We are grateful to the Austrian Government for its assistance to Armenia since the time of the Spitak earthquake, for the activities of the Austrian Development Agency in different fields, and recently for the programs for Syrian-Armenian refugees. The recent high-level political dialog, visits of the Presidents, Ministers, the opening of the Vienna Armenia Center, and the office of the Austrian Development Agency in Yerevan, new cooperation agreements in the fields of culture, education, agriculture, upcoming intergovernmental commission meeting, will bring new impetus to the friendly relations existing between our two countries.

2015 is a very special year for my nation, and I would like to use this opportunity and to thank the Austrian public, members of the Parliament, City Council of Vienna for their special attitude, for commemorating with us the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide, for the special statement regarding the recognition and condemnation of the Armenian Genocide.

And now let me introduce the new age cinematic world music project “Roots of Revival”, which is dedicated to the Centennial of the Genocide, and was already presented last Friday at the Bruckner festival in Linz. I would like to specially thank the sponsors of this project: Bruckner festival, Ministry of Culture of Austria, Municipality of Vienna, Ministry of Culture of Armenia, and the Armenian Embassy.

The author of the project is a young and talented composer Vig Zartman, who was graduated from Yerevan State Conservatory, and currently lives and works in Vienna. “Roots of Revival” introduces the rich Armenian musical culture, which reflects the centuries-old history of the Armenian nation, its birth, tragedy and revival. It is a fascinating combination of Armenian folk, spiritual music, refined with cinematic sounds and orchestrated by classical symphonic orchestra, choir and Armenian duduk.

My pleasure is specifically multiplied with the fact that this concert coincides with the National Day of Armenia. Therefore, I wish to introduce one of the significant achievements of my country, the young but rather talented and rather famous musicians, who will perform tonight at this prominent stage.

We have already on the stage the State Youth Orchestra of Armenia conducted by Sergey Smbatyan. I want to invite to this stage also pianist Nare Arghamian, vocalist Lianna Aleksanian and duduk player Emmanuel Hovhannisian, and the Art-Vocal Choir of Armenia under the conduction of Arno Barkhoudarian.

**STATEMENT AT THE OSCE MEDITERRANEAN
CONFERENCE ON COMMON SECURITY IN THE
MEDITERRANEAN REGION**

Jordan, Sweimeh, October 20, 2015

At the outset we wish to thank the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the OSCE Serbian Chairmanship and the German Chair of the Mediterranean Contact Group for convening of this year's OSCE Mediterranean Conference and extend our sincere gratitude to the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for its traditional hospitality.

We share the views of distinguished speakers that security of the OSCE and Mediterranean regions is inextricably linked. The security challenges and threats, which we face now are of global nature and require our joint actions.

Among such challenges is the challenge of violent extremism, radicalization and terrorism, which threatens to destroy the religious and cultural diversity of the Mediterranean region, erode the delicate fabric of interfaith and interethnic dialogue and co-existence, which has been developed by efforts of many generations.

The region of Middle East is the cradle of civilizations, world religions and cultures. It can provide examples of peaceful coexistence, mutual understanding and respect and assistance to those in need. I would like to take the opportunity and extend our particular gratitude to the Jordanian people for their exceptional hospitality and providing shelter to the Armenian refugees a century ago.

Unfortunately identity based crimes cannot be exclusively traced in history. Ethnic and religious minorities, Christian and Muslim groups alike became soft target of international terrorism and foreign fighters. Attacks against the Armenian-populated town of Kessab, destruction of the Armenian churches in Aleppo and Deir-el-Zor, kidnapping and killing of Armenians, 15 000 Syrian-Armenian refugees in Armenia are part of the humanitarian tragedy in Syria.

We firmly believe that only through concerted actions and cooperation between OSCE participating States and Mediterranean Partners we can counter the challenge of international terrorism.

Countering violent extremism and radicalization is essential part of prevention of terrorism, which requires joint efforts by governments and their societies. Addressing this complex issue should go hand in hand with promotion of reconciliation and peace.

Governments and political figures should denounce racist and xenophobic discourse, including targeting certain ethnic and religious groups as tool to gain political advantage.

States should convey clear political message in favor of diversity and pluralism, extend support at state level to projects aimed at promoting confidence, trust and reconciliation between peoples.

We need to encourage people-to-people contacts, including youth exchanges to promote ideas of peace and tolerance and fight prejudices and stereotypes.

States should ensure that the fight against terrorism must never become a pretext for misuse of criminal prosecutions or for other repressive measures against individuals on account of their ethnic origin.

The phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters is one of the reflections of violent extremism and radicalization and it is an essential part of transnational threats in the Mediterranean region. We strongly believe that it is necessary to have agenda of fighting the ISIL worldwide and within the OSCE region. Armenia certainly welcomes all actions on the ground which aim at eradicating terrorism.

We highly value interreligious and intercultural dialogue as an important mechanism to tackle the issue of extremism and radicalization.

The region of Middle East is the birthplace of world religions and civilizations. Christianity and Islam have co-existed and influenced each other for centuries in this region. Many religious symbols are sacred for both religions. The example of Jordan is illustrative in this context. Jordan is a model for co-existence and mutually enriching dialogue between Christianity and Islam. Throughout history it has served as safe haven for thousands of Christians and Muslims, who have fled their war-torn

countries. The Armenian nation is indebted to the friendly Arab people, which helped us to withstand the challenge of complete annihilation and eventually revive.

In recent years we witness serious security challenges, which threaten the very nature of the Middle East as cradle of civilizations, world religions and world culture. Violent extremism, radicalization and terrorism target different ethnic and religious minorities. The conflicts and wars in recent years have resulted in drastic decrease of the Christian population in the Middle East, especially in Syria and Iraq, which faces today existential threat.

With perishing and exodus of Christians from the region ages-old traditions of interfaith dialogue and tolerance will be lost. The destruction of the ancient cultural masterpieces is an attempt to erase the memory of other people, destroy monuments of millennia-old cultures and civilizations.

In the light of current negative developments in the region, we need to strengthen cooperation between the OSCE participating States and Mediterranean Partners for cooperation in the following areas:

- Promote and encourage education on history, religion, traditions, role of the ethnic and religious minorities.
- Adopt measures to promote full respect for and protection of places of worship, religious sites, symbols and cemeteries.
- Promote interfaith and intercultural dialogue, with focus on youth.
- Design and implement regional and national programs, aimed at promoting trust, confidence and reconciliation.
- Highlight patterns of intolerance and discrimination including with regard of past grave crimes perpetrated against minorities in order to better understand and proactively address intolerance and discrimination.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF THE
AZERBAIJANI DELEGATION**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, September 10, 2015

We thank the distinguished Director Michael Georg Link for presenting the outcomes of this year's Human Dimension Implementation Meeting.

We took note of the statement of the distinguished Ambassador of Azerbaijan and in this regard would like to stress the following.

Warsaw meeting is a platform for dialogue between governments of participating States and civil society with the aim of review of implementation of our joint commitments in the human dimension.

We see that Azerbaijan conducts a policy of prohibiting participation of its civil society in the HDIM meetings and we regret that this year's HDIM was the first one, which was held in the absence of the real Azerbaijani civil society but with extensive representation of pro-governmental organizations.

We also understand the Azerbaijani authorities' desire to see the HDIM as a platform for interaction with its own gongos only. HDIM is a platform of a dialogue free of censorship and prosecution, and we believe that Azerbaijan should stand for an open and frank dialogue with the civil society, including representatives of civil society of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Reply

I did not intend to take the floor again but the attempts of the distinguished Azerbaijani Ambassador to draw the parallel between human rights situation in Armenia and that of Azerbaijan particularly in the realm of independent civil society compels me to do so for one simple reason. Azerbaijan's human rights record is well-known and we don't want to be assessed against this standard, thus any comparison is simply offending.

However, we are more than ready to discuss the human rights situation in Armenia and Azerbaijan also in the framework of conflict resolution, but I am afraid it will not be for the benefit of Azerbaijan and its diplomatic corps some of whose prominent members were fired and stigmatized for

their posts and likes in social network. Therefore, we will not advise the Azerbaijani side to seek any parallels with regard to fundamental freedoms in order not to find themselves in losing camp.

Since distinguished Azerbaijani Ambassador referred to so called an Armenian fugitive human rights defender, I would like to stress that any person can leave and return to Armenia regardless of his political affiliations and civil society representatives do not need to escape to another country or do not need high level foreign dignitaries to rescue them from their own country as it was the case of Emin Huseynov, whose free passage from Azerbaijan was secured by the Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

Finally, in his remarks Azerbaijani Ambassador labels civil society and thus people of Nagorno-Karabakh as terrorist. Naming a whole people as terrorists reflects the continuous attempts of Azerbaijan to dehumanize the people of Nagorno-Karabakh. Such a policy of Azerbaijani leadership justifies the legitimate aspirations of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh not to have anything common with that country whose representative are not even capable of listening points of view which differentiates from their official stance.

REMARKS AT THE OPENING OF THE CONCERT "WITH YOU, ARMENIA"

Vienna, Musikverein, November 7, 2015

As Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia in Vienna I would like to say a few words on behalf of the Embassy and the Government before the concert will begin.

It is a great honour to address to the distinguished auditory of the concert "With you, Armenia", which takes place within the scope of the festival "Yerevan Perspectives". The festival counts series of musical events, previously took place in Jerusalem, Tallinn, Brussels, St. Petersburg and New York during the year 2015.

2015 is a special year for the Armenian nation, in Armenia and in Diaspora, when we are commemorating the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide, the sad and tragic page of the history. Tonight's cultural event aims at transcending the historic injustice, at sending the strong message to the civilized world, that Armenian heritage, Armenian culture not only survived, but go far beyond the commemorative sentences and prayers.

We are witnessing a unique cultural event when the famous musicians and ensembles present memorial concert in the one of the most prestigious concert halls in the world, the Grosse Saal of the Musikverein. The Camerata Salzburg Orchestra, Maisky family trio, the Salzburger Bachchoir, well-known Armenian musicians are among them. With their extraordinarily diverse repertoire, involving European and Armenian Composers, innovative programming and charismatic performance style, they will make the words "With you, Armenia" be heard here in Vienna. I would like to thank the organizers, the "Yerevan Perspectives", conductor George Pehlivanian and all musicians participating in tonight's event.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE CO-CHAIRMEN OF
THE OSCE MINSK GROUP, THE PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE OSCE CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE, AND THE HEAD OF
THE HIGH-LEVEL PLANNING GROUP**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, November 12, 2015

We would like to warmly welcome the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group Ambassadors Igor Popov, Pierre Andrieu and James Warlick, the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk and the Head of the HLPG, Colonel Markus Widmer to the Permanent Council and thank them for their comprehensive reports.

We reiterate our support for the agreed format of the Minsk group Co-chairmanship and our commitment to the peaceful resolution of the NK conflict. Needless to say, that successful peaceful settlement requires cessation of all hostilities on the ground, creation of the conditions conducive for negotiations, through unconditional adherence to the 1994 trilateral ceasefire agreement and the 1995 agreement on the consolidation of the cease-fire regime.

Regrettably, like last year, we receive the Co-Chairs at the Permanent Council meeting amid highly volatile situation on the Line of Contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan and the Armenia-Azerbaijan state border.

During recent escalation Azerbaijan has introduced new alarming trends, namely use of 120 mm. mortars, 107 mm. rocket launchers and D-30 howitzers, deliberate targeting of settlements, which resulted in high numbers of civilian casualties and indiscriminate shelling of military infrastructure far from the Line of Contact.

Obviously, in an attempt to divert attention from the outrageous human rights situation and the growing criticism, Baku has been escalating the situation with considerable unforeseen negative consequences. With this provocations Baku demonstrates its disregard both to the human life, to its own commitments and the appeals of the Co-chairs.

Unfortunately, the Azerbaijani side has developed a destructive practice of escalating the situation especially ahead of important visits to the region and high-level meetings, thus trying to undermine those meetings and to impede the negotiation process. It adhered to this notorious practice before the meetings in New York in the margins of the UN GA last September. The same happened during the last visit of the Co-chairs to the region. But this time Azerbaijan resolved to a violation just at a time when the Co-chairs were crossing the LoC in a clear defiance to the Co-chair's efforts. That incident took place days after the Co-chairs directly called upon Azerbaijan to agree to the creation of the mechanism of investigation of cease-fire violations.

Whenever the Co-chairs address the violation of the case-fire regime they limit themselves to generic calls to all parties to the conflict to exercise restraint. However, as the practice has shown, putting the blame equally on all sides of the conflict has hardly born fruits. Azerbaijan continues to violate the cease-fire with the conviction that its irresponsible behaviour would not be internationally directly criticized or condemned, but would be shared with other parties to the conflict.

The Co-chairs have years ago come up with the idea on creation of the mechanism of investigation of the cease-fire violations, which could effectively contribute to military restraint, save innocent lives, and become a mechanism of prevention. In their September 26 statement the Co-chairs once again urged Azerbaijan to agree to create the mechanism. However, Azerbaijan continuously rejects numerous proposals on CSBMs, while Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh have welcomed those proposals. Hence, obviously the whole responsibility for the violations and escalation falls on Azerbaijan.

The attempts to downgrade the Office of the Personal Representative of the Chairman in Office in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone is another vivid example of Baku's such policy. The OSCE permanent presence in Nagorno-Karabakh through PR CiO is an asset of this Organization. It provides opportunity to the international community to assess real situation on the ground, assists the Co-Chairs, promotes CSBMs and serves as restraining factor for outbreak of new hostilities. Any efforts directed at

diminishing or harming its activities can be detrimental for the peace process, the OSCE role in the conflict resolution and may adversely affect the situation on the ground. Therefore, Armenia will do everything to keep that presence going unabated, as we believe that any change in this regard should be directed solely to the reinforcement of the office, increasing the number of monitors, strengthening their resources and technical means.

Another evidence of Azerbaijan's defiance to the peace process within the efforts of the Minsk Group Co-chairs is Baku's indefatigable efforts to move the issues related to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution to different international formats. The last such an attempt to disrupt the peace process was the introduction of the draft report and draft resolution in PACE.

With regard to the exchange of information on missing persons through the International Committee of Red Cross, we would like to stress that this is a purely humanitarian action and as the representatives of the Red Cross have reiterated on numerous occasions it could not be considered as CBM. It emanates from the humanitarian obligations of all sides involved in the conflict and should not be politicized. It is not a new project since the exchange of such data has been a part of the long-standing activities of the ICRC in the region, including through commissions in Stepanakert, Yerevan and Baku. Moreover, the regular meetings of the Yerevan and Baku commissions had taken place up to 2006 and were stopped due to the refusal of Azerbaijan to meet. We believe that the restoration of the practice of such meetings will be an important contribution to the activities aimed at exchanging the data. We would also like to take this opportunity to express our concern regarding the refusal of Azerbaijan to provide access for ICRC to the Armenian hostages, including civilians. In a number of cases those hostages were found dead in the Azerbaijani custody. On other occasions they were proved to be tortured and humiliated, including in front of the TV cameras. These are the evidences of the gross violation of the humanitarian law by Azerbaijan. It is also concerning that the data on missing persons received from the Azerbaijani side has been incomplete, misleading and evasive. We encourage the ICRC to use its good offices to address these issues.

The Delegation of Armenia took note of the report of the distinguished colonel Markus Widmer. We encourage the HLPG to continue its activities strictly following its mandate.

As this is the last appearance of Colonel Widmer in his current capacity at the Permanent Council, we would like to thank him for guiding the Group in last two years and wish him all the success in his future endeavours. We welcome his successor, Colonel Hans Lampalzer.

In conclusion I would like to thank the Co-Chairs and the Personal Representative for their efforts. We hope that the upcoming high-level meeting will bring us closer to peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Reply

The people of Nagorno-Karabakh are de-facto independent since dissolution of the Soviet Union, when it exercised its right for self-determination according to the state legislation and international law. Therefore, claims of Azerbaijan to exercise sovereignty over the people of Nagorno-Karabakh are baseless. Should the human rights of people of Nagorno-Karabakh including right to freedom of movement, right to vote and finally right to self-determination be respected, then our region can move towards greater prosperity and respect of human rights in general.

We firmly believe that settlement of the conflict is possible only through full upholding of human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh. The aggressive power politics of Azerbaijan is outdated and does not belong to 21st century.

Military provocations are combined by the demands to withdraw the NK Defence Army from the current military positions. In doing so, the Azerbaijani side aims to get better starting positions for restoring large-scale hostilities. In this regard, we wish to recall that the NK Defence Army created security zone around Nagorno-Karabakh to protect the civilian population from constant indiscriminate shelling. Criminal provocations of Baku and its non-compliance with the Geneva conventions on international humanitarian law leave no doubt that it wishes to shift the positions of its armed forces to have the towns and villages of Nagorno-Karabakh in the operating range of its heavy artillery.

When it comes to the UN SC resolutions referred here by the Ambassador of Azerbaijan, it should be mentioned that they were adopted during the military phase of the conflict and did not lead to immediate cease of hostilities due to the position of Azerbaijan, which like now, made continuous attempts to impose forceful solution of the issue. Today after 20 years of ceasefire Azerbaijan refers to single element of resolutions by downplaying all others such as lift of blockade or neglecting parties of the conflict referred in the resolutions. All the UN SC Resolutions have clearly recognized Nagorno-Karabakh as a party to the conflict. If Azerbaijan is willing to implement the UN SC resolutions it should first and foremost reach authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh in achieving progress on the conflict resolution.

On IDPs: Massacres and ethnic cleansing of Armenian population in Azerbaijan followed by the military aggression of Azerbaijan against people of Nagorno-Karabakh was one of the root causes of the conflict. In 1990s Armenia received more one 400 thousand refugees and IDPs. In the proportion of its original population Armenia had more displaced population than Azerbaijan. Yet Armenia did not build refugee camps and opted for local integration, which has been only possible durable solution. Yet Azerbaijan did everything to sustain and even augment the declared number of displaced populations at the expense of realization of human rights of the displaced population.

Azerbaijan is the only OSCE participating State, which hinders humanitarian access of the UNHCR and UN special procedures to Nagorno-Karabakh, where, according to the UN Special Rapporteur on IDPs of the year 2008 30 thousand Armenian IDPs are residing. Azerbaijan does not offer any policy of return or compensation to more than 400 000 Armenian refugees. By doing so, Azerbaijan clearly violates the OSCE commitments.

Finally, we would just like to remind the delegation of Azerbaijan, that return of both Armenian, NK, and Azerbaijani refugees and IDPs is one of the elements of the Basic principles of peaceful settlement of the NK conflict, which Azerbaijan effectively rejects.

REMARKS AT THE OPENING OF THE "ARMENIA IN OLD MAPS" EXHIBITION

Vienna, Austrian National Library, November 26, 2015

The Exhibition and the presentation aim are to make public a selection of cartographic images in which snippets of the history of Armenia are viewed through the ancient, Greco-Roman, Byzantine, Islamic and western geographers and cartographers.

Few words about Dr. Rouben Galichian, whom I know from 1990, we are friends and collaborating 25 years. Dr. Galichian is London and Yerevan based scholar and researcher specializing in historical maps of Armenia and the South-Caucasus region. He has published several books on the history and cartography of the Caucasus – "Historic Maps of Armenia. The Cartographic Heritage", "Clash of Histories in the South Caucasus", "Countries South of the Caucasus in Medieval Maps", "The Invention of History, A Glance into the History of Armenia". The last one is a catalogue specially designed to accompany Galichian's Exhibition of Maps and it is available today. Galichian's articles have appeared in various cartographic magazines, journals and periodicals, among them "Imago Mundi" and the "Journal of the International Maps Collectors Society".

Before the presentation we will have some introductory remarks by the Austrian scholars. Dr. Petra Svatek is Professor at the Institute of History of the Vienna University. She is author of a number of publications on Modern History, expert on history of cartography. Dr. Svatek will talk briefly on appearance of Armenia in old maps. Dr. Stefaan Missine is the President of the Austrian Belgian Society, Austria's Representative in the International Map Collectors' Society, author of publications on medieval and modern history, historiography and cartography. He will introduce the recent discovery of the name Armenia on the oldest engraved globe of the World and the oldest American Birth Certificate.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF H.E. FRANK-
WALTER STEINMEIER, OSCE CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE,
FEDERAL MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE FEDERAL
REPUBLIC OF GERMANY**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, January 16, 2016

We warmly welcome Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Permanent Council and thank him for the comprehensive address.

The delegation of Armenia has already presented its approaches on the priorities of the 2016 German Chairmanship during your first appearance at the Permanent Council last year. Therefore, we will use this opportunity to share some remarks on key points of your thoughtful address.

We fully endorse the approach of the German Chairmanship on promoting dialogue, trust and security. Indeed, our Organization is a forum for addressing outstanding issues of European security through dialogue, cooperation and confidence building on the basis of its values, norms and principles, enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act. The unification of German people through exercise of its right to self-determination a quarter of century ago and the emergence of dozens of new independent states since then became possible also through dialogue and cooperation within our Organization.

We appreciate the Chairmanship's resolve to support peaceful resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict within its agreed format and through the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship. The situation on the Line of Contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan and the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan remains tense and escalated, due to continued cease-fire violations by Azerbaijan. We took note of the concerns expressed by Germany in this regard along with its favourable attitude towards introduction of investigative mechanism into ceasefire violations and strengthening the capacities of the team of PRCiO, the only permanent presence in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone.

Unfortunately, the PRCiO office with its current capacities cannot sufficiently cope with evolving security needs, and the Organization's growing experience and expertise in the ceasefire monitoring should be

fully used in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict environment as well. We encourage the Chairmanship to translate its positive attitude on CBMs and CSBMs into relevant initiatives.

The adherence to the ceasefire agreement is essential in maintaining peace process. The commitments on peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict have been undertaken by all participating states through the OSCE relevant documents. In this regard, the participating states particularly those who are neighbouring the South Caucasus region should refrain from the action and rhetoric, which may endanger peace process and promote hostilities.

In this regard, we are particularly concerned with continued biased position of Turkey on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which once again was manifested in the recent statements made by high ranking officials during their visits to Baku.

We would like to join the other speakers and express our deepest condolences to the families of the victims of the recent terrorist attack in Istanbul.

In light of the numerous terrorist attacks in the OSCE area and beyond we strongly endorse the intention of the Chairmanship to focus on the countering international terrorism. The implementation of two declarations, adopted in Belgrade will contribute to our efforts to fight the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters, including by fully implementing relevant UNSC resolutions, with regard to ISIL, Al Nusrah Front and other terrorist groups associated with Al Qaeda.

We support the German Chairmanship's human dimension priorities such as freedom of media, freedom of assembly and association, tolerance and non-discrimination, rights of national minorities. The remembrance and education of Holocaust and other genocides can be an important contribution of the OSCE to the efforts of the international community to put an end to mass atrocities against ethnic and religious minorities, including Christians in Syria and Iraq.

In conclusion, we would like to thank the outgoing Serbian Chairmanship and to wish all success to Mr. Minister, Ambassador Pohl and to Your able and competent team.

STATEMENT ON THE CASE OF HRANT DINK
Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, January 16, 2016

January 19th marks the 9th anniversary of the assassination of Hrant Dink, prominent Armenian-Turkish intellectual, chief editor of the Armenian newspaper *Agos*.

The recent press-release of the Representative on Freedom of the Media, Mrs. Dunja Mijatovic on this case states “I remain hopeful that recent developments in the trial will help bring the masterminds behind the murder to justice. Exposing the masterminds would also demonstrate to the entire society the importance of freedom of expression, and the continued need to fight violence against journalists”.

My Delegation shares the expectations voiced out by the Representative on Freedom of the Media.

It should be recalled that the Delegation of Armenia has regularly raised this issue at the Permanent Council throughout last years. In response, we had been advised by the Turkish Delegation to wait for the results of legal proceedings.

Armenia is a staunch advocate of freedom of media and safety of journalists and human rights defenders. We firmly believe that failure to address intimidation, violence and killing of journalists, community leaders, and intellectuals creates a climate of impunity, thus encouraging intolerance towards any idea which runs counter to official narratives.

The recent reaction of the Turkish Government against the peaceful action of the prominent Turkish intellectuals, who dared to raise their voice in defense of the wide part of Turkey’s society, under the 301 article of the Turkish Penal Code, which was used to convict and stigmatize Hrant Dink, is a further case in point.

We are pleased to note that a large portion of the Turkish society once again gathered in rallies also calling to bring to justice all masterminds of the Hrant Dink assassination. We call upon the Turkish authorities to properly address these calls.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF THE
DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER OF AZERBAIJAN**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, February 11, 2016

The OSCE provides a platform for equal dialogue among all participating states regardless of their relations and diverging opinions and in this vein, we would like to engage in discussions with Deputy Minister Azimov.

We took note of the points made by Mr. Azimov and we would like to elaborate on some of them. But first let me stress that protracted conflict cannot be resolved by protracted accusations. At the same time, it should be remembered that referring to some negotiating details of the agreed format at the Permanent Council particularly to those which have never happened is not very conducive for frank and goal-oriented dialogue.

Mr. Azimov made a point on principles of international law regarding conflict settlement. All Helsinki principles are of primary significance. When it comes to Nagorno-Karabakh conflict all OSCE participating states, including Armenia and Azerbaijan, agreed that non use of force, territorial integrity, equal rights and self-determination of peoples are principles upon which the conflict resolution should be based. The attempt to revisit our OSCE commitments, including the Athens Ministerial Statement, simply because other principles are frequently referred in other conflict situations, is not helpful at all and can further protract settlement of already protracted conflict.

Here I would like to remind the distinguished Deputy Minister that the conflict is not about territories, it is about the rights of the indigenous people. We regret to note that the anti-Armenian policy of Azerbaijan has remained unchanged more than 25 years. Azerbaijan rejects to recognize the right of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to self-determination. We would like to recall that this very right is proclaimed by the presidents of the Co-chair countries of the OSCE Minsk Group as one of the basic principles of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution and endorsed by the OSCE Athens Ministerial Statement. Determination of the final legal status

of Nagorno-Karabakh through a legally binding expression of will stands at the core of the settlement.

The people of Nagorno-Karabakh are de-facto independent since dissolution of the Soviet Union, when it exercised its right for self-determination according to the state legislation and international law. Therefore, claims of Azerbaijan to exercise its sovereignty over the people of Nagorno-Karabakh are baseless. Should the human rights of people of Nagorno-Karabakh including right to freedom of movement, right to vote and finally right to self-determination be respected, then our region can move towards greater prosperity and respect of human rights in general.

When it comes to the UN SC resolutions, it should be mentioned that they were adopted during the military phase of the conflict and did not lead to immediate cease of hostilities due to the position of Azerbaijan, which made continuous attempts to impose forceful solution of the issue. Today after more than 20 years of ceasefire Azerbaijan refers to single element of resolutions by downplaying all others such as lift of blockade or neglecting parties of the conflict referred in the resolutions. All the UN SC Resolutions have clearly recognized Nagorno-Karabakh as a party to the conflict. If Azerbaijan is willing to implement the UN SC resolutions it should first and foremost reach authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh in achieving progress in conflict resolution.

There was a point on the inability of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs to bring us towards conflict resolution. The argument that years have passed and no solution was made is not a valid one. In our view, continued and recently escalated attacks against Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship is an attack against conflict resolution. Aside of being unfair and incorrect those allegations serve as excuse for Azerbaijan for rejecting proposals of the agreed format particularly those aimed at consolidating ceasefire. Those allegations undermine the preparation of the population to the peace since they entail false accusation on the prejudices at identity and religious level.

In its efforts to discredit the Co-chair countries the president of Azerbaijan recently even attempted to introduce religious dimension into the conflict. In fact, he accused Co-Chair countries of being Islamophobic, which is a very dangerous and false manipulation. The positions of

Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh coincide with the proposals of the Co-Chair countries not because we are Christians, but because we believe that there is no alternative to the peaceful resolution of the conflict.

The main obstacle towards conflict resolution is not position of Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh or OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs. It is Azerbaijani policy and actions which impede the progress in peaceful resolution. The consistent policy of Azerbaijan to change the balance between parties to the conflict undermines the peace process. Azerbaijani leadership explicitly referred to the necessity of resolving Nagorno-Karabakh conflict through enhancing its military and economic capacities and capabilities and thus imposing its will over Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.

Last year was a missed opportunity for the process of peaceful settlement, as we had to tackle consequences of military provocations along the Line of Contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan and the state border. Azerbaijan resorted to massive ceasefire violations through expanded use of heavy weapons and subversive actions. It has rejected all proposals aimed at consolidating ceasefire including withdrawal of snipers and establishment of investigative mechanism under the pretext that these confidence and security building measures can consolidate the status quo.

There is a certain distortion of notions in this claim. Armenia is eager to go beyond the status quo which should be an outcome of negotiated and peaceful settlement. The ceasefire consolidation will create conditions for peaceful and negotiated settlement and thus it does not promote the status quo but the opposite. In escalating situation, Azerbaijan is responsible for the maintaining the current status quo.

Strengthening OSCE permanent presence in the conflict zone will be another indication of willingness of the parties to resolve the conflict exclusively through peaceful means. There is a contradiction in Azerbaijani rhetoric of the need of more OSCE involvement in the conflict resolution and consistent policy of downgrading the Office of the PRCiO. This is yet another manifestation of non-constructive attitude towards OSCE mechanisms related to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

As for the OSCE Minsk group, the OSCE Co-Chair countries showed strong coherence in their policy of arriving to peaceful and negotiated settlement together. In this important international undertaking they managed to put aside their own controversies and pursue their mandate in constructive and united manner. Unfortunately, not every OSCE pS showed similar responsibility and they were not able to resist the temptation to use Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in their wider geopolitical confrontation. The case of Turkey is very illustrative in this regard.

Armenia has already referred to the Azerbaijani attempts to score points in other international organizations which are not related to the conflict resolution. Regardless of outcomes, these attempts are futile and can cause unnecessary tensions within societies. For example, the failure to adopt an explicitly provocative resolution on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in PACE triggered very harsh rhetoric from Azerbaijani leadership which is not conducive for conflict resolution.

Armenia will continue to rely on the mediation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs in advancing peaceful resolution. We invite Azerbaijan to join other OSCE participating States and engage in genuine and constructive dialogue on the basis of respect for the OSCE principles, values and commitments as well as endeavor to solve security problems in a peaceful and negotiated way within agreed formats, as it has committed itself in Astana.

And finally, the real willingness of Azerbaijan to cooperate with the OSCE is reflected not only in its hostile attitude towards the OSCE institutions, field operations and agreed formats, but also its readiness to contribute to this Organization. For your information, in real terms Azerbaijan has so far not contributed to the OSCE budget. Throughout years Azerbaijan was receiving more through imposition of local income tax than its entire contribution. On the contrary, the OSCE participating States, including Armenia have regularly subsidized the Azerbaijani state budget by compensating the income taxes paid to the Government by its citizens. Taking the opportunity of your presence here, we would like to encourage you to raise this issue in Baku.

**REMARKS AT THE RECEPTION DEDICATED TO THE 24TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMED FORCES OF ARMENIA**

Vienna, Embassy of Armenia, February 18, 2016

I would like to thank you all for being here with us today in Vienna Armenia Center to celebrate the 24th anniversary of the Armed Forces of Armenia, and we are honored to host the First Deputy Minister of Defense of Armenia Mr. David Tonoyan, who participated in the OSCE High-Level Military Doctrine Seminar “European Security in Crisis – How to Restore Trust?”

This year we will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Armenia. It’s been a quarter of a century that we have a free and independent statehood. Throughout this time, we never doubted that our 25 year-long journey would be possible without the army which we created.

The Armed Forces of Armenia became the cornerstone which was laid in the foundation of our statehood. My memories take me back to the unbending circumstances when the young Republic of Armenia was forced to undertake the immediate measures in order to be able to strengthen its self-defense capacity and to adequately response to the threats and challenges, we faced.

Unfortunately, the situation has not considerably changed in the course of 24 years, indeed. As two and half decades before, as well as today, the political and military situation in the region of South Caucasus, recent deterioration in the Middle East attach highest priority to the Armenian armed forces, which are guaranty of peace and stability.

Whereas consistent and continuous conduct of reforms in the Armed Forces in line with demands of open society, democratic values, human rights and market economy derives from defense policy objectives adopted by the government of Armenia. Therefore, despite all challenges, along with deterrence of military threats, Armed Forces of Armenia contributes to the strengthening of the international security, participating in the peacekeeping missions in Europe, Central Asia and Africa. The international politico-military integration of our Armed Forces undergoes

consistent reforms with gradual reorganization of its structures, enhancing its capabilities and resources.

Continuous development of our Army is aimed at the adequate and efficient response to current and future challenges and contribution to the international peace and security.

**STATEMENT AT THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE OSCE
PERMANENT COUNCIL ON THE ESCALATION OF THE
SITUATION IN THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT-ZONE**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, April 5, 2016

First, we would like to thank the OSCE Chairperson of the Permanent Council for convening the special session. We are also grateful to the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs and the Personal Representative of the Chairperson in Office for appearing in the Permanent Council on the issue which requires urgent attention of the OSCE and its participating states.

Before I will go directly to the current situation on the Line of Contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan, I would like to thank for the words of sympathy addressed to the families of victims of the ongoing escalation in the region.

We are convinced that this escalation is meaningless and the peoples of the region will not benefit from the large-scale military confrontation.

The large-scale military actions began at the night of April 1 to April 2. Azerbaijani armed forces unleashed large scale offensive along the line of contact. The use of force on which Azerbaijan was making constant threats took place.

The defence installations of the Nagorno-Karabakh Defence Army, civilian infrastructure, settlements came under heavy bombardment by artillery, tanks, armoured vehicles, multiple rocket launchers, and air force, along the Line of Contact and deep inside the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. The units of the Azerbaijani army intruded Nagorno-Karabakh in several directions. The use of deadly offensive weapons included 122 mm calibre multiple launch rocket system "Grad", heavy multiple rocket launcher "Smerch", heavy flamethrower system TOS-1, 152 mm calibre howitzers and various-calibre mortars.

The first and decisive strike on which Azerbaijani armed forces counted for successful commencement of their military action was effectively resisted by the NK Defence Army. Azerbaijan lost significant number of tanks, armoured vehicles, number of combats, attack and other types of drones, 2 attack helicopters, as well as hundreds of troops. These

figures are constantly updating but it is certain that Azerbaijan already paid a heavy price for its military adventurism and misleading reports on putative military gains will not be able to mitigate it.

The NK Defence army endured casualties as well. So far 20 servicemen were killed, 72 wounded. The fate of 26 persons is unknown. There are number of civilian casualties: youngest of which is 12 years old boy and eldest is 92 years old woman.

We are not surprised that Azerbaijan tries to cover up its large-scale military offensive by putting forward false allegations on ceasefire violations emanating from the NK side.

After all, history does not know any aggressor who will not blame the other side for unleashing its military campaign. It is obvious that neither Armenia, nor Nagorno-Karabakh have any reason, necessity, purpose to escalate the situation. Whereas, there are multiple reasons for Azerbaijan to do that, to name only a few: to divert the international attention from the criticism of its dire human rights situation, to avoid public anger in Azerbaijan related to the huge inflation and socio-economic problems due to the drastic cut in oil prices, to derail the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process trying to gain some advantages through the blackmail– negotiate with guns.

However, even in the Azerbaijani version there is an implicit recognition that the current military escalation is a result of their deliberate actions. Here, first of all I mean the references of Azerbaijani side which has been also circulated by the Azerbaijani delegation here in the OSCE on so called “liberation” of settlements and strategic positions. Azerbaijani side went even further by declaring that its forces are building new defence lines and consolidating their gains.

The attempt to conquer the territory and military positions differentiate these ceasefire violations from the previous ones. Another important feature of this escalation that makes it unprecedented is systematic and deliberate targeting of the civilian objects and population with an apparent attempt to terrorize people of Nagorno-Karabakh. Otherwise, it is difficult to understand why Azerbaijani armed forces would bombard schools and kill and injure schoolchildren or why Azerbaijani special forces would

torture, kill and mutilate three elderly persons in the NK borderline village Talish, one of them 92 years old woman. The appalling photos of these heinous crimes appeared in the media. These atrocities recalled the memories of massacres committed at the wake of the conflict, when hundreds of Armenians were killed and mutilated in Sumgait, Baku, Kirovabad and elsewhere in Azerbaijan. Not much has been changed in Azerbaijan since then, except that Azerbaijani armed forces learnt ISIL style executions and taking pictures with chopped heads, which was put forward online to boost military spirit.

The deliberate shelling of border line settlements particularly Martakert town of Nagorno-Karabakh by heavy artillery and multiple rocket systems is not even hidden by Azerbaijani side who made a threat to bombard even the NK capital city Stepanakert.

These actions cannot be justified by military necessity and some of them constitute war crimes. It is clear what will happen to the inhabitants of NK if Azerbaijani troops would be able to capture them. Therefore, the necessity of the implementation of the right to self-determination of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh cannot be put under doubt since the very existence of people is at stake. Under these circumstances the Republic of Armenia as a party to the trilateral ceasefire agreement of 1994 will take necessary actions. People of Nagorno-Karabakh have the right to self-defence and Armenia as a guarantor of their physical security will stand by them. The President of Armenia instructed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia to prepare the draft treaty on the mutual military assistance to be signed by the Republic of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh Republic.

Armenia appreciates the unequivocal condemnation of ceasefire violations pronounced by various representatives of international community. However, non-specified and generic condemnation will not be sufficient to restrain the party who unleashed this large-scale military offensive. Therefore, it is essential to identify and hold accountable Azerbaijan who undermines the ceasefire and thus regional peace and security.

My delegation constantly raised the issue of ceasefire violations by Azerbaijan at the level of the Permanent Council since 2014. On numerous

occasions Armenia agreed with the proposals of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs to establish investigative mechanism into possible ceasefire violations while Azerbaijan rejected all proposals of international mediators on confidence building measures aimed at the consolidation of ceasefire. Armenia called on strengthening the capacities of the Office of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office whose field officers monitor ceasefire regime, while Azerbaijan attempted to limit their permanent presence in the conflict zone. The reason why is more than evident today. Hence all efforts of Azerbaijan were aimed at limiting the international presence and preparing conducive conditions for its new military aggression against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh.

In line with its policy of preparation to major hostilities, Azerbaijan dismissed all proposals for political settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict put forward by the international mediators-the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs and their respective countries. At the highest-level Azerbaijan mocked the peace process and its agreed format and finally earlier this year Azerbaijan refused to meet with the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs.

Along this policy of undermining the peace process and disregarding the calls of various representatives of international community to uphold its commitment to peaceful resolution of the conflict, Azerbaijan tried to get support of Turkey known for its hostile attitude towards Armenians. The provocative rhetoric of Turkish high-level authorities before and after the recent escalation along with consistent support provided to the Azerbaijan armed forces are nothing less than open encouragement to commit new crimes against the Armenian people. Armenia has constantly raised the threats that kinship solidarity approaches pose to the indivisible and universal security in the OSCE area and this recent event more than validated our concerns.

Yesterday the President of Armenia in an address delivered at the meeting with the Ambassadors of the OSCE participating states accredited to Yerevan clearly communicated the position of Armenia on overcoming the current escalation.

First, the adherence to the 1994 trilateral ceasefire agreement signed between Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh should be enforced,

the military actions should be halted and the troops should return to the positions and installations which they held on April 1.

Second, investigation mechanism into the ceasefire violations should be urgently established. The capacities and activities of the PRCiO should be significantly strengthened and extended to include additional field officers to monitor the ceasefire.

The Nagorno-Karabakh authorities are signatory of 1994 ceasefire agreement and the direct contacts should be re-established with them by all parties to the conflict.

No any arrangement will be supported by the Armenian side, which will try to create conditions for continued and incremental ceasefire violations, something that Azerbaijan tried to achieve by proclaiming a deceptive unilateral ceasefire. We and international community cannot count on good will of the country which has unleashed this attack. Our point of reference cannot be a good faith of Azerbaijan which had never existed, but international obligations of 1994 ceasefire verified and supervised by the relevant OSCE actors.

Reply

On the one hand Azerbaijan is blaming Armenia in pursuing a consolidation of the status-quo and on the other accuses it of unleashing the latest escalation. This back and forth in its poor propaganda clearly demonstrate that the Azerbaijani side is trying to conceal its responsibility for the aggression against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Throughout years the Armenian Delegation was consistently pointing that Azerbaijan has not rejected the use of force as a tool for resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Refusal to engage constructively in the talks under the agreed format of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs, continuous attempts to diminish OSCE presence in the region and downgrade the PRCiO Office, rejection of the proposed CSBMs indicated that the Azerbaijani leadership is preparing for a new aggressive war. Any initiatives of the Armenian side to make use of the OSCE confidence building toolbox in all three dimensions were effectively blocked by the Azerbaijani Delegation.

Here I would like to refer to the last statement of the Azerbaijani President, made on occasion of Nowruz, in which he particularly stated that “Instead of resolving the conflict, the Co-Chairs put forward strange proposals on strengthening security measures on the Line of Contact.” I find it hard to understand that the leader of a country labels measures aimed at consolidating ceasefire and saving lives of soldiers and civilians as something strange. In doing so, the Azerbaijani leadership assumes full responsibility for the escalation.

The new aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh falls into the logic of its long-standing policy of anti-Armenian hatred and intolerance. Such a policy, promoted at the highest level led to radicalization of the Azerbaijani society, in particular youth, something, which my Azerbaijani colleague here was proudly acknowledging last year in this hall.

The policy of demonization of the Armenian people made possible killing and glorification of Ramil Safarov, torturing to death Armenian civilians in Azerbaijani custody and eventually deliberate shelling of villages, decapitating and mutilating of bodies of civilians in the best traditions of the ISIL. The atrocities committed in Talish village yet again show that the NK people facing existential threat and that it has no future under Azerbaijani rule. These atrocities leave no doubt about the real level of tolerance in Azerbaijan.

STATEMENT ON THE VIOLATIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW BY AZERBAIJAN

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, April 26, 2016

We would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to a number of gross violations of the international humanitarian law by Azerbaijan in the course of its recent large-scale military offensive.

From the very beginning of the Azerbaijani offensive civilian infrastructures and civilian population, including children and the elderly became intentional and indiscriminate targets. Among the first civilian victims were the 12 years old boy, Vaghinak Grigoryan who was killed in front of the school-building as a result of a Grad missile attack, and two other wounded school-children.

In the village of Talish of Martakert region of Nagorno-Karabakh, which is located 3.5km from the Line of Contact, three elderly members of Khalapyan family, including the 92-year old woman Marusya Khalapyan were brutally tortured, mutilated and killed. Moreover, a number of crimes were committed against the military personnel of the Nagorno-Karabakh Defense Army. Three captive soldiers Hayk Toroyan, Hrant Gharibyan and Karam Sloyan were beheaded by Azerbaijani armed forces in ISIL style. Social networks were full of photos of the Azerbaijani soldiers parading in Azerbaijani settlements with chopped heads. The photos of Karam Sloyan, who was of Yezidi origin were entitled “the head of Yezidi infidel”.

Furthermore, during the exchange of bodies of the deceased between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan carried out through the mediation of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the PRCiO, it was registered that bodies of the deceased transferred by the Azerbaijani side had signs of torture and mutilation.

Those barbaric acts going beyond elementary norms of civilized world, constitute violations of core international instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Convention on the Rights of the Child, etc. In this context it is also imperative to specifically mention the

blatant violation by Azerbaijan of Geneva Conventions of 1949, which inter alia address groups exposed to specific risks, such as children, women and elderly, and its Additional Protocols of 1977 and 1989.

Some of these violations have characteristics of war crimes and criminal cases have been launched by the authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh to identify the whole magnitude of the atrocities. Already at this initial stage it is clear that these crimes entail identity based persecution against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh. The Reference of the Office of the Prosecutor General of the NKR in regard to those cases, distributed on April 12, contains detailed information on the killed and wounded civilians.

The further systematic application of these violent actions may lead to the crime against humanity. It is important to prevent further atrocities also through the fair assessment, condemnation and bringing perpetrators to justice.

We have raised this current issue with the view to seek clarification from the Azerbaijani Delegation whether Baku remains faithful to its own obligations and commitments under international humanitarian law or considers them as ceased their effect as well.

We heard today that there is an intention of the Chairmanship and ODIHR to jointly plan such event in Azerbaijan on tolerance and non-discrimination. To plan such an event after recent atrocities committed by Azerbaijan against population of NK can be considered as encouragement to Baku. It will question credibility of ODIHR and will have strong impact on our cooperation with ODIHR.

Reply

The statement of the Azerbaijani Ambassador and the note verbal circulated today attempts to politicize concrete humanitarian issues raised by our Delegation, indicate two things. First, by refusing to address very concrete cases of atrocities that took place during the April large scale military offensive, Azerbaijan acknowledges the fact of their occurrence. Second, Azerbaijan intends to continue to justify the same atrocities against people of Nagorno-Karabakh.

We understand that Azerbaijani side tries to evade its responsibility of current atrocities by bringing forward more than two decades long ungrounded protracted accusations to which we always responded at every appropriate occasion. If Azerbaijani side thinks that its own version of history or efforts to revive the status quo of its Soviet past by the use of force gives legitimacy to chop heads or cut ears today, then there is a strong evidence that we are dealing with premeditated crimes organized by Azerbaijani highest authorities.

Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh have been always ready to respond or investigate any allegation of Azerbaijani side on the violation of international humanitarian law. . If the Azerbaijani side is truly interested in ensuring human rights of people living in the both sides of line of contact, first and foremost the right to life, it should be interested in an OSCE mechanism, which could investigate such incidents and identify the responsible side. Yet Azerbaijan always dismissed any possibility of verification even of its own allegations.

**STATEMENT ON THE SECOND GLOBAL FORUM AGAINST
THE CRIME OF GENOCIDE AND AURORA PRIZE AWARD**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, April 28, 2016

The Remembrance and Education of Genocide is an important part of the OSCE human dimension commitments and we would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to two events, Global forum against Genocide and Aurora prize award ceremony, which were held in Yerevan and got wide international attention and participation in the framework of the Armenian Genocide commemoration.

The Second Global Forum on the Crime of Genocide, was held in Yerevan on April 23-24. The statement of the President of the Republic of Armenia at the Forum was distributed in the OSCE.

The general heading of this year's forum was "Living Witnesses of Genocide". Participation of a number of survivors of genocides and other crimes against humanity in different parts of the world made the conference indeed a remarkable and at the same time inspiring event. Mr. Youk Chhang, survivor of Khmer Rouge terror and currently Executive Director of the Documentation Center of Cambodia, Nadia Murat, survivor of the Genocide of Yezidi people in Iraq, who endured torture and degrading treatment by ISIL Mr. Kabanda Aloys, survivor of Rwanda Genocide and currently the Administrator of the Ibuka Memory and Justice Association along with other participants shared their stories of suffering, struggle, gratitude and revival. The very presence of these people in itself bore the powerful message that genocide perpetrators never win.

The Forum brought together representatives of international organizations, genocide scholars, parliamentarians, academicians and representatives of civil society.

Last year when I addressed this distinguished audience, I singled out gratitude and renewed faith in humanity as one of the main themes of the commemoration of the Centenary of the Armenian Genocide. I am pleased to underline that these strong feelings have been further evoked and materialized in an important humanitarian undertaking.

On behalf of the Armenian Genocide survivors a group of well-known intellectuals and philanthropists launched the Hundred Lives Initiative and Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity and as a gratitude to those who saved the sons and daughter of perishing nation regardless of difficult circumstances. The Aurora Prize will be awarded annually on April 24 in Yerevan. The very name of the prize was inspired by the Armenian Genocide survivor Aurora Mardiganian, who actively participated in fundraising in the United States and thus had personal contribution in saving many women and children scattered in the Syrian desert in the immediate aftermath of massacres. The Aurora Prize Laureate is honored with a \$100,000 award. In addition, the winner will have the unique opportunity to continue the cycle of giving by selecting an organization that inspired their work to receive a \$1,000,000 grant.

First winner of the Aurora prize was Marguerite Barankitse, from Maison Shalom and REMA Hospital in Burundi, who saved tens of thousands lives and cared for orphans and refugees during the years of civil war in Burundi. When the war broke out, Barankitse, a Tutsi herself, tried to hide 72 of her closest Hutu neighbors to keep them safe from persecution. They were discovered and executed in front of her eyes. Following to this gruesome incident, she started her work saving and caring for children and refugees. She saved roughly 30,000 children and in 2008, she opened a hospital which has treated more than 80,000 patients to date.

The other three nominees were Dr. Tom Catena, from Mother of Mercy Hospital in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan, who and is responsible for serving over 500,000 people in the region; Ms Syeda Ghulam Fatima, the General Secretary of the Bonded Labor Liberation Front in Pakistan, which has liberated thousands of Pakistani workers, including approximately 21,000 children, who were forced to work for brick kiln owners in order to repay debts; and Father Bernard Kinvi, a Catholic priest in Bossemptele in the Central African Republic, who provided refuge and health services to those on both sides of the conflict in that country, saving hundreds of people from persecution and death.

The full information on the Global Forum and the Hundred Lives Initiative will be distributed by the Delegation of Armenia.

Armenia has committed itself to the prevention of the crime of genocide and made it as a priority. The protection of the population which can be a subject of genocide is firmly embedded in the Armenian national security strategy.

The Global Forum against the Crime of Genocide has turned into an important platform of dialogue on the issues of genocide prevention, remembrance and education. We encourage the OSCE and its institutions to be more active in utilizing this platform in addressing the implementation of OSCE human dimension commitments.

**STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION ON THE LINE OF
CONTACT BETWEEN NAGORNO-KARBAKH AND
AZERBAIJAN**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, April 28, 2016

We would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the recent developments on the Line of Contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan.

Despite the calls of international community to adhere to the 1994 ceasefire regime and halt the hostilities and return to the negotiation table, Azerbaijan continued to resort to military actions along the Line of Contact.

The Azerbaijani armed forces conducted heavy shelling of the positions of NK Defense Army and civilian settlements including by using heavy mortars, artillery, multiple rocket launch systems and tanks. After halting major hostilities in the beginning of April 10 casualties of the NK Defense Army have been reported as a result of military actions by Azerbaijani forces. The Mataghis village and the town of Martakert were indiscriminately shelled by tanks and heavy artillery (*see the attached pictures*). The Azerbaijani side enlarged the area of its military actions to include also the Armenian-Azerbaijani state-border. A number of times civilian settlements located at the north-eastern part of the border were targeted.

It is remarkable how Azerbaijani authorities try to justify their action by assuming simultaneously the role of both winner and victim. On one side Azerbaijan claims that they are imposing their will on the ground and on the other hand it blames the Armenian side for escalation.

As it was noted in recent statement of the Nagorno-Karabakh Ministry of Defense “Azerbaijan’s military leadership adopted a tactics which obviously shows that the official Baku, on the one hand, takes provocative actions to deliberately escalate the situation, while on the other hand, rushes to present the developments along the frontline as consequences of offensive actions by the Armenian sides”.

It is particularly disturbing that Azerbaijani armed forces turned civilian settlements into frontline positions from where they shell both

military installations and civilian objects in Nagorno-Karabakh (*see the attached pictures of Azerbaijani military positions in the civilian settlements*).

Using civilians as shields violates international humanitarian law, something that Azerbaijan has been constantly doing since its large-scale military offensive. I would like to refer here to the Interim Report of the Nagorno-Karabakh Human Rights Defender which comprehensively documented the grave violations of humanitarian law by Azerbaijani armed forces circulated by my delegation here in the OSCE.

It is deplorable that Azerbaijan simply denies any violation of international humanitarian law and customs of war by its armed forces despite of abundant factual evidence.

The Azerbaijani side continued to disrupt activities of the OSCE PRCiO. While the NK authorities immediately responded positively to the proposal of the PRCiO to conduct monitoring on the Line of Contact, the Azerbaijani side so far has failed to give its agreement. Another attempt of the Office to conduct monitoring on the Armenian-Azerbaijani state border was rejected by the Azerbaijani authorities.

Monitoring of the ceasefire regime, established by the trilateral ceasefire agreements in May, 1994 and February, 1995 is the core activity of the PRCiO Office and so far, the only practical CSBM. PRCiO Office, being the only international permanent presence in the conflict zone is the eyes and ears of international community, which can deliver objective information on the real state of affairs on the Line of Contact. The obstructive stance by the Azerbaijani side should be a matter of close attention of Minsk Group Co-Chairs and the OSCE Chairmanship.

The recent large-scale military offensive of Azerbaijan revealed that the PRCiO capacities should be significantly expanded both in human and financial terms. The Office needs advanced technical equipment to raise the efficiency of monitoring.

Azerbaijan has been trying to erode the ceasefire regime not only through military actions on the ground. Here in Vienna and in New York Azerbaijan openly communicated its decision to denounce the 1994 ceasefire agreement. In this regard we would like to refer to the statement

of the Foreign Ministry of Armenia, which inter alia states: “Armenia strongly condemns this step whereby Azerbaijan grossly breaches May 1994 ceasefire agreement, as well as casts doubt on the July 1994 agreement on the reinforcement of ceasefire and the February 1995 agreement on the consolidation of ceasefire. Notably, the July 1994 agreement requires Azerbaijan to “maintain the ceasefire regime until signing of the big political agreement The 1994 and 1995 trilateral ceasefire agreements have for years served as a basis for preserving the fragile ceasefire. Any harm to these agreements is a serious obstacle for the peace process, hinders the efforts of the Co-Chairs and the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman in Office and undermines regional security. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia states that, taking into consideration the possible dangerous consequences emanating from this irresponsible step of Azerbaijan, and as a signatory party to 1994 and 1995 existing agreements on the ceasefire and the consolidation of the ceasefire, Armenia will exert every possible effort and carry out all necessary steps to guarantee the security of Nagorno-Karabakh and its population.

Also, I would like to recall that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nagorno-Karabakh which, as a party to those agreements, in its statement strongly condemned the attempts to reconsider the 1994 ceasefire and 1995 cease fire consolidation agreements as an explicit attempt to unleash another war against people of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The co-Chairs of the Minsk Group reiterated their position that the trilateral ceasefire agreements of 1994 and 1995 remain in force.

We would like to make it clear: talks on the peaceful settlement of the conflict are impossible and unreasonable in the conditions of restoration of large-scale hostilities and significant human casualties, including civilians. The conflicting party, which is dismantling the ceasefire regime through denunciation of the previous agreements and continuously undermines the OSCE agreed format, as well as mechanisms and tools, currently present in the conflict zone, bears the full responsibility for further escalation and prolongation of the conflict.

Reply

We are ready to restoration of the ceasefire regime under the 1994 trilateral agreement and application of the investigative and verification measures of the ceasefire consolidation as proposed by the Minsk Group Co-Chairs, investigative mechanism into ceasefire violations along the Line of Contact. Adherence to the above ceasefire agreements and avoiding of casualties is a crucial prerequisite for productive peace talks.

The claim of the Azerbaijani side that Armenia rejects negotiations is fully groundless and senseless. In his interview to the Bloomberg news agency, President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan stated that it's "unreasonable" for Armenia to resume peace talks with Azerbaijan because "the situation is entirely different now". The President stated that there is no logic in resuming talks while at the same time military would be engaging in war.

We have consistently stated that the Armenian side will never accept the Azerbaijani style of negotiating with guns. To have meaningful negotiations we need first of all to deal with the consequences of the Azerbaijani military adventurism, namely restore and consolidate the ceasefire regime through full respect to the 1994 trilateral ceasefire agreement and the 1995 agreement on the consolidation of the ceasefire regime.

On April 4 at the meeting with the OSCE participating states Ambassadors accredited in Yerevan the President of Armenia clearly stated «The Republic of Armenia, as a party to the 1994 Ceasefire Agreement, will continue to fully implement its obligations to ensure the security of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh».

Under the circumstances when Azerbaijani troops commit despicable atrocities against peaceful population of Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijani authorities even refuse to address flagrant violations of international humanitarian law, Armenia will firmly stand by the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to prevent further identity based crimes.

ADDRESS AT THE OPENING OF THE CLASSICAL YOUNG STARS CONCERT

Vienna, Prainer Conservatory, May 14, 2016

First, thank you all for being with us on Saturday evening for Classical Young Stars Concert with the participation of scholarship recipients of “New names” project from Armenia and Russia, as well as “Young Masters” from Austria. The concert tour in Austria combined three events: the first recital was done on Thursday in the “Armenia” center of the Embassy of Armenia in Vienna, the second – in the Cultural Center of the Russian Federation yesterday and the third gala-concert we attend today, in this beautiful Ehrbar Saal.

Since its foundation in 1989 the participants of the “New Names of Armenia” project made concert tours throughout the Europe, CIS, USA and Middle East. Just recently - last autumn, they traveled to Malta and made a series of concerts under the auspices of the Maltese President Mrs. Marie Louise Coleiro Preca. And I would like to use this opportunity and thank Silva Mikenyan, the founder and director of the Armenian branch of the “New names” festival, and vice-director Nonna Voskanyan, who traveled with children to Vienna and is here with us today. “New Names of Armenia” Project is under the patronage of the Armenia’s first lady Mrs. Rita Sargsyan.

I would like also to thank Ivetta Voronova, the founder and director of the International Charity Project “New Names”, as well as Nadezhda Barkhatova, who represents the leadership of the Project from Russian side.

Special thanks to sponsors, organizations and individuals who supports the Young stars, particularly, ÖBB and personally Mr. Christian Kern, the former Manager of the company, who was appointed recently as new Federal Chancellor of Austria; European Fund for Culture Support, namely Director Mr. Konstantin Ishkhanov, and of course, I wish to express my special gratitude to the Art-director of this concert series, Ms. Karine Haroutounian.

Our talented children and adolescents need careful treatment, all stages should be open for them, and we must be proud and happy of them. They best represent our culture, our societies, ourselves, because they are sincere and genuine, and they are out of politics. We hope that they accumulate more skills and experience in Vienna enable them to become renowned artists soon.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF MINISTER
FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF ESTONIA AND CHAIR OF THE
COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE,
H.E. MARINA KALJURAND**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, May 26, 2016

We would like to warmly welcome H.E. Marina Kaljurand, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia and Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and express our gratitude for her interesting and comprehensive address.

Both the OSCE and the Council of Europe are highly relevant regional organizations, shaping the collective efforts of their participating and member states to maintain peace, security and stability in our wide region through active promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, rule of law and democracy. The visit of Minister Kaljurand to the OSCE and her address to the Permanent Council is illustrative of the high level of cooperation between our Organizations.

We welcome the willingness and readiness of the Council of Europe to cooperate with the OSCE respective partners. Here we would like to particularly mention positive interaction of the Council of Europe with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the ODIHR. Such cooperation will contribute to creation of synergy between our organizations in their efforts towards protection and promotion of human rights.

Speaking about synergy, we mean first of all utilization of comparative advantages of our organizations without unnecessary duplication. Among such advantages of the Council of Europe is its experience in the field of tolerance and non-discrimination. Today violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism are direct threats to our values, peace and security in the areas of operation of OSCE and Council of Europe. Fight against racism, xenophobia and intolerance is essential in this regard. Armenia has been vocal in condemning hate speech and xenophobia, especially its use by public figures in the political discourse. Combating these phenomena has been a priority for Armenia during our Chairmanship at the Committee of Ministers and it continues to remain as such.

We highly value the activities of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance in combating intolerance and hate crimes. The reports of the ECRI reflect real problems in the sphere of extremism, racism, radicalization and hate crimes and provide clear-cut recommendations to address current challenges. Those reports can serve as guidance to our institutions for identifying those hate crimes which may represent threat to the security in the OSCE area.

It is the primary goal of Council of Europe to safeguard common values and individual rights at pan-European level. We firmly believe that the rights of individuals guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights must not be dependent on the status of the territory where peoples live. In this regard, we appreciate recent initiatives to discuss the subject of ensuring human rights in conflict zones. OSCE and Council of Europe can effectively cooperate in this field with the aim to make sure that there are no any areas of exclusion when it comes to enjoying human rights and fundamental freedoms. In this regard, we took note of the Conclusion of the Chairman on the 126th session of the Committee of the Ministers on the necessity of unrestricted, full and immediate access of the Council of Europe including its monitoring bodies and mechanisms to the conflict areas. This access is even more important amid grave violations of humanitarian and human rights as it was the case during the recent large scale military offensive of Azerbaijani armed forces against people of Nagorno-Karabakh which led to numerous atrocities. We also took note that the Conclusion of the Chairman refers to the human rights in Nagorno-Karabakh and underlines the necessity of confidence building measures.

The year of 2016 is an important milestone in relations between Armenia and the Council of Europe, as it marks the 15th Anniversary of Armenia's accession to the Organization. These have been years of fruitful cooperation in various areas of mutual interest. In a few days we will officially launch the Council of Europe 2015-2018 Action Plan for Armenia, which will further promote the reform process in our country.

In conclusion, we would also like to wish every success to Estonia in leading the Organization and pledge our full support to the Estonian Chairmanship in its endeavours.

**STATEMENT ON THE RECENT ATTACKS OF FOREIGN
TERRORIST FIGHTERS**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, June 16, 2016

The Armenian delegation expresses its grave concern over the last escalation of the situation in north-western Syria, around the city of Aleppo. In the recent days Aleppo was attacked by the terrorist organization Al-Nusrah Front, which led to numerous casualties among the civilian population.

We strongly condemn the continuous and deliberate bombardment of the Christian-populated districts of Aleppo, resulting in human losses and destruction. In the result of those attacks only in the Armenian neighborhood dozens were killed and injured, Armenian nursing home, the Holy Trinity “Zvartnots” Armenian Catholic Church and a number of buildings of scientific-educational, historical-cultural and civilian significance were seriously damaged.

The Delegation of Armenia since last two years has consistently raised the issue of foreign terrorist fighters, operating in Syria and Iraq. The terrorist organizations ISIL, Al Nusrah Front and other terrorist groups and entities, associated with Al Qaeda primarily target ethnic and religious minorities, including the Armenian community.

The threat to the very existence to ethnic and religious minorities in Syria and Iraq is widely recognized by the international community. On February 3, 2016, the European Parliament adopted a resolution, according to which ISIL “is committing genocide against Christians and Yezidis, and other religious and ethnic minorities”.

The UN Congress Resolution, adopted in March, 2016 recognized that “the atrocities perpetrated by ISIL against Christians, Yezidis, and other religious and ethnic minorities in Iraq and Syria constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide”.

In Helsinki Declaration, adopted last year the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly strongly condemned persecution and violence against Christians and other religious minorities in the OSCE area and beyond, including in

the Middle East and North Africa, and actions that limit their right to religious freedom and to practice their faith.

The challenges posed by the above-mentioned terrorist organizations, constitute a serious security threat for the OSCE region. Violent extremism, radicalization and terrorism, target different ethnic and religious minorities, threaten their very existence in the Middle East and contribute towards ongoing migration crisis in the OSCE area. The Armenian community in Aleppo had been formed by the descendants of victims of the Armenian Genocide. After 101 year this besieged community is struggling for its survival in the environment of apparent cross-border support rendered to the terrorist groups.

The OSCE adopted important Ministerial Declarations in Basel and Belgrade, which recognize the grave nature of the problem and the need to fully implement the UN Security Council Resolutions 2170, 2178, 2199 and 2249. In the Belgrade Declaration on Reinforcing OSCE Efforts to Counter Terrorism in the Wake of Recent Terrorist Attacks the participating States strongly condemned all terrorist attacks, in particular by the ISIL, Al-Nusrah Front (ANF), and all other individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with Al-Qaida and recognized that they constitute a global and unprecedented threat to international peace and security.

We strongly call upon all participating States to unconditionally implement their commitments to fight the scourge of terrorism.

In particular, we call on Turkey to prevent the use of its territories by terrorist groups for cross-border attacks against civilian populations, including religious and ethnic minorities in Syria.

**ADDRESS AT THE SYMPOSIUM “UNCERTAIN PATHS: ESCAPE,
EXPULSION AND GENOCIDE IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR”**

Amstetten, July 4, 2016

Two years ago mankind commemorated the centennial of the outbreak of the First World War, a great human catastrophe, which was unprecedented in scope and savagery: it claimed some 14 million lives — 5 million civilians and 9 million soldiers, 20 million were wounded, several million became prisoners of war, were displaced or had to leave their native regions and resettle permanently. And it is very important and actual that the discussions of this symposium focus on what are the real consequences of the WW1 and how they can be eliminated and recovered. Because even today the wounds of this centennial old tragedy still are not healed.

The First World War had tragic bearing on peoples that were not directly involved in. It has also left deep scars in the psyche and body of my nation. Last year we commemorated the centennial of the events that marked the beginning of deportation and mass killing of the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire. The scale and scope of the atrocities committed by the Ottoman government made it an unprecedented historical tragedy, which was aimed at a total annihilation of a whole nation. The first modern genocide perpetrated under the cover of the First World War, which claimed one and a half million lives of the Armenian people, hundreds thousand lives of various religious and ethnic minorities, among them Greeks, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Yazidis, shows to what extent humanity can degrade in the absence of an international system of security and protection of human rights.

After the First World War, the world witnessed many massacres which took lives of millions of people. The scope of massacres and atrocities committed on the pretext of false theories of racial, ethnic, or religious domination during the twentieth century constitute a serious blemish on the record of human civilization. The fact that the Armenian genocide went unpunished was a major impetus for future dictatorships, who didn't think twice before issuing orders for a new crime. No international action was taken to condemn this crime, leading new dictators to conclude that the

international community was already prepared to tolerate such acts of genocide, especially when they occurred in the “fog of war.” The Armenian Genocide was a sad precursor to the Jewish Holocaust during the Second World War, and genocidal campaigns in Cambodia, Rwanda, and Darfur. As 1984 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Most Reverend Archbishop Emeritus Desmond M. Tutu wrote: “And yet it is possible that if the world had been conscious of the genocide that was committed by the Ottomans against the Armenians, the first genocide of the twentieth century, then perhaps humanity might have been more alert to the warning signs that were being given before Hitler’s madness was unleashed on an unbelieving world.”

It is history repeating itself. In modern world violence, mass killings, devastation and displacement have unfortunately, become increasingly frequent, resulting in humanitarian catastrophes and crises of a horrifying scale. Since recent years we have witnessed mass atrocities of Christians, Yazidis, Muslims and other ethnic and religious minorities in the Middle East, which triggered mass exodus of the indigenous nations populating the region. The ongoing refugee and migration crisis that EU faces since instability wounded the regions of Middle East, Central Asia and North Africa, is the best prove that the only panacea of preventing crimes against humanity is joint struggle against impunity and denial. It has become faultlessly clear that the international fight against such crimes against humanity as genocide, terrorism, ethnic cleansing, discrimination, mass deportation, must be given a new impetus with a new content, accompanied with efficient prevention tools.

In this regard the question mark arises! What is the responsibility of our civilization striving for non-repeating of such catastrophes? I wish to emphasize the role that various governments, parliaments, international organizations, civil societies, academic communities play or should undoubtedly play in recognizing and remembering the past tragedies and preventing the conflicts and crimes against humanity in present day and in the future. Particularly, Austria and Germany, as the successor states of the Austro-Hungarian and German empires, recently had recognized their own responsibility for the crimes committed by the allied Ottoman Empire against its Armenian population and other minorities during the WW1.

From the regional context, the Genocide is the thorny issue in the development of the sound security system in our part of the world, and a healthy bilateral relationship between Armenia and Turkey. Refusal to establish diplomatic relations with Armenia, denial of historic truth, blockade and sealed borders in 21st century are unacceptable. Only acceptance of the historic truth can heal the deep-running discord between Turkish and Armenian peoples. Recognition of the Armenian Genocide can in no way be viewed as a threat, insult or attack on the Turkish people, and will only contribute to the self-confidence of any nation. Once free of this historic burden of Genocide denial, Turkey can work in concert with Armenia and other nations to promote peace and understanding in the whole region. Historic justice, remembrance, reconciliation, and peaceful coexistence are not ephemeral concepts but essential parameters in the rapprochement between Armenian and Turkish peoples.

And in conclusion I would like to express our appreciation to the Government of Lower Austria, to Boltzmann Institute for Elimination of the Consequences of War and to the Center for Migration Research of St. Poelten for organizing this very important scientific event, and to wish the participants of this symposium the utmost success and fruitful discussions and deliberations.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF H.E.
SEBASTIAN KURZ, FEDERAL MINISTER FOR EUROPE,
INTEGRATION AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF AUSTRIA**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, July 14, 2016

We warmly welcome H.E. Sebastian Kurz, Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs of Austria to the Permanent Council and thank him for the comprehensive address.

Austria will assume the Chairmanship of the OSCE in a complicated period for European security, which is characterized with the threat of use of force and use of force to suppress human rights and fundamental freedoms, including equal rights and self-determination of peoples, unwillingness of some participating States to ensure genuine commitment to the OSCE principles and values, lack of political will to make use of the OSCE as a platform of equal and cooperative dialogue. The attempts to introduce artificial hierarchy among the OSCE fundamental principles coupled with the efforts of concealing and justifying gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms have been eroding the European security.

The OSCE as the largest regional security organization and platform of equal dialogue is well placed to deal with outstanding issues of European security on the basis of its values, norms and principles, reflected in the Helsinki Final Act. We should make full use of the comparative advantages and toolbox of the OSCE, namely comprehensive security approach, agreed negotiation formats, field presences and institutions to exclude use of force from the international policy, develop inclusive dialogue, bridge gaps, build trust and confidence, deal with the past and promote reconciliation.

We took note of the intention of the incoming Austrian Chairmanship to promote resolution of protracted conflicts. We firmly believe that unequivocal political support by the OSCE Chairmanship to the agreed formats is important for ensuring sustainable and efficient implementation of their mandates and withstanding attempts to undermine their efforts.

Regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict we encourage the incoming Chairmanship to support the efforts of the Minsk Group co-Chairs in

addressing the consequences of the large scale military aggression against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, in particular promoting expansion of the PRCiO Office and its monitoring capacities and establishment of investigative mechanism into ceasefire violations, agreed during the meeting at the level of Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Vienna and confirmed in Saint-Petersburg. Strengthening of the permanent presence of the international community in the NK conflict zone is crucial for the prevention of further outbreak of military actions.

We encourage the Austrian Chairmanship to prioritize the issue of arms control and CSBMs, which are one of the cornerstones of the security and stability in the OSCE area. Effective legally binding arms control regime and its all-weather implementation could be crucial in ensuring practical application of the principle of non-use of force or threat of force. It will promote military transparency, trust and predictability, as well as prevent military buildup and outbreak of conventional warfare. We will support further dialogue on modernization of the Vienna Document, as a follow up to the efforts undertaken by the German Chairmanship and also reviewing the CFE Treaty. Armenia has established a solid bilateral cooperation framework with Austria on the topic of SSR/G and we are pleased to note that the SSR/G will be highly featured in the list of priorities of the Austrian chairmanship.

We support focus of the incoming Austrian Chairmanship on combating terrorism and radicalization. We attach utmost importance to full and unconditional implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions 2170, 2178 and 2199 by all participating states as it is envisaged by the Basel and Belgrade Ministerial Declarations, including in regard to fighting against the ISIL, Al Nusra Front and other terrorist organizations associated with Al Qaeda. This is particularly relevant in the context of addressing the challenge of the ongoing refugee and migration crisis.

We would welcome streamlining of efforts in countering radicalization with special focus on youth, since the latter is more prone to radicalization, in particular in conditions of state propaganda of hatred, xenophobia and intolerance.

We encourage the Austrian Chairmanship to streamline in its human dimension agenda the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the population living in the conflict zones. Another important area is remembrance and education of genocides, which is important in our efforts to prevent mass atrocities, to counter the policy of “final solutions”, to provide guarantees of non-recurrence and finally achieve reconciliation.

We share the Austrian Chairmanship’s focus on the topic of green economy and building partnerships for security. Inclusive economic participation and partnership is crucial for promoting trust and cooperation at all levels of governance. Second dimension has untapped potential in the area of confidence building. We need to utilize it on the basis of solidarity, partnership and taking into account the interests of all participating States. The medieval siege through decades long policy of closed borders should remain in the past.

We would like to stress the important role OSCE field operations play in supporting implementation of our commitments and translating them into best practice. We expect that the Austrian Chairmanship will provide support to the OSCE Office in Yerevan.

In conclusion, we would like to wish every success to You, Mr. Minister, in Your future responsible mission.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF
AMBASSADOR CLAUDE WILD, CHAIRPERSON OF THE OSCE
INFORMAL WORKING GROUP FOCUSING ON
THE ISSUE OF MIGRATION AND REFUGEE FLOWS**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, July 14, 2016

We would like to thank the German Chairmanship for convening the special meeting of the Permanent Council on the issue of the ongoing migration and refugee crisis.

Our thanks go to distinguished Ambassador Claude Wild, Head of the Swiss Delegation, who conducted the responsible mission of the Chairperson of the OSCE Informal Working Group Focusing on the Issue of Migration and Refugee Flows in the most intelligent manner.

We thank Ambassador Wild and his team for elaborating the comprehensive report on the basis of discussions within the frames of the informal Working Group. We will need time to examine in details the content of the report, but it is certain that it encompasses many valuable findings and conclusions, which reflect both the current capacities of the Organization in the field of migration management and possible avenues of enhancing those capacities.

The Delegation of Armenia took active part in the activities of the Working Group in light of the increasing global displacement challenges and ongoing conflicts in Syria and Iraq, which have significantly affected Armenia. About 20.000 persons displaced due to the conflict in Syria have sought protection in Armenia, which makes it the third European country with the biggest number of refugees from Syria per capita.

We would like to stress the need to ensure regional cooperation between frontline, transit and receiving states in implementation of the OSCE Ljubljana commitments on ensuring open and secure borders in order to facilitate safe passage of refugees to the country of destination willing to receive them. OSCE together with its field operations is mandated to provide assistance in facilitating cooperation in border security and management. Cooperation between field operations located along the West Balkan route is a good point of departure in this regard.

Second, the frontline participating States have special responsibility to ensure receipt of refugees, escaping terrorist threat. We could consider the possibility of establishing permanent monitoring of most sensitive borders in the context of ongoing crisis, namely the external borders of OSCE with Syria and Iraq.

Though the scope of the report is limited to the ways of tackling the consequences of the current refugee and migration flows, we firmly believe that we need to address the underlying factors behind this challenge, namely the problem of foreign terrorist fighters. In this regard, we would like to reiterate our position on the need for the OSCE participating States to unconditionally implement their commitments under UN Security Council Resolutions 2170, 2178, 2199 and 2249 and the OSCE Basel and Belgrade Ministerial Declarations, including the Belgrade Declaration on Reinforcing OSCE Efforts to Counter Terrorism in the Wake of Recent Terrorist Attacks.

In particular, the OSCE participating States should prevent the use of their territories by terrorist groups for cross-border attacks against civilian populations, including religious and ethnic minorities in Syria.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF
AMBASSADOR ARGO AVAKOV, HEAD OF THE OSCE OFFICE
IN YEREVAN**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, July 14, 2016

We would like to warmly welcome Ambassador Argo Avakov on his first appearance to the Permanent Council and thank him for the comprehensive and informative report.

At the outset, we would like to reiterate our firm political support to the activities of the OSCE Office in Yerevan. The efficient and result-oriented cooperation between the Government of Armenia and the OSCE Office reflects the political will and ownership of Armenia in implementation of its OSCE commitments in all three dimensions.

We particularly value the report of Ambassador Argo Avakov, as he represents the only remaining 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 provides detailed and comprehensive assessment on the implementation of the Armenia's OSCE commitments throughout the last year, including in the fields of democracy, rule of law and human rights and indicates the contribution of the Office in Yerevan to that end. 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: We welcome continued assistance of the Office in conduct of the Police Reform Program, including in such key areas as community policing, development of the institution of school

inspectors and modernization of Police educational institutions. Their primary aim is to promote democratic policing and further strengthen trust and confidence between the society and the Police.

We also support development of police capacities in addressing domestic violence and continued cooperation with the relevant government bodies in implementation of the PC Decisions 1106 and 1202 on ICT CBMs.

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. A landmark achievement of cooperation between the MOD and the Office was creation of the specialized center within the MoD, the Centre of Human Rights and Integrity, which will co-ordinate development and implementation of policy and best practices of international standards of human rights and humanitarian law.

We were pleased to note that the Office facilitated exchange of experience between the Centre for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise and the Ukrainian and Croatian demining centers. The project also is a best practice of horizontal cooperation and coordination between OSCE field operations. We welcome the focus of the Office on raising awareness of the risks of mines among the civilians, in particular children.

In the ***Economic and Environmental Dimension***, the key program continues to be the regulatory framework reform and we welcome the consistency of the Office in implementation of the program in this regard. We support cooperation between the Office and Aarhus centers, ENVSEC and other stakeholders in developing green economy, raising awareness on addressing natural disasters and other aspects of environmental security at all levels of governance, including community level.

In the ***Human Dimension*** strengthening democratic structure, rule of law and promoting human rights standards stands high in the agenda of my Government. Indeed, the Constitutional reforms and the resulting change of the system of government requires more coherence in implementation of the human dimension programs of the Office.

In the past period the Office largely contributed to development of democratic institutions, including the Human Rights Defender's Office of Armenia, promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms, migration management and combating trafficking. Armenia continued to make remarkable progress in the field of freedom of expression, freedom of media, anti-trafficking.

We appreciate the role of the Office in launching discussions among wide range of stakeholders in reforming the Armenian Electoral Code in line with the international recommendations. The agreement reached by the Government and opposition parties on the Electoral Code has been an unprecedented success and we hope that this important point of convergence will be sustained and promoted.

Armenia appreciates the Office's partnership with the OSCE institutions and the civil society in implementation of the human dimension programs.

There was a reference to the current standoff in the Erebuni Police Station and we thank for condolences expressed. The Police and other law enforcement agencies showed exemplary restraint in handling this situation which caused by the deplorable actions of an armed group that led to killing of one high ranking police officer and injuring others. We hope that the law enforcing agencies will be able to discharge their tasks by avoiding any casualties.

Reply

We took note of the high interest of Azerbaijan to the activities of OSCE field operations. We firmly refute any attempt of Azerbaijan to interfere into defining of Armenia's and priorities in cooperation with the OSCE. We would like to stress again that the OSCE Office in Yerevan is not mandated to deal with the NK conflict. Azerbaijani delegation should refrain from linking its conflict perceptions with the agenda of the Yerevan Office.

We understand that Azerbaijan accumulated impressive knowledge and skills in impeding the work of the OSCE Offices in general and the destiny of Baku Office is sad point to this case.

While shaping its endless list of concerns and questions to the Yerevan Office, Azerbaijan should not forget that it is not a host country for this Office and its interest towards the work of the Office should be addressed exclusively within budget cycle.

**STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION ON THE LINE OF CONTACT
BETWEEN NAGORNO-KARABAKH AND AZERBAIJAN AND
THE ARMENIAN-AZERBAIJANI STATE BORDER**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, July 28, 2016

We would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the recent developments on the Line of Contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan.

Despite the calls of international community to adhere to the ceasefire regime established by 1994 and 1995 agreements and halt the hostilities and return to the negotiation table, Azerbaijan continues to resort to military actions along the Line of Contact.

I would like to refer to the Press-Release of the Ministry of Defense of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, according to which the ceasefire violations by the Azerbaijani armed forces in the southeastern direction of the Line of Contact resulted in one killed and one wounded servicemen of the NK Defense Army.

The Azerbaijani armed forces also continued deliberate shelling of the borderline settlements along the Armenian-Azerbaijani state border and the LoC. The Azerbaijani military deliberately targeted football field of the school in the village of Movses in the north-east of Armenia at the very moment of children play. The Azerbaijani units also regularly shell the agricultural areas of the Talish village in Martakert region of NK with the aim to impede farming. Let me remind you that Talish was the most affected settlement during April large scale military offensive of Azerbaijan wherein massive destruction and atrocities took place. Apparently, the current action of Azerbaijani armed forces aimed at impeding the return of population to their homes.

Last night in the vicinity of Talish village Azerbaijani armed forces shelled from rocket propelled grenade.

More than two months passed since the meeting of the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Vienna and more than one month passed since the last summit at the presidential level in St-Petersburg. As colleagues are aware, these meetings resulted in adoption of concrete and clear-cut

commitments reflected also in the outcome statements on expansion of the PRCiO Office and creation of investigative mechanism into ceasefire violations.

However, so far there is no progress in this direction due to unconstructive stance of the Azerbaijani side. Such a policy is a major impediment to the advancement of process of peaceful resolution of the NK conflict.

Earlier today Azerbaijani delegation labeled socio-economic development of Nagorno-Karabakh as illegal economic activities. The people of Nagorno-Karabakh are entitled to all human rights, including right to life, right to development, and other political, cultural and economic rights, which have been established by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UN Covenants and elementary norms of civilized world.

According to Azerbaijani position, since the people of Nagorno-Karabakh does not recognize sovereignty of Azerbaijan and exercised the right of self-determination more than two decades ago, they should be deprived of all means of existence, and everything they do is illegal in nature, starting from birth. I do not exaggerate here. The Azerbaijani report labels as illegal increase of birth rate in Stepanakert.

Any issues related to the economic and environmental situation in conflict areas should be dealt in the OSCE in the context of confidence building measures and Armenia is ready to support any constructive proposal in this regard.

**STATEMENT ON NON-IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMITMENTS
ON NON-USE OF FORCE BY AZERBAIJAN**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, July 28, 2016

We would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the non-implementation of commitments on non-use of force by Azerbaijan.

Unconditional adherence to non-use of force or threat of use of force is key precondition for substantive political talks on any security related issue in the OSCE area, including conflict settlement.

The April preplanned large-scale military offensive of Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh, accompanied by atrocities and gross violations of the international humanitarian law was not merely another escalation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, but a serious challenge to common security and stability of the whole OSCE region. This military adventurism seriously threw back the process of resolution of the conflict.

Despite the calls of international community to adhere to the ceasefire regime established by 1994 and 1995 agreements and halt the hostilities and return to the negotiation table, Azerbaijan continues to resort to regular military actions along the Line of Contact. There were average 34 ceasefire violations daily in August and 42 in the first week of August.

Four months have passed since the meeting of the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Vienna and three months since the last summit at the presidential level in St-Petersburg. These meetings resulted in adoption of concrete commitments on full adherence to the 1994 and 1995 trilateral ceasefire agreements, which don't have time limitations, expansion of the PRCiO Office and creation of investigative mechanism into ceasefire violations.

However, so far Azerbaijan has rejected to implement these commitments, which puts under the question its credibility as a partner in negotiations. Moreover, its unconstructive stance clearly indicates that Azerbaijan continues to rely on the policy of forceful solution of the NK conflict and therefore is not interested in measures aimed at consolidation of the ceasefire regime. Such a policy is a major impediment to the advancement of process of peaceful resolution of the NK conflict. Attempts

of using force as an instrument of pressure on the political negotiations, if not adequately addressed and condemned by the international community, may lead to serious destabilization with unpredictable consequences for the entire region.

The Azerbaijani delegation today repeated its usual mantras on so-called illegal economic activities in Nagorno-Karabakh.

On September 2 the people of Nagorno-Karabakh marked the 25th anniversary of the adoption of Declaration of Independence of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. These years were marked by significant progress in development of democratic state institutions, strengthening of the rule of law, protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and building of market economy.

The people of Nagorno-Karabakh are entitled to all human rights including right to life, right to development, and other political, cultural and economic rights which have been established by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UN Covenants and elementary norms of civilized world.

The international law does not envisage reprisals including economic, cultural and humanitarian blockade against any people based on the conflict perception of one member state. The UN Security Council has never sanctioned any measure against authorities and population of Nagorno-Karabakh and thus the efforts to isolate population of Nagorno-Karabakh from international community are not legal.

The attempt of Azerbaijan to define criminal all economic, social, cultural and humanitarian activities of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh aims at further violating individual and collective human rights and thus should be unequivocally condemned. Azerbaijan is not entitled to inflict collective punishment on the entire people through impeding their economic, cultural and humanitarian contacts with the international community.

The international instruments such as UN Covenant on Political and Civil Rights and UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights empower people to pursue their economic, social and cultural development by the virtue of the right to self-determination. The UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights by its Article 1.2 establishes that

“All peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence”

Azerbaijan itself has recognized that the equal rights and self-determination of peoples should be among the principles of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution during the OSCE Athens Ministerial Council and thus denying rights of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to economic and cultural development is contradictory in this regard.

**REMARKS AT THE EVENT DEDICATED TO THE 25TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIA'S INDEPENDENCE**

Vienna, Embassy of the Republic of Armenia, September 21, 2016

Today my country is permeated with joy and festivities stimulated by the very special occasion. 25 years ago, the population of Armenia with overwhelming majority expressed through the nation-wide referendum its unequivocal support to the bright ideas of independence and sovereignty. The Republic of Armenia proclaimed the values and norms encompassed in the Declaration of Independence, adopted earlier, in August 1990.

25 years is a serious landmark. It's an age of adulthood, maturity, knowledge, experience. It's an age when idealistic approach is normally replaced by pragmatic assessment. The quarter century is the period when generation is being replaced by another generation, paving the way for new ideas, new approaches, new values.

25 years ago, sceptics questioned the viability of the future of our new Armenian republic. Indeed, Armenia's northern regions, which were totally devastated by an earthquake in 1988, coupled with equally cataclysmic collapse of the Soviet Union meant for us a loss of traditional markets, access to resources, and geopolitical stability. Well, in retrospect, the sceptics proved to be wrong. Armenia's independence is now a reality firmly implanted in the minds and hearts of the Armenian people.

But in the meantime, I don't want to try to paint a completely rosy picture here. Armenia has experienced more than its share of human hardship, economic crisis, conflict, regional instability, and twin blockade since regaining its sovereignty. Nevertheless, we have made substantial progress in laying the foundations for a viable state. Armenia has become one of the reform leaders among CIS countries and the front runner in building up democratic institutions and civil society. In the mentioned period we have recorded years of economic growth. This performance reflected a combination of factors, namely a sustained commitment to macroeconomic stability, improvement of competitiveness, market-driven processes of regulating the export and the import, a focus on poverty-reducing policies as well as a huge support from the Armenian Diaspora.

Armenia still has a long way to go to reach the appropriate level of economic prosperity and rule of law to become modern and stable country with desirable capacities and its own place among the large family of independent nations.

I would like to specially thank the government and people of Austria for their invaluable support and assistance shown since the time of the Spitak earthquake and during those 25 years of independence. Through its official channel – the Austrian Development Agency, and its office in Yerevan, knowledge transfer and new cropping methods raises steadily agricultural productivity of Armenia. Starting up small dairies or other processing enterprises affords future prospects for the rural population. Austria also helps our Government to lay the necessary foundation for business activity and to build a modern and efficient administrative apparatus, support programs for Armenian refugees from Syria

Armenia and Austria attach great importance to the political dialog that became a nice tradition of our bilateral relations. During the past 4 years we exchanged a number of important official and state visits on the highest level: 2012 – Federal President of Austria Dr. Heinz Fischer visited Armenia with a state visit, 2014 – Armenian President Mr. Serzh Sargsyan reciprocated to the Austrian soil.

Territorial administration, science and education, economy, agriculture, culture ... one can read this list of fields of fruitful and effective cooperation existing between our countries. This year Austria hosted the 7th session of the Austrian-Armenian joint commission for bilateral foreign economic relations and traditional business forum. We all are looking forward to significantly improve our trade balance and figures of economic exchange. Last year we have witnessed the formation of the Austria – Armenia parliamentary friendship group.

I would also like to use this opportunity to thank the Government of Austria for their special attention and attitude towards our compatriots, the Armenian- Austrian community, which has more than two centuries long history in this country.

Being a prominent location in the heart of Europe, Austrian capital, beautiful city of Vienna, accommodates large number of international

organizations, that make easier life of diplomats and governmental officials. Armenia highly values the support of the Austrian government to maintain all necessary conditions for effective international cooperation.

I would especially outline the role of the OSCE. As a country preparing itself to assume the presidency in the OSCE along next calendar year, Austria is considered very reliable and desirable partner for my country. And Armenia is strictly committed to unambiguous implementation and strengthening of the OSCE principles empowering people in the OSCE area to promote and protect their rights and to freely pursue their own future and thus contributing to the peace and security worldwide. Armenia enjoys full-fledged membership and cooperation with IAEA, UNIDO, UNODC, CTBTO, OFID, IACA, and many others.

I would like to thank all our guests - members of the Austrian Parliament, representatives of the Austrian Government, Municipality of Vienna, members of diplomatic community - ambassadors and diplomats, international organizations, representatives of the Armenian community for being with us today to celebrate the National Day of Armenia, 25-th Anniversary of the Independent Armenian Republic.

I would like also to thank our musicians – Hovannes Jibian on piano and Garry Sarkissian on saxophone. And now I warmly ask You to enjoy the meal, to test Armenian wine and very special apricot brandy Abrikon.

**STATEMENT ON THE USE OF FORCE BY AZERBAIJAN
AGAINST THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION OF THE
PEOPLE OF NAGORNO-KARABAKH**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, October 4, 2016

We would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the continued policy of use of force by Azerbaijan against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The Azerbaijani side continued to violate the ceasefire regime along the Line of Contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan and the Armenian-Azerbaijani state border. One of the incidents resulted in death of Sevak Khachatryan, serviceman of the NK Defense Army on September 25.

There is a certain feature of the current actions of the Azerbaijani armed forces and that is the attempt to make it impossible to pursue any economic activities in the NK borderline settlements. As a result, the harvest in number of settlements in Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia has been severely impeded and undermined. This is particularly the case of the Talish settlement whose population was a subject of atrocities during the April offensive of Azerbaijani armed forces.

The above incidents alongside with continuous rejection by the highest Azerbaijani leadership of the very existence of civilian population in Nagorno-Karabakh indicate that the Azerbaijani Government consistently pursues policy of all types of warfare including economic one in order to expel the people of Nagorno-Karabakh.

This year we had extensive discussions in the HDIM on the role of OSCE as a regional organization under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter in promoting individual and collective human rights contained in the UN Covenants. The legally binding UN Covenant on Political and Civil Rights and UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, are the cornerstones of the international human right law, empower people to pursue their economic, social and cultural development by the virtue of the right to self-determination. Furthermore, it recognizes that all peoples may for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources. It

maintained that in no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence.

What Azerbaijan is trying to do is exactly what unequivocally rules out the Covenant: deprivation of people of Nagorno-Karabakh of their means of subsistence.

The attempt to go after and punish everyone who is involved in any economic interaction with the people of Nagorno-Karabakh cannot be productive for a country who has never exercised its jurisdiction over Nagorno-Karabakh particularly now at the post oil age of existence, as defined by Azerbaijan itself. If it is still possible to silence and imprison dissenting voices in the own society under the charges of illegal economic activities it does not mean that Azerbaijan will be able to employ same approach in putting the entire population of Nagorno-Karabakh under the medieval siege.

We condemn the attempts to criminalize the entire population of Nagorno-Karabakh and impede their economic, social, cultural and humanitarian contacts. Armenia will always stand behind the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to ensure that they are not deprived of their means of subsistence.

Any economic issue in the conflict areas should be addressed through de-escalation and confidence building measures.

Under the current circumstances the only way forward is to implement agreements reached in the Vienna and St. Petersburg Summits including on strengthening the OSCE presence in the conflict area and we call Azerbaijan to do so.

**STATEMENT IN REPLY TO DIRECTOR OF THE ODIHR
MICHAEL LINK**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, October 13, 2016

We would like to join the other speakers and thank the distinguished Director Michael Georg Link for presenting the outcomes of this year's Human Dimension Implementation Meeting.

Armenia values the HDIM as an important platform for inclusive and civilized dialogue between representatives of participating States, civil society and academia. Our participation in the HDIM at the level of Minister was indicative of our interest in that meeting.

The Delegation of Armenia engaged in open debate on current challenges in the sphere of human rights, our achievements and best practices in upholding OSCE commitments. We did not shy away to address our own shortcomings and outstanding issues.

The discussions once again clearly established the fact that security and stability in the OSCE area is closely interlinked with upholding of human rights and fundamental freedoms of all. Participants of the HDIM agreed that gross violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms may further fuel conflicts. We were outspoken on the need to streamline the efforts of our Organization and its institutions to promote individual and collective human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people residing in conflict areas.

We took note of the statement of the representative of Azerbaijan and in this regard would like to stress the following.

We regret that Azerbaijan restricted participation of its independent civil society, and opted to engage in fake dialogue with its GONGOs. This is disrespectful towards all of us who value the HDIM as one of the most inclusive platforms for human rights dialogue.

Azerbaijan is attempting to promote its domestic ill-practice of silencing of dissenting voices from other parts of the OSCE including Nagorno-Karabakh, which is unacceptable and should be clearly condemned. Harassment and dehumanization of the representative of the civil society of NK in the course of the forum fully fits into its official

policy of hatred and intolerance towards Armenians in general and people of NK in particular.

HDIM is a platform of a dialogue free of censorship and prosecution, and we believe that Azerbaijan should stand for an open and frank dialogue with the civil society, including representatives of civil society of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Taking the opportunity of the presence of Director Link we would like to express our concerns regarding some publications in the Azerbaijani media on the most recent appearance of the ODIHR Director in Baku. We are not aware whether assessment attributing to Mr. Link is correct. Some of those assessments qualify Azerbaijan as an excellent sample of interfaith relations and also present recent constitutional referendum in that country in a very positive light. We think that the ODIHR director has all opportunities to confirm or deny or simply keep silence about his remarks in Baku. But we would like to stress that the ODIHR director became a tool for propaganda despite all our concerns, which were clearly articulated in this Organization.

We are not aware whether this visit met its declared goal of appeasing Azerbaijan and re-engaging it in cooperation with the OSCE and ODIHR, but one thing is clear. Holding an event on TND at the level of Director and creating artificial avenues for presenting nonexistent good practices in a country, which officially pursues policy of promoting intolerance, xenophobia and hate crimes may highly affect credibility and reputation of ODIHR as an institution promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms independently and without political considerations.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF THE
PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE
RED CROSS PETER MAURER**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, October 13, 2016

We would like to thank the distinguished President of the ICRC, Mr. Peter Maurer for outlining the activities of the ICRC and sharing his ideas on better interaction between the OSCE and the ICRC.

Armenia highly values the principles of impartiality and neutrality upon which the ICRC activities have been based. The primary value of Your esteemed Organization is reaching out to the people, who are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance without any politization.

The ICRC is the only permanent international humanitarian presence in Nagorno-Karabakh. We commend the efforts of the ICRC to provide humanitarian assistance to the forcefully displaced population of Nagorno-Karabakh particularly from the settlements of Talish, Madagis and Tonashen in close cooperation with the authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh in the aftermath of the April large-scale offensive of Azerbaijan. We appreciate ICRC activities aimed at strengthening ability of the affected population of Nagorno-Karabakh to meet their immediate needs and resume their livelihoods.

Another pressing issue, we would like to touch is dignified treatment of captive civilians, prisoners of war and human remains. The NK authorities have fully cooperated with the ICRC to address humanitarian consequences of the April war, including recovery of human remains and their dignified return.

The ICRC was invited to monitor and verify the cases of torture and mutilation of the bodies of servicemen of the NK Defence Army and civilians killed during the April escalation. In this regard I would like to refer to the detailed information available in number of Notes Verbale of the Foreign Ministry of Nagorno-Karabakh, the comprehensive report of the NK Ombudsman and other documents, providing factual material on the atrocities committed against the civilian population of the Talish village and torture of captive servicemen and mutilation of their bodies.

We attach highest importance to full and unrestrained access of the ICRC to places of detention and monitoring of conditions of captives in the context of the conflict. In this regard I would like to recall a number of cases of torture and killing of Armenian civilians in Azerbaijani custody, including the cases of Mamikon Khojoyan, Manvel Saribekyan and Karen Petrosyan.

Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh authorities also cooperate with ICRC on exchange of information on missing persons and render all possible assistance for unhindered implementation of its activities. We welcome the ICRC project on DNA-sample collection from the families of missing persons, which can help to clarify the fate of missing persons

There are two factors complicating the progress in this regard. First, attempts to politicize the issue and inflate the number of missing persons for purely propagandistic aims. It should be mentioned that Azerbaijan has been politicizing the issue of missing persons in all stages of NK conflict starting from the 90s when then Azerbaijani authorities used the practice of disguising military casualties and burying the killed servicemen without any identification. The head of the Azerbaijani State security service, Madat Guliyev stated in the context of recent disclosure of 127 burying sites, that on a number of occasions the Azerbaijani servicemen were buried without any identification.

Second is the refusal of Azerbaijan to cooperate at the level of relevant state commissions on missing persons both with NK and Armenia. International practice including that of number of the OSCE participating States suggests that it is not possible to embark on any meaningful and efficient cooperation without fully operationalizing these professional and non politicized frameworks.

We value close interaction of the ICRC and OSCE particularly at the level of field missions and presences. The cooperation between the ICRC mission in Stepanakert and PRCIO is good case in point. This cooperation has been essential during April events as well.

In conclusion, we would like to stress our full support to the activities of the ICRC.

Reply

In response to the distinguished Ambassador of Azerbaijan I would like to add that Azerbaijan openly violated Geneva Conventions and did not even hide itsincompliance with them on number of occassions. Furthermore Azerbaijan did not implement humanitarian agreements reached at the highest level particularly in Astrakhan Summit. It should be remembered that Azerbaijan prevented the handling of the deceased bodies of NK helicopter crew members despite clear and unconditional international obligations in this regard. Two chopped heads of NK servicemen up to date has not been returned by Azerbaijani side.

In the meantime, I would like to draw attention to full cooperation of the NK authorities with the ICRC mission in Stepanakert, which has regular access and ability to verify dignified treatment of the two Azerbaijani citizens, currently serving their prison sentences in Nagorno-Karabakh.

We call on Azerbaijan to implement its international obligations emanating from Geneva Conventions and join the family of civilized nations. Furthermore, we call on Azerbaijan to ratify Additional Protocols to Geneva Conventions.

We also call on Azerbaijan to stop refusing establishment of investigative mechanism into ceasefire violations, which will also help to identify those responsible for violations of the international humanitarian law.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE CO-CHAIRMEN OF THE
OSCE MINSK GROUP, THE PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE OSCE CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE, AND THE HEAD OF
THE HIGH-LEVEL PLANNING GROUP**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, November 10, 2016

We would like to warmly welcome the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group Ambassadors Igor Popov, James Warlick and Pierre Andrieu, the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk and the Head of the HLPG, Colonel Hans Lampalzer to the Permanent Council and thank them for their comprehensive reports. We welcome Ambassador Stephane Visconti on assumption of the responsible mission of the Minsk Group Co-Chair and wish the outgoing Co-Chair Pierre Andrieu all the best in his endeavors.

We reiterate our full support for the agreed format of the Minsk group Co-chairmanship and our commitment to the peaceful resolution of the NK conflict. As it was already mentioned last time the Co-Chairs appeared at the Permanent Council on April 5 in the immediate aftermath of the large-scale military offensive unleashed against Nagorno-Karabakh. We appreciated their efforts aimed at de-escalating the situation. The use of force amid peace process highlighted certain realities.

First, it indicated that Azerbaijan used peaceful negotiations to create capacities aimed at military solution of the conflict.

Second, it revealed the true reasons behind the rejection of confidence and security building measures including strengthening OSCE presence and creation of the investigative mechanism.

Third, the atrocities perpetrated by Azerbaijani armed forces both against civilians and militaries with their subsequent glorifications indicated that Azerbaijani side did not merely crossed a line of contact but a red line further seriously eroding the calls of the Co-Chairs on preparation of the population to the peace. The tactic of terrorizing the population of Nagorno-Karabakh and attempts at discrediting all their activities should also be seen in the same context of pursuing a zero-sum game.

Fourth, Azerbaijan tried to undermine the very foundations of the peace process by an attempt to denounce 1994 and 1995 ceasefire agreements which do not have any time limitations. We appreciate clear-cut message of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs and their respective countries that reconfirmed the relevance and indispensable role of these agreements for peace process.

The confidence and security building measures outlined during the Summits of Vienna and St Petersburg are instrumental in contributing to the prevention of the further use of force and thus creating conducive environment for peace process.

Armenia is committed to the implementation of what has been announced and agreed upon at Vienna and St. Petersburg summits on strict adherence to 1994 and 1995 ceasefire agreements, creation of an investigative mechanism into ceasefire violations and expansion of the capacities of the PRCiO Office. Unfortunately, Azerbaijan openly rejects implementation of those agreements and the letter of the Delegation of Azerbaijan, distributed yesterday, was yet another confirmation of that fact. Strengthening of the capacities of the PRCiO Office does not mean mere mechanical increase of its staff, but rather increase of its monitoring activities on the ground in the conflict zone. Every meeting and agreements reached therein are meaningful as far as there is a record of their implementation. Azerbaijan's record in this regard is by far not positive, which certainly impacts the whole negotiations process.

The ongoing ceasefire violations continue claiming casualties and urgency of implementation of these confidence and security building measures is essential both for creating necessary environment for peace process and preventing further casualties on the ground.

Azerbaijan complements the explicit use of force by implicit threat to use the force. The intentional ceasefire violations have been accompanied by the large-scale military exercises which occur in very special timing. For instance, just before St. Petersburg Summit Azerbaijan held large scale military exercise and same will happen in couple of days before the Hamburg Ministerial Council and afterwards of the visit of the Co-Chairs to the region. According to Azerbaijani defence Ministry the forthcoming

military exercises will involve 60 thousand troops, almost entire personnel strength of armed forces, more than 150 tanks, 700 units of artillery and more than 50 units of military aviation, and it is apparently being held in violation of Vienna Document.

We are convinced that the threat or use of force should be unequivocally condemned in a specified and clear manner. The people of Nagorno-Karabakh have been main target of the large-scale military offensive of Azerbaijan. Their right of existence on their ancestral homeland was put under the question. Under these circumstances, the realization of the right of people of Nagorno-Karabakh to self-determination becomes more than relevant today and it constitutes central issue in the negotiation process.

That being said, let me highlight that Armenia is committed to peaceful resolution of the conflict based on the three principles outlined by the OSCE Co-Chairs in their entirety.

In our reply to the President of the ICRC a couple of weeks ago we stressed that both Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh continue to cooperate with the ICRC and its offices in Yerevan and Stepanakert both in regard to the exchange of information on missing persons and also other areas of activities of the ICRC. We also outlined a number of concrete cases of open violation of international humanitarian law by Azerbaijan, all of which remained unanswered. We also underlined that attempts to politicize the issue and inflate the number of missing persons for purely propagandistic aims as well as the refusal of Azerbaijan to cooperate at the level of relevant state commissions on missing persons both with NK and Armenia are complicating progress in regard to exchange of information on missing persons.

The Delegation of Armenia took note of the report of the distinguished colonel Hans Lampalzer. We encourage the HLPG to continue its activities strictly following its mandate on elaborating military peacekeeping operation.

Reply

In reaction to the statement of the distinguished Ambassador of Turkey, I would like to emphasize, that, yes, Turkey is a member of the

Minsk Group on the paper, but in reality Turkey is violating its OSCE commitments and playing a very negative and destructive role in the process, by fully supporting one party to the conflict, keeping sealed its borders with Armenia and blockading it not only on the ground, but also in international fora, refusing to ratify protocols on establishment of diplomatic relations and development of relations between two countries, signed in Zurich 7 years ago.

We call on Turkey to reconsider its policy in regard to the NK conflict.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF H.E.
SEBASTIAN KURZ, OSCE CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE,
FEDERAL MINISTER FOR EUROPE, INTEGRATION AND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF AUSTRIA**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, January 12, 2017

We warmly welcome H.E. Sebastian Kurz, Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs of Austria to the Permanent Council and thank him for his comprehensive address.

Mr. Minister, during your previous appearance at the Permanent Council the delegation of Armenia took the opportunity to present its approaches on the priorities of the 2017 Austrian Chairmanship and express its support to its forward-looking but also realistic program. Therefore, we will share some remarks on key points of your thoughtful address.

Austria is assuming the Chairmanship in a very complex environment of a number of persisting and evolving challenges. Among several outstanding issues, which Austria inherited is the challenge of the consistent erosion of the OSCE toolbox, including such valuable mechanisms as field operations. Regrettably the long-standing policy of Azerbaijan to reduce OSCE field presence in the region of South Caucasus, gained even more consistency last year in an unprecedented attempt of imposing pressure and dictate on the Chairmanship, the Office and the host country through using technical decision on extension of the mandate of the OSCE Office in Yerevan. We need very strong leadership of the Austrian Chairmanship in protecting the OSCE presence in the South Caucasus in line with the OSCE procedures and practice, which will effectively prevent further unconstructive stance of hostage taking.

We appreciate the Chairmanship's resolve to prevent further escalation of the NK conflict by working through the agreed format of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship. The large-scale military offensive of Azerbaijan against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, accompanied by atrocities and other violations of international humanitarian law in April last year demonstrated one more time that use of force and military buildup do not solve, but deepen conflicts and eventually undermine decades of

efforts of the international mediators and other parties to the NK conflict to achieve durable peace.

Another lesson of the April large-scale offensive is the imperative of strengthening the capacities of the PRCiO as the OSCE permanent presence in the conflict zone and introduction of investigative mechanism into ceasefire violations. Regrettably, agreements in this regard achieved at the Vienna and St-Petersburg summits last year, still have not been finalized and implemented due to rejection of one participating State. Armenia along with 55 OSCE participating States supported the German Chairmanship's proposal on enhancing the PRCiO capacities. Full adherence to ceasefire regime, established by the 1994 and 1995 tripartite agreements, through strengthening OSCE's monitoring, investigative and verification capacities along the Line of Contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan is vital for the advancement of peace process. We encourage the Austrian Chairmanship to continue the efforts aimed at full implementation of the above-mentioned agreements

We fully endorse the view of the Austrian Chairmanship that safety and security of conflict affected population should be a priority. Human, economic and cultural rights of millions of people, residing in conflict areas throughout the OSCE region, including their right to life are constantly being violated. This significant portion of the OSCE population remains excluded from the OSCE activities, including those aimed at promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms. We hope the Austrian Chairmanship will address this problem also by presenting inclusive human dimension program, which will provide opportunity to discuss human rights of people residing in conflict areas, as the category of population, most suffering of the conflict.

We fully endorse the approach of the Austrian Chairmanship on the need to apply the OSCE wide toolbox to promoting de-escalation, reestablishing trust and countering violent extremism and radicalization. Indeed, our Organization is a forum for addressing outstanding issues of European security through dialogue, cooperation and confidence building on the basis of its values, norms and principles, enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act.

Throughout recent years we have adopted very important documents aimed at countering phenomenon of the foreign terrorist fighters and violent extremism. In Hamburg we have condemned numerous atrocities targeting religious communities by terrorist entities such as ISIL, ANF and other Al-Qaida affiliates. Unfortunately, the incitement to violence, war and genocide had not been exclusively limited to terrorists, and atrocities perpetrated and glorified in the OSCE region that I have already referred to, should be taken as serious warning sign. The events in the OSCE neighboring regions suggested that the radicalization of youth and advocacy of violent extremism and hatred cannot be contained in the officially designated image of enemy and eventually they can explode the entire societies. That being said, let me underline that Armenia strongly supports the Chairmanship's priority on countering violent extremism and radicalization with focus on youth.

In conclusion, we would like to thank the outgoing German Chairmanship and to wish all success to you, Mr. Minister, to the Chairman of the Permanent Council Ambassador Kojan and to the Austrian able and competent team.

**STATEMENT ON THE ARMED PROVOCATION BY
AZERBAIJAN AT THE ARMENIAN-AZERBAIJANI STATE
BORDER**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, January 19, 2017

We would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the recent armed provocation by the Azerbaijani armed forces at the north-east section of the Armenia-Azerbaijan state border in the vicinity of the Chinari settlement.

On December 29, an Azerbaijani armed unit crossed the state border, penetrated into the territory of the Republic of Armenia and targeted the servicemen of the Armed Forces of Armenia. The Armenian armed units repulsed the attack and caused several casualties to the subversive group. Regrettably, the armed provocation led to death of three servicemen, lieutenant Shavarsh Melikyan and privates Edgar Narayan and Erik Abovyan.

The Investigative Committee of the Republic of Armenia has opened criminal case on the basis of articles 1, 7 and 13 of the paragraph 104, killing of two and more persons by an organized group with motives of national, racial and religious hatred or religious fanaticism and article 2 of the paragraph 384, unleashing or conduct of a war of aggression, of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia. Currently, investigation is ongoing.

Immediately following the provocation, the Ministry of Defense of Armenia issued press-releases with details of the armed provocation, including information on one of the Azerbaijani casualties, whose body was found in the trenches of the Armenian armed forces on the territory of the Republic of Armenia. Only after hours of silence and realizing that the Armenian side holds irrefutable proofs of the responsibility of the Azerbaijan for this diversionary infiltration, the Azerbaijani propaganda tried to mirror ill-prepared counter accusations. Apparently, the very fact that the body of Azerbaijani serviceman was found in the Armenian positions deprives these claims of any hint of credibility.

We would like to stress that the Azerbaijani side holds full responsibility for this serious incident, which claimed the lives of servicemen and brought grief to several families just on the eve of New Year and Christmas.

The situation along the Line of Contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan also remains tense. Yesterday ceasefire violation by Azerbaijani armed units resulted in death of a serviceman of the Nagorno-Karabakh Defense Army Andranik Musikyan.

I would like to remind that following the large-scale military offensive of Azerbaijan against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh the agreements on increasing the capacities of the PRCiO and creating investigative mechanism into ceasefire violations were reached in the Vienna and St. Petersburg summits. The importance of these CSBMs in order to prevent armed provocations and casualties among military servicemen and civilian population is self-evident for anyone in the OSCE, but not Azerbaijan. Mutual accusations cannot be clarified by story-telling, an outburst of which we have seen in the recent letters of Azerbaijani Permanent Representative, but clear verification of facts which can be produced by an OSCE investigative mechanism.

Armenia does not need to be convinced for an urgent need of investigative mechanism into cease-fire violations and any calls in this regard should be specified.

Against this background we took note of the statement of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs and we hope that the Co-Chairs will be persistent in promptly and strongly reacting to any use of force or threat of force in the conflict zone, especially, those which lead to human losses.

We call on the OSCE Chairmanship and the participating States to send an unequivocal signal to Azerbaijan that any attempt of use of force will be condemned by the international community, as well as to exert pressure on it to implement agreements reached in the Vienna and St. Petersburg Summits.

STATEMENT ON THE CASE OF HRANT DINK

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, January 19, 2017

January 19th marks the 10th anniversary of the assassination of Hrant Dink, prominent Armenian-Turkish intellectual, chief editor of the Armenian newspaper *Agos*.

It should be recalled that the Delegation of Armenia has regularly raised this issue at the Permanent Council throughout last years. The response was always the same, we had been advised by the Turkish Delegation to wait for the results of legal proceedings.

Throughout this decade the developments in the trial did not identify the masterminds behind the murder and bring them to justice. Throughout long years of investigation there has been an impression that certain revelations happened along shift of political landscape and yet clear-cut question who and why remained unanswered.

We welcome the press-release of the OSCE Representative on the freedom of media Ms. Dunja Mijatovic in this regard and fully share her assessment that “even a decade on, the masterminds behind this tragedy are still at large”.

We firmly believe that failure to address violence and killing of journalists, community leaders, and intellectuals creates a climate of impunity, thus encouraging intolerance towards any idea, which runs counter to official narratives.

We remember that Hrant Dink was stigmatized and even tried for his position and statements regarding the Armenian Genocide. Unfortunately, same environment of silencing voices seeking truth and justice prevail in Turkey after a decade of his murder. The suspension from parliamentary sessions of MP Garo Paylan as a punishment for his reference to the historic persecutions of the religious groups is the most recent example in this regard. There are reports that certain political parties are even attempting to initiate a criminal case against him equaling reference to the Armenian Genocide to a hate speech.

Turkey positions itself in this Organization as an advocate of tolerance and non-discrimination, particularly with regard religious groups. We

firmly believe that if Turkish Delegation is really sincere in its claims it should not merely advocate the rights of newly created religious communities in certain participating states, but its authorities themselves should show an example of such tolerance, at least towards indigenous religious minorities, whose small portions survived and currently exist in Turkey.

In the same vein, let me also recall our request to the Turkish Delegation to clarify the expropriation by the state authorities of the Armenian Church St. Giragos and its land property in Diyarbekir Sur District. It is almost a year that we have officially communicated this request through the Permanent Council and yet, despite assurances voiced out in the Annual Security Review Conference, no any response has been provided so far.

RESPONSE TO THE STATEMENT OF THE AZERBAIJANI DELEGATION

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, January 19, 2017

We regret that instead of demonstrating support and constructive approach to the peace process led by the Minsk Group Co-Chairs, Azerbaijan is again referring to the history of the conflict in distorted manner.

The UNSC resolutions were adopted almost quarter of century ago during the military phase of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with the aim of immediate cease of hostilities. But every time these resolutions were violated by Azerbaijan, whose leadership continued to rely on forceful solution of the NK issue.

By enthusiastically citing the resolutions the Azerbaijani side in line with its usual practice refers only to certain provisions of these documents and distorts their content. Not only there is no any reference to the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia in those Resolutions, but they clearly indicate that the territory of the Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding military security zone are in control of the “local Armenian forces”.

Nowadays when Azerbaijan put into doubt the existence of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh and its authorities and label all their activities as illegal it should remember that they have been recognized as direct and immediate party to the conflict. It also should be recalled that during the very historic period Azerbaijan was directly negotiating with the authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic without even participation of the Republic of Armenia. My delegation had opportunities to circulate in the OSCE relevant documents, and we can do that again if Azerbaijani wishes so, which testify that President of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliiev and his Minister of Defense have been part of these efforts.

Thus, if Azerbaijan wishes to implement those resolutions it should start by establishing direct contacts with Nagorno-Karabakh elected authorities.

Moreover, the Resolutions, inter alia, include the following provisions: condemnation of the violations of cease-fire, demand for immediate

cessation of hostilities and hostile acts with a view to establishing a durable cease-fire, calls for restoration of economic, transport and energy links in the region, unimpeded access for international humanitarian relief efforts in the region and lift of blockade. All these measures were clearly and unequivocally addressed to Azerbaijan and rejected by that country further escalating the military situation.

Azerbaijan failed to comply with those resolutions and opted for military adventure. That policy was doomed to failure and in May 1994 Azerbaijan had to conclude a ceasefire agreement with Nagorno-Karabakh. The agreement of cease-fire opened the way for negotiations to find a peaceful solution to the conflict.

Unfortunately, nowadays the leadership of Azerbaijan continues again its policy of resolution of conflict by use of force, despite numerous calls of the international community to settle it exclusively by peaceful means. The April large-scale offensive of Azerbaijan against NK, followed by attempts to dismantle the tripartite ceasefire agreements of 1994 and 1995, which make up the foundation of the cessation of hostilities and peace process zone are indicative in this regard.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF MINISTER
FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS AND
CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS OF THE
COUNCIL OF EUROPE, H.E. IOANNIS KASOULIDES**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, January 26, 2017

We would like to warmly welcome H.E. Ioannis Kasoulides, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus and Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and express our gratitude for his interesting and comprehensive address.

Before going to the agenda of cooperation between Council of Europe and the OSCE we would like to stress the high level of cooperation between Armenia and Cyprus, based on millennia old traditions of neighborhood and friendship and shared values between our peoples.

The firm stance of Cyprus for the realization of the right to the truth and the protection of rights of people who were subject of mass atrocities including genocide earned well-deserved respect and acknowledgement.

One of the key areas of activities of the OSCE and the Council of Europe is promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms, rule of law and democracy, as important cornerstones for peace, security and cooperation.

We welcome willingness and readiness of the Council of Europe to cooperate with the OSCE and its institutions. Here we would like to particularly mention positive interaction of the Council of Europe with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the ODIHR. Such cooperation should be based on mutual utilization of comparative advantage of our organizations and avoiding unnecessary duplication of activities.

Among such advantages of the Council of Europe is its experience in the field of tolerance and non-discrimination. Nowadays violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism are direct threats to our values, peace and security in Europe.

Armenia has been vocal in condemning hate speech and xenophobia, especially its use by public figures and leaders in the political discourse. Combating these phenomena have been a priority for Armenia during our

Chairmanship at the Committee of Ministers and it continues to remain as such.

We highly value the activities of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance in combating intolerance and hate crimes. The reports of the ECRI reflect real problems in the sphere of extremism, racism, radicalization and hate crimes and provide clear-cut recommendations to address current challenges. Those reports can serve as guidance to our institutions particularly ODIHR for identifying those notable hate crimes which may represent threat to the security in the OSCE area.

Another avenue of cooperation between our Organizations could be promoting the human rights of people residing in conflict areas. It is the primary goal of the Council of Europe to safeguard common values and individual rights at pan-European level. Both the Council of Europe and the OSCE executive structures and institutions should have outreach to the conflict areas with the aim to protect and address human rights of people and strengthen their democratic institutions and rule of law.

In this regard, we stress our support to the OSCE Austrian Chairmanship in making needs of populations affected by conflicts the primary goal of our political efforts. We hope that the Council of Europe will also continue to streamline in its agenda ensuring human rights in conflict zones. OSCE and Council of Europe can effectively cooperate in this field with the aim to make sure that there are no any areas of exclusion when it comes to enjoying human rights and fundamental freedoms.

This access is even more important amid grave violations of humanitarian and human rights as it was the case during the recent large scale military offensive against people of Nagorno-Karabakh, which led to numerous atrocities and forceful displacement of thousands of people.

We support priorities of the Cyprus Chairmanship of the Council of Europe, in particular those related to protection of cultural property and reaction to offences against it. My Delegation has regularly raised in the OSCE the issue of illegal expropriation of religious property under the pretext of combating terrorism. Smuggling of cultural heritage of Syria by foreign terrorist fighters is another important challenge, which needs to be addressed.

In conclusion, we would also like to wish every success to Cyprus in leading the Organization and pledge our full support to the Cypriot Chairmanship in its endeavors.

**ADDRESS AT THE OPENING OF THE CONCERT DEDICATED
TO THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN ARMENIA AND AUSTRIA**

Vienna, Porgy&Bess Club, April 28, 2017

First, I would like to thank Porgy&Bess Club and its artistic director Christoph Huber for co-organizing with the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia this event, dedicated to the 25th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Armenia and Austria. This date is a very important milestone in our bilateral relations, and we organize a series of such events in Vienna and Yerevan.

Although we mark today 25 years of diplomatic relations our ties go deep into history, they are more than 200 years old, starting from the establishment of the Armenian community in Austria, and particularly the foundation of the Mekhitarist congregation in Vienna. In 1918-1920 there were active relations with Vienna during the short period of the Armenian independence.

We are especially thankful to the government and the people of Austria for their invaluable support and assistance shown since the time of the Spitak earthquake of 1988 and during 25 years of our modern independence. Armenia and Austria attach great importance to the high-level political dialog and development of cooperation in different fields. We are also thankful to the Government of Austria for the special attention and attitude towards our compatriots, the Armenian-Austrian community, and to Austrian Parliament, for the 2015 statement recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

And finally, a few words about our event. Several months ago, I was present at the concert of Karen Asatrian, Rita Movsesian and the Armenian Spirit band, and I thought that it could be a very nice opportunity to present this Armenian ethnic jazz program to our friends from Austria and colleagues from friendly countries. The project is symbolic, because it expresses the cultural bridge between nations and musical directions.

Karen Asatrian was born and educated in Armenia, continued his jazz-piano studies in Klagenfurt. In addition to his activities and performances in Austria, Armenia, and other countries as an artist, Karen is a Professor for jazz-piano at the Corinthian State Conservatory as well as the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna.

And now let us welcome to the stage Karen Asatrian, Rita Movsesian and the Armenian Spirit Band.

**REMARKS AT THE EVENT DEDICATED TO THE 25TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC
RELATIONS BETWEEN ARMENIA AND AUSTRIA**

Diplomatic Academy, Vienna, September 29, 2017

I would like to thank the Diplomatic Academy, our distinguished speakers and all friends who came to celebrate with us triple anniversaries - 26 years of independence of the Republic of Armenia, 25th anniversary of the Armed Forces of Armenia and 25th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations with the Republic of Austria.

It's been already a more than a quarter of a century that we have a modern independent statehood. Armenia has experienced more than its share of human hardship, consequences of the earthquake, economic crisis, Nagorno-Karabagh conflict, and twin blockade since regaining its sovereignty. Nevertheless, we have made substantial progress in laying the foundations for a viable state. Armenia has become one of the reform leaders among CIS countries and the front runner in building up democratic institutions and civil society. Although security-related issues have always been in the focus of our attention, we have constantly been searching for ways to boost our economy, and we have achieved certain positive results. We have been carrying out reforms and providing sustainable development for stronger democracy, good governance, rule of law, and progress in all other areas. Worth-mentioning that significant events have occurred in Armenia's public life over the past years, we are on the way to a parliamentary system of governance.

Armenia pursues open policy with our bilateral and multilateral partners. Here in Vienna we are actively engaged in cooperation with various international fora, particularly UN organizations and OSCE. Although Armenia's priority is to shape a common economic area within the Eurasian Economic Union, relations with the European Union have seen a significant strengthening in recent years.

Our independent journey would not be possible without the army which was build 25 years ago. The Armed Forces of Armenia became the cornerstone which was laid in the foundation of our statehood. My

memories take me back to the unbending circumstances when the young republic was forced to undertake immediate measures to strengthen its self-defense capacities and to adequately response to the threats and challenges we faced. Consistent and continuous conduct of reforms in the Armed Forces is aimed at the adequate and efficient response to current and future challenges in line with the demands of open society, and its contribution to the international peace and security.

This year Armenia celebrates 25th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations with many countries. Since becoming a full member of the United Nations in 1992, hundreds of countries have recognized Armenia, hence starting with a process of dialog and cooperation. Austria was among the first of those countries, as on 24th of January 1992 Armenian and Austrian Foreign Ministers Raffi Hovhannisian and Alois Mock signed a joint statement on establishing diplomatic relations and exchanging diplomatic representatives.

Although we mark today 25 years of interstate relations Armenian-Austrian ties go deep into history, they are more than 200 years old, starting from the establishment of the Armenian community in Austria, and particularly the foundation of the Armenian catholic congregation of Mekhitarists in Vienna. After the First World War there were active contacts between Yerevan and Vienna during the short period of the Armenian independence in 1918-1920.

Austria has always supported Armenia in addressing its social-economic problems. In 1988 the Austrian Government, humanitarian organizations and individuals extended their hand to help Armenia to overcome the consequences of the devastating Spitak earthquake. They organized fundraising and collecting the humanitarian aid, allocated funds and human resources to assist Armenia in implementing targeted recovery programs in the affected regions. The largest project was reconstruction of the Gyumri Children's hospital. Through the cooperation with governmental and non-governmental organizations (Red Cross, Caritas) Austrian Government continuing its humanitarian programs aiming at raising the level of Armenian healthcare system, reducing the poverty and supporting the families-in-need or Syrian-Armenian refugees.

I would like to specially thank the Austrian Development Agency, which offers remarkable assistance to evolving Armenia's farmer economy, agriculture, agro-processing, and organic food production.

Armenia and Austria attach great importance to the political dialog that became a nice tradition of our bilateral relations. During the past years we exchanged number of important official and working visits on the highest level. Austrian Federal President Heinz Fischer officially visited Yerevan in 2012 and with status of special envoy in 2017. Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan paid an official visit in 2014, and had two working visits to Vienna, during which the leaders discussed a broad range of issues touched to bilateral and regional relations. There were many contacts and mutual visits at the level of Foreign ministers, other heads of governmental agencies, experts and parliamentarians.

I wish to mention with satisfaction that since 2014 there are parliamentary friendship groups in the legislative bodies of our two countries. We are satisfied with the level of collaboration between the National Assembly of Armenia and the Austrian Federal Parliament in various international fora such as Council of Europe, the OSCE, Euro NEST and other parliamentary assemblies as well as with Austrian members of the European Parliament.

The importance of the economic component, increasing the effectiveness of trade-economic relations has always been highlighted during the meetings of the inter-governmental commission, the 8th sitting of which is planned to be held in Yerevan next year.

The Armenian-Austrian humanitarian cooperation touches the spheres of secondary and higher education, science, culture, sports and youth has also been quite dynamic. An important step in raising the efficiency of the operation of the cultural institutions in Armenia is the Austrian support through grants and favorable loans.

I would also like to use this opportunity to thank the Government of Austria for its special attention and attitude towards our compatriots, the Armenian-Austrian community. Obviously, the fact of establishment of diplomatic relations between our countries 25 years ago was fruitful for the strengthening of friendship and diversification of ties between our two peoples.

STATEMENT ON THE PRESENTATION OF THE OSCE UNIFIED BUDGET PROPOSAL

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, October 5, 2017

We thank the OSCE Secretary General for presentation of the 2018 Unified Budget Proposal.

Our detailed position on specific parameters and funds of the UB will be presented in the course of the discussions in the ACMF framework. Let me refer to the current context of the budget cycle.

First, we would like to refer to the closure of the OSCE Office in Yerevan as a result of the refusal of one participating state to extend its mandate. In this unfortunate situation for the organization we are trying to find ways to continue our engagement with the OSCE and further implement programmatic activities of the Office, many of which were recognized as exemplary.

We took note that the budget of the PRCiO Office in fact remains unchanged. Our position has been well known on this issue since the budget discussions on UB 2016. Being the only OSCE permanent presence in the NK conflict zone, Office of the PRCiO should significantly strengthen its personnel, monitoring activities and employ modern equipment.

Strengthening the capacities of the Office is one of the clear-cut commitments of the Vienna and St-Petersburg summits of the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan. The supplementary PRCiO budget proposal was submitted by the German Chairmanship more than a year ago. In our view UB 2018 should reflect this modest increase, as the first step to enhance capacities of the PRCiO Office.

We also took note of the budget proposal for the HLPG. While noting some reduction of the overall budget, we need clarifications on expediency of increase in some budget lines, in particular in the context of compliance with the mandate of the HLPG. The current security situation on the ground makes unrealistic conduct of familiarization visits to the conflict zone. Therefore, we encourage the HLPG to reconsider its duty travel costs.

We deem necessary to review the number of the personnel of the Group and adjust it to the ongoing needs. We reiterate our serious concern about current composition of the HLPG, which raises questions about neutrality and impartiality of the HLPG. Therefore, certain rectification is needed.

We believe that the incoming Italian Chairmanship should focus its efforts on developing early warning and conflict prevention mandate of the OSCE executive structures both in Secretariat and the field and promotion of confidence and security building measures. Prioritization in allocating the limited resources of the OSCE should be given to the funds and projects serving this end.

We will consider the budget lines of the OSCE Secretariat and Institutions from the point of view of streamlining in programmatic activities protection of human rights of people residing in conflict areas.

As for horizontal issues we understand that the Secretariat did not succeed in its efforts to ensure compliance of all the participating States to the OSCE Rules and Regulations. The Armenian side has consistently stressed its strong disagreement with the practice of illegal compensation for the income tax in violation of the OSCE Rules and Regulations. In sake of transparency we encourage the OSCE Secretariat to present to the ACMF disaggregated data on the debt, accumulated by the participating States due to non-reimbursement of the paid income tax to the Organization.

In conclusion, the Delegation of Armenia would like to express its gratitude to the Austrian Chairmanship of the ACMF and stress its readiness to cooperate with the incoming Italian Chairmanship with the view to bring the UB in line to the evolving security needs of the OSCE.

**STATEMENT ON THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE
CONFLICT PREVENTION CENTRE MARCEL PESKO**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, October 5, 2017

We would like to thank the CPC Director Ambassador Marcel Peško for his report to the Permanent Council.

We have few comments on the report.

The report makes reference to the closure of the Office in Yerevan and OSCE continued engagement with Armenia.

I would like to highlight that Armenia hosted the Office to get support on the implementation of the OSCE commitments. The Office was closed because it was successful in assisting Armenia to this end.

As long as there are some participating states which find their *raison d'être* in this Organization in impeding the others to implement OSCE commitments and there is a little political will to protect assets of the Organization, both security and cooperation which are motto of our Organization will be elusive.

Now let me to refer to the OSCE continued engagement with Armenia. We certainly value the role and readiness of the Secretariat including CPC to continue certain projects in Armenia. We would like to assure that Armenia will further rely on the OSCE expertise in implementing its commitments.

We agree with your assessment that, in the context of conflict resolution and peacebuilding, better use could be made of confidence-building measures (CBMs), which could also be applied more effectively for the purpose of early action and crisis response. In this vein field operations who had been established to promote confidence building measures should be strengthened as a response to evolving security situations. In this regard we took note of the work performed by the CPC on the expansion of the PRCIO.

Finally, we would like to refer to the work that CPC is doing in relation with displacement. We believe that reference point of any activity for the CPC is OSCE commitments but not documents which are not consensual and produced through cooperation of the CPC with other

international organization. In other words, CPC should be guided by the decision 3/11 on conflict cycle on the issues of displacement as well. Decision 3/11 clearly recognizes the needs of people which are at the risk of displacement or already affected by it. Hence, we would like to request the CPC to plan and perform their activities by taking into account the prevention of displacement and needs of people residing in conflict areas.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF CHRISTINE
BEERLI, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, October 12, 2017

We would like to start by thanking Ms Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross Christine Beerli for outlining the activities of the ICRC and sharing her ideas on better interaction between the OSCE and the ICRC.

Armenia highly values the principles of impartiality and neutrality upon which the very concept of ICRC had been anchored and we always consider that effective implementation of these principles in practice without exception is an essential prerequisite for successful and sustainable humanitarian engagement.

The ICRC accumulated valuable experience in addressing humanitarian needs of people living in conflict areas and the outreach of ICRC remains critical for the plight of civilians.

The ICRC is the only permanent international humanitarian presence in Nagorno-Karabakh. We appreciate the cooperation of the ICRC with the NK authorities along with close interaction with the OSCE permanent presence on the ground in conflict zone. The humanitarian response of the ICRC to the last April escalation in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict area, due to large scale military offensive, has been largely proportionate and effective. We have already referred to various aspects of the ICRC humanitarian actions last year at the level of the Permanent Council and thus we would like to elaborate only on some ongoing activities.

The protection of people residing in conflict areas is essential. We appreciate close involvement of ICRC to protect schools and kindergartens through construction of safe rooms and protection walls. The economic empowerment of households through providing means of subsistence is another important undertaking. We believe that valuable experience of ICRC in this field can be used and developed by OSCE conflict related field operations in mitigating economic consequences of conflicts through confidence building measures including harvest time cease-fires.

We believe that all instances of ceasefire violations which entail losses among civilians should be thoroughly investigated and thus OSCE investigative mechanism into cease fire violations are particularly important in the environment where civilians may become targets or human shields.

The ICRC involvement in assisting the sides to implement international humanitarian law is of utmost importance. Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh implement international humanitarian law without any conditionality. Our adherence to Geneva conventions and its protocols have never been pre-conditioned by reciprocity. However, reciprocity is important since it enables an environment of comprehensive respect of IHL. We regret that on many instances our strong adherence has not been responded if not same at least in similar manner. I will not come up here with list of our concerns and I will refer only to the case which was brought by us in the Permanent Council. Armenia raised the issue of detention of Armenian citizen Mr. Zaven Karapetyan by Azerbaijani armed forces and reminded Azerbaijani side that under similar conditions in June 2016 an Azerbaijani citizen Ms. Hatiba Alakbarova who according to Azerbaijani side was mentally ill crossed the border with Armenia. In three days, Armenia through ICRC returned the citizen of Azerbaijan. So far Azerbaijani side did not return Mr. Zaven Karapetyan. There is a record of torture and extrajudicial killings of the Armenian civilians captured by Azerbaijan and we strongly urge Azerbaijan to protect civilians in line with Geneva Conventions

As far as exchange of information on missing persons is concerned, de-politization of this purely humanitarian issue is essential in registering further progress. Instead of inflating numbers of missing persons or designating them as putative prisoners of war the sides need to cooperate at the level of relevant state commissions.

**RESPONSE TO THE STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE
OSCE PA, CHRISTINE MUTTONEN**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, October 19, 2017

We would like to warmly welcome the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Ms. Christine Muttonen back to the Permanent Council and thank her for her vision on the role of the OSCE and its Parliamentary Assembly in strengthening security and dialogue in our region.

Armenia values the role of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly as a forum for dialogue between representatives of peoples in the entire OSCE area, which may supplement and reinforce the activities of the OSCE participating States and OSCE Secretariat and Institutions.

We appreciate continued cooperation of the OSCE PA with ODIHR in election observation which was also manifested at the April 6 Parliamentary elections in Armenia.

We have noticed your particular interest towards structured dialogue as a first step towards overcoming current impasse in the European security. We think that strong adherence to all OSCE principles and commitments without selective approach can create conducive environment for moving forward and the parliamentarians may lead us by their example through adopting resolutions in line with Helsinki Final Act.

In this context we appreciate the stance of PA for respect and realization of the basic human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons living in conflict zones which reaffirms again that OSCE principles and commitments should be realized elsewhere in the OSCE region without any exclusion

Inclusive approach is essential in any sensitive and complex environment. Initiatives to apply parliamentary diplomacy tools, including organizing discussions with parties to the conflicts may be valuable if they are of inclusive nature, involving all elected representatives of peoples.

Let us recall that the efforts of Parliamentarians to cease military hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict area put forward by Bishkek protocol had been highly instrumental in preparing ground for ceasefire.

We took positive note of messages on peace and needs of people affected by conflicts coming from your Special Representative Mr. Kristian

Vigenin during his recent trip to the region. We regret that he was not able to visit Nagorno-Karabakh conflict area. However, we welcome his meetings with all parties who signed Bishkek protocol and agree that increased contacts among parliamentarians is important in the region.

Madam President, we took note of your reference to the OSEC field missions as essential undertaking which may develop culture of dialogue and cooperation. Unfortunately, field offices themselves can become victims of culture of conflict perceptions. We believe that there are few bridges in the OSCE area and each of them should be cherished in this uneasy time of distrust and confrontation.

We sincere wish to see Parliamentary Assembly as one of those bridges and we thank you for your able leadership in this regard.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE OSCE REPRESENTATIVE
ON FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA HARLEM DESIR**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, November 9, 2017

I would like to warmly welcome Mr. Harlem Désir, the OSCE Representative on the Freedom of the Media and thank him for his first report to the Permanent Council.

Armenia has always valued the activities of this OSCE institution aimed at assisting participating states in ensuring freedom of expression. In this regard, we are pleased to note the important contribution of the Office of the RFOM in settling outstanding issues such as decriminalization of libel and regulation of financial fines in Armenia.

We appreciate the readiness of OSCE Representative on the Freedom of the Media to continue dialogue and cooperation with Armenia which was manifested in the recent visit of Mr. Harlem Désir to Yerevan.

We are pleased that throughout the visit Mr. Harlem Désir had opportunities to meet and discuss various issues related to relevant legislation and practice with wide range of stakeholders including Ministry of Justice, Police, Human Rights Defender and journalists.

We subscribe to the view that freedom of expression and media freedom do not undermine but strengthen security. They are indispensable part of free, secure and vibrant societies which operate on the basis of transparency, dialogue and compromise.

The freedom of expression is essential in dismantling hate narratives and propaganda of war and raising awareness on violent actions which may lead into serious security threats. Any attempt to deny access of journalists and other media workers including to conflict areas could be recognized as early warning sign in this regard.

The criminalization of the visits of journalists and other media workers to the conflict areas is illegal practice and we firmly believe that the cases similar to that of Alexander Lapshin, to which the report refers to, should not be repeated.

Armenia sees certain merits in contacts between journalists reporting on conflicts from different sides and we value the Office's expertise in this

regard. However, we understand that there are also limits and the lack of freedom of expression and safety of journalists in states-parties to the conflict are certainly among those limitations.

In conclusion, let me reiterate our strong support to this mandate and readiness to closely cooperate in implementing all OSCE commitments related to the freedom of expression and media freedom.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE CO-CHAIRMEN OF THE
OSCE MINSK GROUP, THE PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE OSCE CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE, AND THE HEAD OF
THE HIGH-LEVEL PLANNING GROUP**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, November 9, 2017

We would like to warmly welcome the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group Ambassadors Igor Popov, Stephane Visconti and Andrew Schofer, the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk and the Head of the HLPG, Colonel Hans Lampalzer to the Permanent Council and thank them for their comprehensive reports. We welcome Mr. Andrew Schofer on assumption of the responsible mission of the Minsk Group Co-Chair.

We reiterate our full support for the agreed format of the Minsk group Co-Chairmanship and our commitment to the peaceful resolution of the NK conflict.

We appreciate consistent efforts of the Co-Chairs to advance peace process in the challenging context shaped by large scale military offensive in April 2016.

The Geneva Summit and the agreement to take measures to intensify the negotiation process and to take additional steps to reduce tensions on the Line of Contact is certainly one of the outcomes of these efforts.

We have already had opportunity to acknowledge the role of the Co-Chairs and their respective countries in de-escalating situation in April 2016 and afterwards. It should be added that in the reporting period de-escalation efforts of the Co-Chairs have been necessary due to continued ceasefire violations which resulted in new casualties. We took note that on the certain instances the Co-Chairs had to clearly identify the source of escalation which is necessary in the situation of the continued absence of relevant mechanisms of reducing tensions on the Line of Contact.

Steps to reduce the risk of further violence have already been agreed during the previous Vienna and St. Petersburg Summits and they include the creation of the OSCE investigative mechanism and expansion of the

Office of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson. Armenia has unequivocally supported these measures.

Unfortunately, so far these agreements have not been implemented as another commitment to maintain the ceasefire has continuously been challenged by Azerbaijan.

In our view there is no alternative for peaceful settlement of the conflict as much as there is no alternative for undertaking additional envisaged steps to reduce tensions on the Line of Contact.

The massive use of force in April 2016 and further ceasefire violations has seriously damaged the peace process. It has demonstrated that use of force cannot strengthen negotiation position of the party of the conflict resorting to it, but is able to harm peace process.

The prevention of the further use of force or threat to use force is essential for consolidation of the ceasefire regime and thus creating conditions for the advancement of the negotiation process. In this context we hope that Azerbaijan will genuinely approach its commitments, including those undertaken in last three Summits.

We are convinced that use of force, particularly atrocities against people residing in conflict area should be unequivocally condemned. Armenia has been very clear that people of Nagorno-Karabakh, their security, self-determination and freedom today and in future cannot and will not be sacrificed.

Finally, let me highlight that Armenia reiterates its commitment to peaceful resolution of the conflict based on the three principles: non-use of force, equal rights and self-determination of peoples and territorial integrity in their entirety as outlined by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs and accepted by all the OSCE participating States.

We would like to thank the PRCiO and his dedicated team for their important role in the conflict area. We understand that the PRCiO Office's extremely limited resources both in term of personnel and equipment are impediment for OSCE comprehensive involvement on the ground, including monitoring activities. Armenia is convinced that the OSCE through its only international permanent presence in the Nagorno-Karabakh

conflict area should be actively involved in reducing tensions along the Line of Contact.

The neutral and impartial stance of the HLPG and all of its members along with equal and close interaction with all parties to the conflict is essential in promoting successful activities of the HLPG in line with its mandate. We see certain need to streamline the HLPG activities in line with its mandate.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE EU COMMISSIONER FOR
EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY AND ENLARGEMENT
NEGOTIATIONS JOHANNES HAHN**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, December 18, 2017

We would like to warmly welcome EU Commissioner for European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn to the Permanent Council and thank him for his address.

Armenia values the development of the Armenia-EU cooperation. The Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement-CEPA signed last month in the margins of Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit has been an important outcome of consistent and joint efforts channeled also through high-level political dialogue. We highly appreciate your contribution, Mr. Hahn, in this regard.

The agreement establishes a comprehensive legal basis for further strengthening the political dialogue, broadening the scope of economic and sectoral cooperation, creating a framework for new opportunities in trade and investments, and for increased mobility.

It should be also stressed that by reaffirming joint commitments to democratic institutions, human rights, the rule of law the CEPA will serve as an important framework for further assistance to the reform agenda of the Government of Armenia.

Many issues of EU and Armenia cooperation belong to the OSCE agenda as well. It is important that the CEPA reaffirms the commitment of the European Union to support the efforts and approaches of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group for the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict based on the norms and principles of the international law, in particular: non use of force or threat of use of force, equal rights and self-determination of peoples and territorial integrity.

It is worth to mention that the CEPA was welcomed by the participants of the Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit in their joint Declaration.

By signing the CEPA, Armenia demonstrated that the membership to one integration framework, in this case to the Eurasian Economic Union,

does not preclude cooperation with the others. We hope that pragmatic and result oriented dialogue will be the driving force of the inclusive economic cooperation in the entire OSCE area without dividing lines. In this regard, we would like to recall the recent address of the Chairman of the Eurasian Economic Commission Board Tigran Sargsyan to the Permanent Council.

The European Union was one of the strongest partners of the OSCE Office in Yerevan. Unfortunately, the closure of the Office which occurred against the will of the host state reduced possibilities of cooperation aimed at the implementation of the OSCE commitments. We hope that Armenia Cooperation Program will provide a workable solution to continue the EU engagement on the ground.

In conclusion, we would like wish Commissioner Hahn every success in advancing inclusive cooperation and partnership in Europe.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF H.E.
ANGELINO ALANO, OSCE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE, MINISTER
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF ITALY**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, January 11, 2018

We warmly welcome H.E. Angelino Alfano, Chairman-in-Office and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy to the Permanent Council and thank him for the comprehensive and coherent address.

At the outset, we would like to thank Italy for its strong commitment to multilateralism and resolve to lead our Organization in open, transparent and inclusive manner.

We are pleased to note that in seeking “Dialogue, Ownership and Responsibility” the Italian Chairmanship will be guided by forward looking approach taking up not grievances but inspiration from the past.

Difficult security issues have always been high on and even dominated the OSCE agenda and this is true today as never before. However, conflict perceptions cannot be point of departure for multilateral cooperation. The OSCE participating states should not impede but assist each other in implementing their joint commitments by strengthening, and not weakening OSCE presence as it happened in the case of the closure of the OSCE Yerevan Office.

Despite this serious setback, Armenia looks forward to renewed cooperation with the OSCE Chairmanship, participating states and executive structures. We hope that “Armenia cooperation program” will become instrumental this year and we count on support of the Chairmanship in this regard.

We took a positive note of the intention of the incoming Chairmanship to put protracted conflict high on its agenda.

We strongly maintain that protracted conflicts are not identical and cannot be approached by identical set of principles of settlement while they are addressed in different agreed formats. In this regard, we appreciate the approach of the Chairmanship to address protracted conflicts through supporting agreed formats.

Armenia strongly supports the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs aimed at resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict based on three principles of non-use of force or threat of the use of force, equal rights and self-determination of peoples and territorial integrity, and the statements delivered on behalf of the Presidents of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairing countries.

Armenia welcomes the intention of the incoming Chairmanship to support the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs. Armenia will support concerted efforts to strengthen the OSCE presence on the ground in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict area aimed at reducing tensions along the Line of Contact.

The necessity of such measures has been agreed at Geneva Summit last year while the measures themselves had already been identified in the statements made at the Vienna and St. Petersburg Summits and they include creation of an OSCE investigative mechanism and PRCiO expansion.

We would like to recall that OSCE Chairmanships along with OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs proposed very essential confidence and security building measures such as withdrawal of snipers. Given the nature of last ceasefire violations and claimed casualties on the Line of Contact which occurred already this year, this proposal continues to remain very pertinent.

Armenia values the support of the Chairmanship to its Personal Representative whose Office remains critical in implementing already existing and envisaged confidence and security measures in the NK conflict area.

The impartiality and neutrality are the key of successful performance of any conflict related mandate and in this regard, we would highly appreciate efforts of the Italian Chairmanship to ensure balanced work and composition of the HLPG.

We took note of the strong emphasis that the Italian Chairmanship puts on Structured Dialogue. The dialogue on Arms Control regime along with military transparency and predictability is at the heart of the OSCE, and we will continue to be an active part of the process in line with the tasking of the Hamburg Ministerial Council.

We share importance that the Italian Chairmanship attaches to the Human Dimension. We firmly believe that Human Dimension in its

entirety remains an important platform for inclusive dialogue and any attempt to undermine the inclusive nature of this dialogue will not be supported by my delegation. The voice of people residing in the conflict areas should be heard.

OSCE is well positioned to prevent grave and massive human rights violations, particularly those, which are criminalized under universal international instruments. This year, the international community will mark the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. In our view, OSCE as a regional organization should be a part of this important commemoration and we stand ready to contribute towards that end.

As far as Mediterranean dimension is concerned, we stand ready to bring our own perspective, which is shaped also by experience of the Armenian communities throughout the Mediterranean and Middle East region in future deliberations organized by the Italian Chairmanship in this regard.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF THE
PRESIDENT OF THE OSCE PA, GEORGE TSERETELI**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, January 25, 2018

We would like to warmly welcome the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Mr. George Tsereteli to the Permanent Council and thank for his perspective on the contribution of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to the OSCE comprehensive approach to security.

In upcoming two months, Armenia will embark on the final phase of transformation to the Parliamentary Republic and thus the role of the parliamentarians will be significantly enhanced in determining and pursuing Armenia's policy including on important security issues.

In conducting constitutional reform, Armenia made use of expertise and assistance of the OSCE executive structures including Institutions and OSCE Office in Yerevan.

As a host country against who's will the OSCE field presence was closed, Armenia echoes your strong attachment to the OSCE field presences and certainly appreciates recommendation of the Parliamentary Assembly to re-establish closed OSCE presences.

Armenia has always made clear that it looks for cooperation in implementing OSCE commitments along with OSCE participating states and executive structures. We believe that the current Armenia Cooperation Program provides opportunities in this regard.

We took note of your intention to contribute towards addressing conflict situations in the entire OSCE area including in our region.

In this context, we appreciate the stance of the PA on respect and realization of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons living in conflict affected areas something that you have also alluded in your address referring inter alia to the reports of the Freedom House. It is worth mentioning here that according to the same reports of the Freedom House the freedom index is higher in the certain OSCE conflict affected area compared to some participating state who is also party to the conflict. It shows that conflicts in the OSCE area are not identical and the situation in every conflict area should be viewed within its realities.

Initiatives to imply parliamentary diplomacy tools and promoting confidence building, including through organizing discussions with parties to the conflicts may be valuable if they are of inclusive nature, involving all elected representatives of peoples. The full and unimpeded access to conflict areas and people residing therein is essential for OSCE PA representatives. Last but not least, the representatives of the OSCE PA should be able to defend their position and activities expressed also in their press releases without engaging themselves in a retrospective self-censorship.

Mr. President, we took note of your intention to visit Armenia within your efforts related to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. We would like to recall that the Parliamentarians of Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan played essential role in creating conditions for the ceasefire by concluding the Bishkek protocol in 1994.

In this vein, as your visit is supposed to take place against the background of NK conflict, we would urge you to pay a visit also to Nagorno-Karabakh and meet with their elected representatives in line with the well-established OSCE PA practice.

In conclusion, we would like to wish every success to you in your future endeavors.

ARMENIAN FOREIGN POLICY. COMBINING INTERESTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Vienna, International Center for Advanced and Comparative EU-Russia/NIS Research, March 6, 2018

At the outset I would like to thank The International Center for Advanced and Comparative EU-Russia/NIS Research for organizing this event and inviting me as a guest speaker. I am delighted and honored to speak to this distinguished audience about developments in Armenia and its foreign policy.

Geographically, Armenia is situated in South Caucasus region between Europe and Asia. Our beautiful mountainous country is located between Black sea and Caspian Sea, landlocked by Georgia on the north, Azerbaijan on the east, Iran on the south and Turkey on the west. Armenia was considered to be a trade center between two continents for many centuries. The old Silk Road went through its territory and for a long time, it has been a region of cultural exchange. Consequently, Armenia has European, Middleeastern and Asian elements in its tradition and language. If we look deep down into the history, we will see sediments from many cultures and civilizations, starting from the ancient Greek, Roman, Persian to Roman-Christian, then Arabic, Turkish and Russian influence. Armenia accepted Christianity as a state religion in 301, Armenian language belongs to the Indo-European family.

Since the fall of last Armenian kingdom of Cilicia in 1375 Armenians had lost their independence and until the beginning of 19th century the territories historically populated by Armenians were divided between the Ottoman and Persian Empires. Both parts are respectively called Western Armenia and Eastern Armenia. In 1828 Eastern Armenia became part of Russian Empire. This part of Armenia became independent republic for two years, and from 1920 for 70 years was one of the soviet republics of the USSR.

Until regaining its independence in 1991, Armenia's economy was based largely on industry—chemicals, synthetic rubber, electronic products, machinery, processed food, and textiles; it was highly dependent on outside

resources. Agriculture accounted for only 20% of net material product and 10% of employment before the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991. Armenian mines produce copper, zinc, gold and lead. The vast of energy was and is produced today with imported fuel, including gas and nuclear fuel from Russia for nuclear power plant. The main domestic energy source is hydroelectric.

Armenia is the 149th country by its size. Its territory covers only 29.800 sq.km. (almost 3 times smaller than Austria) and its population is around 3 mln. According to the WTO data, Armenia is the 90th largest export economy in the world. In 2017, Armenia exported \$2.3 bln. goods and services and imported \$3.19B, resulted the negative balance of \$0.9 bln.

The top exports of Armenia are copper ore (\$370mln.), rolled tobacco (\$210 mln.), hard liquors (\$147 mln.), gold (\$140 mln.) and diamonds (\$106 mln.). Its top imports are petroleum gas (\$347 mln.), refined petroleum (\$198 mln.), various goods (\$146 mln.), raw diamonds (\$125 mln.) and packaged medicaments (\$85.9 mln.). The top export destinations of Armenia are Russia (\$372 mln.), Bulgaria (\$163 mln.), Georgia (\$141 mln.), Iraq (\$140 mln.) and Germany (\$135 mln.). The top import origins are Russia (\$957 mln.), Germany (\$206 mln.), Georgia (\$150 mln.), China (\$111 mln.) and Italy (\$104 mln.).

The Armenian economy grew by 7.5% in 2017 and reached a nominal GDP of \$11.5 billion per annum, while per capita figure grew by 10.1% and reached \$3880. In PPP its calculated around \$9,098 (ranked 111 by IMF for 2017). Georgia is on the 105th with \$ 10,644, Ukraine on 114th with \$8,656 and Moldova on 132th with \$5,657.

One of the main impediments of Armenia's integration in regional and international trade arrangements is the twin economic blockade imposed by Azerbaijan and Turkey. Its effects were particularly suffocating to us in the early years of independence, causing a severe energy and transportation crisis and contributing to a drastic decline in the health and living standards of our people. Armenia not only survived but also advanced so that today the current effect of the blockade is to keep fragmented the South Caucasus common economic space and to impede needed regional integration and the flow of international capital into the region. We think that the regional

economic cooperation will help us transcend the political problems and will facilitate the resolution of the political issues. Azerbaijan's and Turkey's policies today in the region are to isolate Armenia, something clearly visible to an impartial observer.

While some of the challenges were unique to Armenia and the region in the last 26 years, its path of democratic and economic development since 1991 is not unlike other countries in Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States. We have made substantial progress in laying the foundations for a viable state, both economically and politically. We have adopted new legislation to promote privatization and foreign investment. We have created new political and economic infrastructures. We are encouraged and rewarded by our extensive reforms. These reforms are irreversible and already showing results. We move now to second generation reforms: legislative and administrative strides forward, an open, liberal economy, economic growth. Just a couple of days ago the Armenian Parliament voted for a new, 4th President of the Republic of Armenia, and this was another step forward in transforming the Armenian political system into parliamentary democracy. Armenia remains committed to building democratic institutions and a civic society and to defending freedom of the press and other civil liberties. We should create a healthy society, a strong government, and a real democracy.

But I don't want to paint a completely rosy picture here. Armenia's track record reflects our difficult geopolitical environment and our external constraints. Armenia has experienced more than its share of human hardship, economic crises and regional instability since regaining its sovereignty. One out of every two Armenians today still lives in poverty, mostly in Armenia's rural areas. Yet, these rural population represent a critical portion of Armenia's economy. If we want to ensure that these communities are not destined to remain stagnant, permanent pockets of poverty, then we cannot allow development to simply take its course. We must take practical steps to intervene, to take a short-cut towards an improved quality of life for our citizens.

Armenia's economic development must be based on a modern, competitive market economy, with minimal government intervention.

Armenia is a small market. Clearly, its future lies in its economic integration within regional and international markets, together with the promotion of free trade, as Armenia's exports are a way to enlarge its domestic markets and strengthen its competitiveness. It is obvious that we need to work harder to attract investors, both foreign and domestic. We should promote a business-friendly environment, enforce economic legislation, and, of course, decrease the burden of taxation.

We still have a long way to go to reach the appropriate level of economic prosperity and rule of law. As we see it, Armenia's key mid-term objectives are:

- ✓ Ensuring a robust and sustainable economic development, this can be translated into a rise in the general living standards of our people.

- ✓ Continuing to promote the rule of law and democratic governance to secure full participation by Armenia's citizens in the process of governance and to improve our government's accountability to its electorate.

- ✓ Addressing national security challenges, including
 - political resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict,
 - improved relations with our neighbors, and the end of the economic blockades,
 - participation in international security arrangements.

All these objectives are interconnected; it is not possible to solve one challenge without addressing the others.

The most destabilizing element is Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It affects Armenia in a very negative way and our foreign policy basically revolves around this issue. Its peaceful resolution is our top foreign policy priority. We believe that peace can be achieved only if the parties to the conflict demonstrate the political will and readiness to compromise. It is, however, competent mediation that brings us together, and helps us establish mutual confidence, engage in a constructive search for common solutions, and shape a shared vision for peace and prosperity. Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is perhaps the most complex and unresolved issue, and certainly the oldest. The cease-fire has been in effect since 1994, and the parties have been in search of a peaceful settlement ever since. Armenia is

committed to a peaceful solution of the conflict, which will guarantee the status based on the principle of self-determination, security and well-being of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh. We welcome the leading role of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-chairs – USA, Russia and France - in helping the parties negotiate such a settlement, and we realize that parties to the conflict must make the serious compromises and ultimate decisions.

Another impediment to the establishment of a sound security system in the South Caucasus region is the unresolved nature of the Armenian-Turkish relations. This asymmetry is unique because no other two countries in this region have such an antagonistic relation with neighboring powers. Russia has diplomatic relations and embassies in all three South Caucasus countries. Iran enjoys good relations with Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. Turkey is the only country that has refused to establish diplomatic relations with Armenia. This is unfortunate because the re-establishment of an independent Armenia presented a fresh opportunity to smoothen the historical antagonism between the Armenian and Turkish peoples. Armenia has on numerous occasions offered to establish normal relations with its neighbor without any preconditions. These overtures have been turned down on many occasions. As long as the last section of the Iron Curtain, the Turkish-Armenian border, remains closed, this will impede development of the Caucasus region, and will introduce a constant element of instability. We also hope that Turkey, as a responsible member of the OSCE, and even member of Minsk Group dealing with Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, will honor its own commitments, and will demonstrate adequate political will to help remove obstacles to regional integration in the Caucasus.

Aiming at strengthening the country's external security, at maintaining external favorable conditions for the development of the country, at presenting the positions of Armenia at the international scene through deepening engagement in the international organizations and processes, the foreign policy of the Republic of Armenia has always been seeking the most effective way to reach all these objectives also through deep and comprehensive integration into Eurasian and European structures. Thence, it had been immanently labelled or titled as complementary or multi-vectorially. The vivid example of such approach is the fact that in 2014

Armenia signed the treaty with the Euroasian Economic Union, and three years after, on November 25, 2017, the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement with the EU.

Armenia has approached the country's complex geographic and political situation with a regional policy that is as conducive as possible to the overall peace and stability of the region so that country may survive and benefit economically and politically to the largest extent possible. Its main feature is to pursue the cooperative relations with neighbors and different economic, political, or military organizations. Republic of Armenia is a full-fledged member of 72 international organizations and adjunct conventions including UN and its specialized agencies, WTO, CIS, CSTO, OSCE, Organization of Francophonie and many other organizations and conventions. We always been emphasized that Armenia is the only country enjoying the full-fledged membership in CIS, CSTO and EAEU from one side, and actively involved in the partnership programs of NATO and the EU, from another side.

Armenia joined the Commonwealth of Independent States in 1991, when the heads of 11 sovereign states, including Armenia, signed the Protocol to the Agreement, in accordance with which they formed the Commonwealth of Independent States on equal bases.

Armenia pays a great importance to its defense coherence with Russian Federation not only through military alliances, but also on bilateral level.

✓ Russian and Armenian border guards are responsible for the protection of the Soviet-era border of Armenia with Turkey.

✓ Russia maintains a military base in Gyumri, second Armenian city north of Yerevan, by the request of Armenian side; in 2010 the relevant treaty was extended until 2044.

✓ Russia supplies Armenia with weapons and military hardware, assigning soft long-term credits for those purchases.

Republic of Armenia is a founding member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and its membership to this organization is among priority security components of Armenia. It's been implemented via multilateral ties between the member states. Before the establishment of the

organization in 2003, the member states had been cooperating in the frames of the Collective Security Treaty, which was signed in 1992.

During the recent chairmanship in the Organization, Armenia focused on the accomplishment and strengthening foreign policy coordination, issues regarding further development of CSTO collective security forces and means management system, including the Collective Forces of Operative Reaction, joint events dedicated to operative and combat training. Issues regarding perfection of legal basis, mechanisms of cooperation and expansion of the practical cooperation in the military-industrial sphere, as well as jointly combatting international terrorism were in the center of attention and relevant decisions were made. We are actively involved in the military capacity-building activities of the organization, including trainings, military excersises etc. Since the beginning of 2017 the former chief of Staff of the Republic of Armenia, army general Yuri Khachaturov, by the unanimous vote of the presidents of the CSTO member states, was appointed as Secretary General of the organization.

Armenia-NATO relations date back also to 1992, when Armenia joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council. Cooperation deepened and broadened after Armenia joined the Partnership for Peace programme in 1994. Currently Armenia engaged in the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) as well as Partnership and Review Program (PARP) with NATO. In 2017 we signed another, already 5th document with NATO covering the Armenian participation in the IPAP program untill 2019. Armenia is participating in PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP) since 2002, cooperation with NATO is helping to develop the ability of its different types of forces to work with NATO forces on operations. NATO has also supported the introduction of civilian personnel to the Armenian Ministry of Defense.

The Armed Forces of Armenia have started their international peacekeeping mission since 2004, when 34 peacekeepers were detached within the Greek unit in Kosovo. In 2005-2009 the peacekeeping unit of the Armenian Armed Forces as part of the Polish unit joined the multinational peacekeeping mission in Iraq. Since 2010, the peacekeeping unit of the Armenian Armed Forces were included in the ISAF (International Security

Assistance Force) in Afghanistan under the command of Germany. The next mission of the Armenian peacekeepers was in Lebanon under the auspices of the UN (UNIFIL) that was launched In December 2014, with the participation of an Armenian platoon of 32 military personnel. Armenian peacekeepers participated in many other international and multinational exercises held in the framework of international peacekeeping initiatives.

NATO-Armenia, as well as Armenian-American defence cooperation do not contradict Armenia's strategic cooperation with Russia and its obligations to the CSTO.

Now let me return to Armenia membership to EAEU. The Eurasian Economic Union is an international organization for regional economic integration. It has been established by the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union and been found on the bases of the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia. The Customs Union has been launched since 2010. In September 2013, the President of the Republic of Armenia has declared the decision of the Republic of Armenia to join the Customs Union, take necessary practical steps for this purpose and subsequently participate in the formation of the Eurasian Economic Union. The agreement, due to which the Republic of Armenia joined the treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union was signed in 2014 and entered into force in 2015.

The EAEU currently counts 5 member-states Armenia, Belarus, Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The EAEU is created for comprehensive modernization, cooperation and increase in competitiveness of national economies and creation of conditions for sustainable development for the increase in living standards of the population of member states. According to provisions of the Treaty on EAEU, the freedom of movement of goods, services, capital and labor, as well as implementation of coordinated or united policy in various branches of economy is provided within the Union. Presidency in the Supreme Council, Intergovernmental Council and Council of the Commission (on the level of Deputy Prime Ministers) is realized on a rotational basis according to the Russian alphabet, by a member state within one calendar year without the

right of extension. Russian Federation assumed presidency in EAEU in 2018 and in the next year of 2019 will pass it to Armenia. The former Prime-minister of Armenia Tigran Sargsyan is the first chairman of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission for the period from 2016 until 2019.

The Common Economic Space allows member states to coordinate economic policy regarding key spheres. One of basic elements of formation of the Common Economic Space is functioning of domestic market, within which in mutual trading in goods member states don't apply the import and export customs duties, measures of non-tariff regulation, special protective, anti-dumping and compensating measures, except for the cases stipulated by the Treaty on EAEU. The EAEU implements coordinated macroeconomic policy, the main directions of which are as follows - formation of the uniform principles of functioning of economies of the union's member states, ensuring their efficient interaction, and designing general principles and reference points for forecasting social and economic development of the Parties.

Since regaining the independence by the Republic of Armenia, its cooperation with the EU has been essential in carrying out reforms in the fields of economy, justice and state institutions building, strengthening democratic society and institutions dealing with the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The relations between the European Union and the Republic of Armenia have been gradually intensifying, moving from the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement of 1996.

The negotiations over the EU-Armenia new agreement, designed to replace the overdue document of 1996, has started in 2010, reaching its final step in 2013, when both sides concluded all rounds on the Association Agreement including the DCFTA. The trade component of this agreement, the DCFTA, also implied the accession of Armenia to the EU internal market, to the EU Customs Union. It was considered as a logical supplement of the EU-Eastern Partnership process and was expected to be signed at the EU's Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius in 2013. But three months prior to the Summit, during his meeting with Russian president Putin, President of Armenia officially announced that Armenia would be

joining the Customs Union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, which later developed into the Eurasian Economic Union.

Despite becoming member of Eurasian Economic Union Armenia continued its dialogue with the EU, putting forward a new agenda. In 2015 the Council of the European Union authorized the European Commission and the High Representative to open negotiations on a new, legally binding and overarching agreement with Armenia, and adopted the corresponding negotiating mandate. The EU expressed its commitment to further developing and strengthening comprehensive cooperation with Armenia in all areas of mutual interest within the Eastern Partnership framework. Negotiation lasted almost 2 years and were concluded in early 2017, when Armenian President Sargsyan and the President of the EU Council Tusk announced that the process is over and pre-signed the new Agreement. On November 24, 2017, heads of foreign services of Armenia and the EU signed a Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA). Once ratified by all parties - Armenia and the EU 28 member-states respectively, relations with Armenia will be based on mentioned document, covering a wide range of cooperation from social to environmental and even security fields. This new agreement provides legal basis for cooperation in the areas of political dialogue, trade, economy, law making, culture, prevention of illegal activities and control of illegal immigration, financial cooperation in the field of technical assistance, trade in goods, provisions affecting business and investment, cross - border supply of services and legislative cooperation. Just recently at the end of this February, Minister Nalbandian and high representative Mogherini, as the Co-Chairs of the Armenia-EU Cooperation Council, signed document on the implementation of the EU-Armenia Partnership Priorities.

Armenia enjoys and benefits from the EU's General Scheme of Preferences plus (GSP+) arrangement. This offers Armenian exports advantageous access to the EU market by allowing complete duty suspension across ~66 % of all EU tariff lines. Armenia's GSP+ utilisation rate is high: around 93%. It allows to export to both EU and US markets around 6000 items produced in Armenia with 0% custom tariff. The same preferential trade regime is applied within the EAEU area, opening great

opportunities for partners interested in investment projects in Armenia and their possible enhancement. Therefore, we actively support and facilitate the dialog between the EAEU and EU commissions and will do our best to promote further steps aimed at the harmonization of trade legislations, exchange of information, experience and expertise, formation of the mutual trust environment, briefly – all measures, leading to enhancement of the scope of possible cooperation between these two regional and global integrative entities.

In conclusion I would like to express hope that all disagreements and turbulences, disturbing West and East relations, putting more and more dividing lines throughout Europe, CIS and the Middle East, in between historic enemies and even former partner countries, can be jointly overcome and their consequences can be erased and eliminated, if of course there is a strong political will. As for small Armenia, we are ready to hardly work together to prove that all these rivalries are not that deep and serious comparing to the benefits from the future cooperation. We are striving to serve as a success story for co-existence of values, economic and political systems, as well as jointly promote understanding and tolerance, leading eventually to cooperation, friendship and peace.

**STATEMENT ON THE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS
IN ARMENIA**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, April 26, 2018

The Delegation of Armenia would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the recent developments in Armenia.

These developments have been taking place in the context of transformation from the semi-Presidential form of governance to Parliamentary Republic.

On April 9 the newly elected President of Armenia Armen Sarkissian assumed his duties. On April 17 the National Assembly elected the former President Serzh Sargsyan as new Prime Minister of Armenia.

The election and subsequent assumption of duties by the Prime Minister was challenged by the mass protests led by the parliamentary opposition block-Yelk.

It should be stressed that the mass actions were peaceful and thus the right to freedom of peaceful assembly has also been upheld along with other fundamental freedoms including freedom of expression.

These rights have been protected in the very challenging environment. Both scale and duration of protests have been unprecedented in the history of independent Armenia and they have seriously affected the life of the capital Yerevan as well as other major cities of Armenia.

The actions of the Police have aimed at ensuring both freedom of peaceful assembly and public order in legal, proportionate and necessity driven manner. It is important to note that the Police did not attempt to stop the protest but bring it in line with public order.

Despite some reports of sporadic clashes among protesters and police forces, as well as some cases of obstruction of the work of journalists and media workers the peaceful nature of protests was maintained.

From the very beginning, the authorities made clear that they will continue to ensure realization of fundamental freedoms, and their restriction is not an option.

The readiness to engage into meaningful dialogue was another clear message that was communicated by the political leadership. Moreover, the

President of Armenia himself walked into the place of the mass protest and approached its leaders by making an offer of dialogue.

There has been strong feeling of solidarity in finding possible ways to overcome standoff across various segments of the Armenian society including diaspora and prevent any irreversible escalation. The Armenian Apostolic Church has played important role in calming the situation and calling for restraint, unity and mutual understanding, particularly on the eve of the commemoration and Remembrance Day of the martyrs of the Armenian Genocide.

Under these circumstances on April 23 Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan acknowledged and accepted the demands of the mass protests. The President of Armenia accepted the resignation of the Government and until the formation of new Government First Deputy Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan acts as Prime Minister.

On April 25 the President Armen Sarkissian launched inclusive political consultations and dialogue among stakeholders to find ways to move forward with regard to the formation of new Government. At this stage, it is important to stress that there is a consensus among all stakeholders that all issues should be addressed within the Constitutional framework and processes including those related to the early Parliamentary Elections.

Today, the President of the National Assembly of Armenia Ara Babloyan officially notified that in accordance of the Armenian legislation on the 1st May the National Assembly of Armenia will convene its special session to discuss the election of Prime Minister.

Against this backdrop, we would like to briefly refer to the implementation of the OSCE commitments by Armenia, which have been taking place as I mentioned earlier under very challenging circumstances. The actions of the authorities and protesters so far have showed that it was possible to avoid civilian unrest and casualties once there was genuine desire to uphold national legislation and Constitution, maintain national unity and international commitments.

On similar note we would like to recall that in recent years the Police of Armenia underwent significant reforms and the OSCE Office in Yerevan

was important partner in this regard. While thorough self-assessment of the performance of the Police is pending, however, at this stage we can argue that the quality of the Police performance shows that OSCE led projects brought tangible results, and Armenia looks forward to continue them also within Armenia cooperation program. In the same vein, Armenia stands ready to continue its close cooperation with the OSCE institutions.

Last but not least, we took note of the timely and appropriate press statement of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict by which the Co-Chairs called on the sides to take immediate measures to respect ceasefire and reduce tensions along the Line of Contact.

In concluding, I would like to thank all our international partners for their impartial and balanced attitude, which are helping the people of Armenia to successfully overcome this important test for our democracy and statehood.

STATEMENT ON THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN ARMENIA

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, May 10, 2018

In follow up to the statement delivered by the Delegation of Armenia on April 26 at the Permanent Council, we would like to update the Permanent Council on the latest developments in Armenia.

As it was referred in our statement, on April 25 President Armen Sarkissian launched inclusive political consultations and dialogue among stakeholders to find ways to move forward with regard to the formation of a new Government. It was stressed that there was a clear consensus among all stakeholders that all issues should be addressed within the Constitutional framework.

In line with the legislation, the National Assembly of Armenia convened two special sessions wherein the election of the new Prime Minister was considered. As a result, on May 8 the National Assembly elected, the leader of the opposition Nikol Pashinyan as Prime Minister and at the same day the President of Armenia confirmed the decision of the Parliament.

Thus, the democratic movement, which enjoyed unequivocal support of the people of Armenia, achieved its landmark outcome.

We have already had an opportunity to present the actions of the Armenian authorities to uphold all fundamental freedoms including rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression. Now let me add that along with those fundamental freedoms, Armenia, its duty bearers and right holders, upheld and realized one of most important rights-the right of people to take part in the Government.

It is important to note that all those rights were realized in peaceful and non-violent manner in line and within the Constitutional framework of Armenia. The popular movement which was defined by its leader Nikol Pashinyan as “revolution of love and tolerance” did not divide but unite the people of Armenia.

Armenia has emerged from this challenge with a clear societal consensus on democracy, good governance and human rights. This

consensus reinforces already existing one on the foreign policy and the peaceful resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and the Armenian people are united today in achieving their national aspirations as never before.

In concluding, I would like again to thank all our international partners for their impartial and balanced attitude, which helped the people of Armenia to open up new page in the development of their democracy and statehood.

REMARKS ON THE OCCASION OF THE CENTENNIAL OF THE FIRST REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

Vienna, Mekhitarist Congregation, May 28, 2018

Today we celebrate the Centennial of the first Republic of Armenia, which was born on May 28, 1918, crowned our centuries-long struggle for survival, self-determination and independence. Its history lasted for only two and a half years. Considering that this September we will be celebrating the 27th anniversary of the third Republic, two and a half years may seem a very short time for accomplishing anything at all. However, the reality is that it was the greatest revolution that occurred in the hearts and minds of the Armenian people. With May 28, we adopted a new system of values – that of independence and democracy. And every year, we repeat as the oath of allegiance that without May 28, 1918, there would be no the second Republic, Soviet Armenia, and there would not be the present Republic of Armenia.

The first Republic of Armenia was born in the flames of the First World War. Victories of May 1918 opened a new and glorious page in the millennia-long history of the Armenian nation. In the battles of Sardarapat, Bash-Aparan, and Karakilisa our forefathers had earned our right to live. Those battles were the heroic efforts of the nation, which had stood at the brink of extinction, and were called to defend the last piece of land of our historical homeland and to save the last remnants of our nation. That incredible act was made jointly by our people. They acted with exceptional unity and solidarity, with the selfless courage and adamant will. They acted on the highest level of national conscience and historic responsibility. They stopped and forced back the enemy, and the world had neither illusions nor doubts about the adversary's racist and anti-Armenian intentions. They averted the impending calamity. The 1915 Genocide that originated in the Ottoman Turkey and was consistently perpetrated and proliferated was stopped in May 1918 owing to the spirit of the unity of the Armenian nation.

For many nations the declaration of independence was a political act and even a grand ceremony whereas for us it was an ordeal. People did not

even know that one or two days after the heroic battles they would be able to declare independence. Armenian people created statehood right in the battle field at the expense of enormous casualties and losses. Only one week before May 28, Armenia or Armenians were a non-existent political factor. On that day, we told all neighbors, friends close and distant, as well as foes that we exist as the most serious factor in the region. On that day, we told everyone that we would exist eternally, that we are a nation and a state, that we have interests and goals, that we would defend ourselves and our compatriots if they would need help. On the other hand, our Republic had adopted the most advanced ideas, democratic rule, and had set the standards of human rights which existed in the world. We adopted on the state level the universal human and national values, with the conviction that they complement each other.

In the meantime, we are far from idealizing our First Republic. We remember that it was also a country of famine, epidemics, refugees and half-dead orphans. But because of this all, First Republic is even more precious to us. On May 28, the foundation of the new state structure had been laid, and that structure assumed a mission of salvaging an ancient people from extinction. It's been already a more than a quarter of a century that we have a modern independent statehood. Contemporary Armenia was also born in the war flames. We, the citizens of today's Armenia, are true to the promise of the First Republic. Armenia has experienced more than its share of human hardship, consequences of the earthquake, economic crisis, oppression, deportations and pogroms of our compatriots in Azerbaijan, war against the Armenian population of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabagh), and twin blockade since regaining its sovereignty. Nevertheless, we have made substantial progress in laying the foundations for a viable state. Armenia has become one of the front runner in building up democratic institutions and civil society. Although security-related issues have always been in the focus of our attention, we have constantly been searching for the ways to boost our economy, and we have achieved certain positive results. We have been carrying out reforms and providing sustainable development for stronger democracy, good governance, rule of law, and progress in all other areas. Worth-mentioning that significant events are occurring today in

Armenia's public life on our way to a full parliamentary system of governance.

Dear guests, today we celebrate the Centennial of the First Republic of Armenia in the Monastery of Mekhitarist Congregation, the oldest Armenian institution in Vienna, which was established in 1811. For more than two centuries of its existence the monks of the Mekhitarist Monastery have been devoted to the preservation of the Armenian heritage. Thus, the monastery has grown into a unique center of Armenian spiritual and cultural tradition. The Congregation could not remain as an observer when the Armenian statehood was reborn, and in 1918-1920 the Monastery, its spiritual leadership, monks did their best to represent the Republic of Armenia in Vienna and played an important role in establishing relations between the Governments of the first Austrian Republic and first Republic of Armenia. The Congregation assisted a delegation of the Armenian Government, namely – Foreign Minister Hamazasp Ohanjanian and his Advisor – Dr. James Greenfield, who later was appointed as the first Armenian Ambassador to both Germany and Austria. They arrived in Vienna in the mid-August of 1918 with a special mission – to convince the Austrian leadership to recognize the Republic of Armenia and to gain its support before the forthcoming Peace Conference. Mekhitarist father Nerses Akinian voluntarily assumed the duties of the Armenian Consul in Vienna. Indeed, the library of this Monastery, its archives preserved a lot of interesting documents, books, newspapers, photos from that period. And this is the reason why we decided to organize exhibition of documents and related materials from the state archives of Armenia, Austria and the library of Mekhitarist Congregation. I would like to take this opportunity and thank Mr. Haik Assenbauer for sponsoring this project. All our guests are welcome to visit the exhibition today. It will be also opened for visitors during this year.

**STATEMENT ON THE VIOLATION OF FREEDOM OF
EXPRESSION IN TURKEY**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, May 31, 2018

We would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council on another case of violation of freedom of expression in Turkey. We recall that the freedom of expression in Turkey has been in the focus during the several meetings of the Permanent Council. In this statement, we would like to refer to the application of the article 301 of the Penal Code of Turkey, which criminalizes denigration against Turkish nation.

It should be recalled that the article 301 had been used against the prominent citizens of Turkey, including Hrant Dink and Orhan Pamuk, who dared to speak out on the issues of memory and remembrance.

The Hrant Dink case exemplifies to what extent the allegations of insulting Turkishness can stigmatize and eventually make the person target for assassination. The European Court of Human Rights in its landmark verdict of the September 14, 2010 found Turkish state liable in failing to protect the right of life, right to the freedom of expression and right to effective remedies of Hrant Dink.

Though the Turkish state pledged full compliance with this verdict, however, after eight years in May 2018, another public figure, this time, the member of the Turkish Parliament Garo Paylan is facing similar charges.

According to the recent reports, Turkish prosecutors are seeking to strip the parliamentary immunity of Garo Paylan in order to prosecute him under the article 301.

As we understand, this article can be invoked by the prosecutors, once the Ministry of Justice of Turkey endorses the complaint, which unfortunately has already occurred in this case. The complaint identifies comments made by Mr. Garo Paylan in the Turkish Parliament on the Armenian Genocide as an insult against the Turkish nation.

Attempts to prosecute a member of the Parliament for his comments delivered in the Parliament seem to be unprecedented even for Turkey and clearly violate Turkey's OSCE commitments particularly on freedom of expression.

We would be grateful if the Turkish delegation could forward the content of this statement to Ankara. We call on Turkish side to ensure implementation of the OSCE commitments on freedom of expression without any discrimination.

Reply

It is noteworthy that Turkey invokes freedom of expression in justifying its denialist policy with regard to the Armenian Genocide abroad including here in the OSCE. However, at home Turkish authorities openly violate freedom of expression by initiating legal actions against those who refer to the Armenian Genocide no matter whether these persons represent people, communities or survivors of grave human rights violations.

This double standard is appalling and it indicates the level of sincerity by which Turkish authorities approach their international obligations and commitments.

As I noted in my statement, the Turkish state has already been involved in this case, since the Ministry of Justice of Turkey endorsed the application of the article 301 of the Penal Code and thus Turkish state bears all responsibility for promoting legal actions against Garo Paylan.

As for the point of the Turkish Ambassador regarding the provocative attitude towards his country, let me highlight the following. In our view, protecting freedom of expression of the member of the Turkish parliament cannot be considered as a hostile and provocative act against Turkey.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF H.E. LUKAS
PARIZEK, STATE SECRETARY AND SPECIAL
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE 2019 SLOVAK OSCE
CHAIRMANSHIP**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, July 19, 2018

The Delegation of Armenia welcomes the State Secretary and Special Representative of the incoming 2019 Slovak OSCE Chairmanship, H.E. Lukáš Parízek to the Permanent Council and thanks for outlining priorities of the Slovak Chairmanship.

We will carefully assess priorities of incoming Slovak Chairmanship, which as we understand will be evolving around effective multilateralism, conflict prevention and people. However, at the outset we would like to stress that these three pillars of the Slovak Chairmanship can serve as excellent reference points in all three dimensions, as well in cross-dimensional issues.

In our view, the effective multilateralism in the OSCE context means first of all readiness to contribute towards the European security and cooperation in responsible manner. The ability to go beyond national or bilateral agenda is a key to effective multilateralism. This is true for all participating states but it is even more relevant for the Chairmanship as it is bound to lead by example. In this regard, we pledge all our support to the incoming Chairmanship in its future efforts of putting effective multilateralism in action.

Conflict prevention has been trademark of the OSCE and we strongly endorse resolve of the incoming Chairmanship to reinvigorate conflict prevention. It should be clearly established that conflict prevention is relevant in all phases of the conflict cycle. Preventing re-occurrence of armed conflicts is particularly important in the framework of protracted conflicts. Use of force created many conflict situations and it is also use of force and threat to use of force that have served as serious impediment towards advancement of peace process.

Attempts to create capacities for use of force including through accumulation of offensive weaponry and illegal exports of military items

should be effectively addressed within conflict prevention. Thus, the Chairmanships along with all other participating states have an important role in upholding all OSCE commitments on arms control particularly in the sensitive security environment. In this regard, we would like to reiterate statements made by our delegation in the 2018 Annual Security Review Conference. Armenia is ready to engage in open and frank dialogue on this matter.

We welcome the intention of the incoming Chairmanship to support efforts of agreed formats of conflict resolution, as specified by the distinguished State Secretary and Special Representative. When it comes to Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, we expect strong interaction of Slovak Chairmanship and its Personal Representative with the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs and all parties to the conflict, particularly in implementing additional measures aimed at reducing tensions along the Line of Contact.

Strong adherence to three principles of conflict resolution, namely non-use of force, equal rights and self-determination of peoples and territorial integrity, put forward by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs for the conflict resolution can be another important contribution of Slovak Chairmanship to the peace process.

Mr. State Secretary, we are encouraged that people, their rights, needs and aspirations will be high on the agenda of the Slovak Chairmanship. Helsinki Final Act confirms the equal rights of the peoples in an unconditional manner. Elsewhere in the OSCE region, including conflict areas, people should be able to enjoy the same human rights and fundamental freedoms including right to take part in the Government.

Ultimate sovereignty rests with people and the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government. The people of Armenia recently showed relevance of this aspirations deriving from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Armenia looks forward to ambitious human dimension agenda of Slovak Chairmanship. We subscribe to the view that there are no safe societies without upholding fundamental freedoms and human rights. In our view, OSCE is well positioned to prevent gross and massive human rights

violations, particularly those, which target entire groups of people and are criminalized under universal international instruments.

We took note that the incoming Chairmanship will continue to put strong emphasis on Structured Dialogue. We share importance of the implementation of confidence and security building measures and mil-to-mil contacts aimed at increasing transparency of armed forces.

We also appreciate the role of Slovakia in promoting an effective and accountable security sector reforms as the Chair of Group of Friends. Armenia looks forward to continue OSCE projects on Security Sector and Governance within Armenia Cooperation Program and we will rely on Chairmanship support in this regard.

In conclusion, we would like to wish every success to you, Mr. State Secretary, in your future responsible mission.

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS BY THE UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM, AMBASSADOR VLADIMIR VORONKOV

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, October 4, 2018

We would like to warmly welcome Under-Secretary-General of United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office, Ambassador Vladimir Voronkov to the Permanent Council and thank him for his address.

Armenia strongly values the cooperation of the UN and OSCE in addressing transnational threats particularly terrorism and in this regard, we are pleased to be guided by the global perspective of fighting terrorism, something that have been just presented to us by Ambassador Voronkov.

There are three points on which we would like to elaborate in this regard.

First, there is a broad consensus in the OSCE on the imperative of addressing security threats posed by foreign terrorist fighters. As result, we have OSCE commitments which are related to the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions 2170 and 2178. Those commitments clearly identify terrorist entities such as ISIL, ANF and Al Qaida associates as recruiting forces of foreign terrorist fighters. As result of defeat of these groups there is a clear threat of return of foreign terrorist fighters. It goes without saying that this return may endanger peace and security in their countries of origin as well as in the conflict areas. Religious solidarity which is often a subject manipulation in conflict situation in the OSCE area can provide new causes for terrorist foreign fighters.

Therefore, we find it important to address this threat through further commitments related to combatting phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters.

Second, as a result of activities including mass atrocities perpetrated by above-mentioned terrorist entities the entire societies face hardships which may amount on particular cases to humanitarian disasters. Rehabilitation of victims of terrorism is an important humanitarian endeavour. Armenia has been providing humanitarian assistance to affected

populations on the ground particularly in Syria and will make further concentrated efforts in this regard.

Third, as we contemplate on our humanitarian response to the victims of terrorism, we should not forget that antiterrorism efforts do not provide a license for human rights violations.

Systematic extrajudicial killings, incarceration of journalists and restriction on civil society cannot be justified by fight against terrorisms in OSCE area. All restriction should be legal, proportional and necessity driven in the clear context of fighting terrorism and in line with international human rights and humanitarian law. We see also apparent need to strengthen our commitments on upholding human rights and fundamental freedoms in the context of fighting terrorism.

In conclusion, we would like to thank again Ambassador Voronkov and wish him every success in his responsible mission.

**TATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS BY THE
PRESIDENT OF THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
GEORGE TSERETELI**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, October 11, 2018

We warmly welcome President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly George Tsereteli back to the Permanent Council.

We thank President Tsereteli for his address which raises important questions OSCE region and our Organization are facing today.

We appreciate your reference to the centenary of end of the First World War. Our duty to remember all victims of violence including genocide perpetrated in the context of that disastrous war should be certainly strengthened. It is also important to recall that international multilateral system had been an outcome of peace, that came after the war, enshrined in principles of international law including the right of people to self-determination. This is not accidental that this year number of participating states celebrate centenary of their independence.

We agree that after a century respect for human rights and multilateralism are indispensable part of peace and security.

In 2018 people of Armenia showed that negative trends on human rights in our region can be reversed. The peaceful democratic transition demonstrated will and maturity of the Armenian society to embrace good governance, democracy and human rights not as merely international commitments but as homegrown domestic agenda of development.

The ongoing transition in Armenia opens up new avenues of cooperation with the OSCE and in this regard, we are grateful for your recent visit, which was mainly concentrated on the democratic change in Armenia.

Armenia looks forward to cooperation with the OSCE PA on wide range of issues including elections.

We certainly agree with the assessment that OSCE could have been better presented on the ground in the South Caucasus. As a participating state who hosted an OSCE full-fledged mission for 17 years and who strongly objected the closure of that Office, we stand ready to consider any

proposal, which would ensure OSCE engagement on the ground in systematic and sustainable manner. Armenia Cooperation Program is an important undertaking in this regard.

Armenia has always advocated stronger OSCE presence in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict area as well. When it comes to the involvement of the OSCE PA in the conflict related issues, particularly through Special Representative on South Caucasus, we would like to underline the following.

The former Special Representative Mr. Kristian Vigenin in his concluding report identified some essential impediments which do not allow to undertake any substantive performance for this mandate. Inability to freedom and full access to contacts and traveling in conflict areas has been recognized as one of them. We agree with this assessment. If any facilitator or mediator is supposed to obtain permission of one party to the conflict for dealing with another party to the conflict then he or she is facing unsurmountable situation.

Without addressing this constrain, without having unimpeded access to conflict areas and representatives of the population of conflict areas the role of special representative will remain ceremonial.

Armenia has always valued the role of parliamentarians in building environment conducive to peace for Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The 1994 Bishkek Protocol by which parliamentarians of all parties to conflict call on their governments to end hostilities and establish ceasefire is a good case in point. We also appreciate 2018 Berlin declaration by which the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly call on the parties to take additional steps to reduce tensions on the Line of Contact.

In conclusion, let me again highlight the readiness of Armenia to strongly cooperate with the OSCE PA in implementing OSCE commitments and wish you, Mr. President, and your able team here in Vienna every success in your activities.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESSES BY THE
PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE OSCE CHAIRPERSON-
IN-OFFICE ON TOLERANCE AND NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, October 18, 2018

We would like to thank the Personal Representatives of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Rabbi Andrew Baker, Prof. Salvatore Martinez and Prof. Bülent Şenay for reporting on their activities and highlighting existing issues of intolerance and discrimination based on religion.

Last year my delegation referred to the existential threats, which Christian communities and members of other religions face in the OSCE area and beyond, such as identity-based violence, mass-atrocities, destruction and illegal expropriation of churches, cemeteries and religious symbols, dissemination of hatred through media and education.

International community including Armenia has recognized genocidal nature of violence targeting certain religious groups particularly Yazidis. Today the efforts of international community should go further than mere recognition. The rehabilitation of persecuted religious groups through victim-centered approach has been required as never before.

In this regard, it is important to recall that this year Nobel peace prize was awarded to Ms. Nadia Murat, a woman who was herself a victim of religious based grave human rights violation and who dared to stand against mass atrocities and enslavement of women perpetrated in the name of religion.

This highly symbolic award should encourage all of us to create enabling environment for rehabilitation of victims of identity-based violence. Realization of the right to the truth is essential in this regard. Also, concerted humanitarian efforts on the ground is another important dimension of both protection and rehabilitation.

We should strongly condemn any misuse of religion including religious solidarity in the violent purposes. By the same token, attempts to introduce religious dimension to conflicts deepens dividing lines, nurtures hatred and further complicates their resolution.

We believe that tolerance and non-discrimination is possible only in the framework of overall protection of human rights. Fundamental freedoms, including freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association shape the necessary environment for protection of the members of religious groups.

In this regard, it is extremely important to raise awareness on international instruments, which protect religious groups and their members. The 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide is a good opportunity in this regard.

These two landmark international documents are complimentary to each other particularly when it comes to the protection of freedom of religion and religious groups as they empower them by individual and collective rights of protection.

Last year Armenia hosted the Chairmanship and ODIHR Conference on “Preventing and Countering Hate Crimes against Christians and Members of other Religious Groups - Perspectives from the OSCE and beyond.

We look forward to the follow up of this Conference and stand ready to contribute towards further efforts of international and regional cooperation aimed at protecting members of religious groups from grave human rights violations.

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESSES BY THE CO-CHAIRS OF THE OSCE MINSK GROUP, THE PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE OSCE CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE AND THE HEAD OF THE OSCE HIGH LEVEL PLANNING GROUP

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, November 8, 2018

We warmly welcome the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group, Ambassadors Igor Popov, Stephane Visconti and Andrew Schofer, Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk and Head of the HLPG, Colonel Vladimir Minarik to the Permanent Council and thank them for their comprehensive reports.

At the outset, we wish to express our appreciation for the work done by the Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship aimed at addressing all aspects of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict throughout this year. 2018 marked an important anniversary. Thirty years ago, on February 20, 1988 the local parliament of the Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous region adopted a decision by which it requested both then-Soviet Armenia and Soviet Azerbaijan to show understanding towards the will and aspiration of the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh and agree on the transfer of the region from Azerbaijan to Armenia. Unfortunately, this bid for self-determination was responded not by understanding and dialogue, but by violence, deportations, abolishment of the status, war and atrocities. Since then security became important element of the conflict resolution. In three decades, the conflict underwent through different stages and got evolved in different international contexts.

Yet its essence remains unchanged as it entails the status of Nagorno-Karabakh and security of its people.

The appeal to democracy and human rights has never been as strong as today among Armenians, as, in this spring the people of Armenia achieved peaceful and democratic transition, which will be eventually channeled into the upcoming December elections.

The new authorities of Armenia, who have been leading this democratic transition, clearly outlined their main approaches to the conflict

resolution. These approaches have been communicated publicly and shared also with the Co-Chairs on various occasions and most recently during their last week trip to the region.

First, the status and security of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh are key issues of the conflict resolution and absolute priority of the Republic of Armenia.

Second, the people and authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh should have a decisive role in conflict resolution. The attempts to objectify Nagorno-Karabakh and its people contradict not only the origin of the conflict, to which I have already made a reference, but to the facts on the ground today. Nagorno-Karabakh is not a no man's land. It is populated by its indigenous people who constituted absolute majority in all stages of the conflict. Without strong involvement of elected representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh any search for durable peace will not be genuine. The role of the NK authorities is essential in all fields of their competence and jurisdiction on the ground.

Third, Armenia continues to strongly support the efforts of the Co-Chair Countries France, Russia and the United States to assist the sides to reach peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Fourth, we reiterate that there is no military solution to the conflict. The military paradigm of the conflict should be entirely overcome. The April 2016 military offensive undermined the peace process.

The current positive dynamic emanating from the recent meetings and Dushanbe commitment should be followed by further implementation of already agreed confidence and security building measures in the framework of the summits of Vienna, St. Petersburg and Geneva.

Along with setting up direct communication links, the strengthening of the OSCE presence on the ground in conflict area remains critically important. The OSCE engagement through the expansion of the PRCiO capacities and establishment of an OSCE investigative mechanism into ceasefire violations is vital for consolidation of the ceasefire.

Fifth, creation of environment conducive for peace requires not only reducing tensions and setting up mechanisms for monitoring and verification, but preparation of people for peace. Hostile rhetoric and

maximalist stances casting doubt on the very possibility of compromise nurture animosity not peace. At the end of the day, it is the peoples of Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan who are eventually destined to accept outcomes of any peace process put forward by their political leaders. They should be able to make their voices heard through strong democratic institutions.

We welcome activities of Ambassador Kasprzyk and his able team on the ground, aimed at consolidating the ceasefire regime and promoting confidence-building measures between parties to the conflict. We are fully aware that limited human, financial and technical resources of the Office are a major obstacle for proper implementation of the mandate of the PRCiO. However, the PRCiO Office, as the only international permanent presence in the conflict area and the only OSCE presence in South Caucasus plays an important role in reducing tensions along the Line of Contact and state border.

We would like to reiterate our position in regard to the composition of the High-Level Planning Group, which may affect neutrality and impartiality, as well as efficiency of its activities. The HLPG and all its members should be able to treat all parties to the conflict in equal manner without kinship or other affiliations.

**REMARKS AT THE EVENT DEDICATED TO THE 50TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE ST. HRIPSIME CHURCH**

Vienna, November 16, 2018

It is a special privilege and an honor for me to address this distinguished audience in a capacity of the representative of the Government of the Republic of Armenia in Austria on such a prominent occasion, 50th Anniversary of the Vienna St. Hripsime Church. Half-centennial jubilee of the major Armenian religious institution would make any diplomatic mission proud of culture, language and traditions carefully preserved by the community. At the same time, it proves that prospects of bilateral ties between countries are sentenced to be optimistic and development-oriented

Armenians have always been warmly accepted by Austrians, regardless the reason brought them to this beautiful country: those who survived 1915 Genocide in Ottoman Turkey, who migrated here from Iran, Turkey or Syria, or those who were forced to move from Armenia because of the tight social-economic and security circumstances. They all had received equal generous reception and feasible aid from the people of Austria. In 1988 the Austrian Government and people of Austria, including Austrian Armenians, reacted immediately to devastating Spitak earthquake, providing the rescue service, humanitarian aid, engaged in aftershock rehabilitation. It is worth to mention that the Austria is among the nations who officially recognized the fact of the Armenian Genocide. These all reflect extremely positively in the hearts of every Armenian living in Armenia or in a multi-million Diaspora throughout the world.

Armenians live in Austria since middle ages, but history preserves first records of the Armenian presence in relation with a renowned Viennese coffee tradition, first introduced in the Habsburg Empire by Johannes Deodato (Hovhannes Astvatsaturian), as well as with the activities of the Armenian Mechitarists Congregation, that was settled in Vienna in 1810 upon the decree of Empress Maria Theresia, who permitted them to establish monastery and church as well as to run their own printing house.

Nowadays the number of Armenians in Austria counts around 6000 people, while the majority lives in Vienna. There is a plenty of smaller communities living in other major Austrian cities such as Salzburg, Graz, Linz, Baden, Klagenfurt etc. They run their businesses, work in hospitals, universities, governmental and non-governmental institutions and centers, involved actively in Austrian social and cultural life.

Along with the permission to exercise their religious activities, Austrian Armenians obtained the opportunity to run their own school, sport club, various cultural and educational organizations. Since 1981 in the Church's premises the Hovhannes Shiraz Saturday school has been operating and serving as a unique center for children education willing to preserve their Armenian identity through learning Armenian language, literature, history, theology as well as pursuing various activities such as Armenian dances, music etc. Ararat Sport Union earlier this year celebrated the 35th Anniversary of its establishment. Armenian General Benevolent Union, The Vienna branch of the Armenian General Sport Union, that is due to mark a centennial of its establishment later in November. Austrian Armenian Culture Society, Austrian branch of the All-Armenian fund, Vienna office of the Armenian Federation for Justice and Democracy, Urartu Theater group, youth and young professional federations. It will take rather long time to name all structures of the Armenian small but active community, that adds a special charm to the multi-cultural and multi-confessional Austria.

I would like to express my deep and sincere gratitude to all who contributed to formation of this small, but very important community. Especially I wish to mention its spiritual leaders, starting from the late Archbishop Mesrop Grigorian, who used to serve as Diocesan Legate of the Catholicos of All Armenians starting from 1980. Upon the decree of Catholicos of All Armenians Garegin the Second Bishop Tiran Petrosyan was appointed as Diocesan Legate to Central Europe and Scandinavian countries. I want to express my sincere words of gratitude to him for his generous support to all Armenian initiatives regardless their governmental or non-governmental nature, to Dr. Vahagn Amirdjanian, head of the Armenian Apostolic Committee of Austria, all members of current, as well

as previous committees, present today among us, Father Andreas Isakhanyan, the prelate of the St. Hripsime Church of Vienna, all spiritual and secular personalities, who feel themselves responsible for flourishing of the Armenian community of Austria, for preserving their national identity and providing our children an opportunity to remain Armenians, to all those who interact with our Embassy in order to bring higher the Agenda of Austrian-Armenian friendly relations.

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE SPECIAL
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE OSCE CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE
ON COMBATING CORRUPTION**

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, December 13, 2018

Armenia aligned itself with the statement of Austria delivered on behalf of the European Union and we would like to make additional remarks in our national capacity.

First, we would like to highly appreciate the decision of the Italian Chairmanship to establish a new mandate aimed at combatting corruption in the OSCE area. We are confident that this is an important contribution of the Italian Chairmanship to the Organization. We acknowledge the importance of Rome anti-corruption conference wherein Armenia attended at the Ministerial level.

Second, we are grateful to Special Representative Prof. Paola Severino for her attention and unwavering support towards requests of cooperation coming from participating states including Armenia. We appreciate that Armenia was one of the first destinations of the visits of the Special Representative.

Armenia fully subscribes to the view of Prof. Severino that the OSCE has a special niche in complimenting efforts of international organizations aimed at supporting states to overcome corruptive practices and build corruption-free and resilient societies.

We also agree that the mobilization of civil society is a key element of success of anticorruption strategies. The political will of the governments to fight corruption is sustainable once it is generated by strong public demand. Furthermore, as much corruption erodes society and destroys its fabric, as much anti-corruption efforts can consolidate people and build society of trust and strong ownership.

The combatting corruption was one of the main demands of the peaceful and non-violent revolutionary changes, which took place in Armenia in April-May this year. After the December 9 elections, the people of Armenia gave very strong anti-corruption mandate to the incoming Government.

We are pleased that first steps towards cooperation in this field have been already made in 2018. We appreciate the involvement of the Office of Coordinator of Economic and Environmental activities, which resulted in the submission of an extra-budgetary project on “Strengthening anti-corruption reform in Armenia”.

We are grateful to all those delegations who support our efforts and already pledged their assistance and we are looking forward to cooperate with all OSCE relevant actors particularly with Special Representative on the OSCE Chairmanship on Combatting Corruption.

In conclusion, we would like to wish every success to Prof. Severino in her future activities.

FAREWEL OSCE STATEMENT

Vienna, OSCE Permanent Council, December 13, 2018

Thank you very much Maria-Pia for your kind words and wishes. At the outset I'd like to express my gratitude to you and to all our colleagues for friendship and cooperation. I served full seven years as Armenia's representative at the OSCE, I've gained many friends in this hall, and I am going to miss you. It is really a very sad occasion for me, but in the meantime today's globalized world and internet giving us various opportunities to easily keep alive our friendship and relationship.

It is symbolic that my first experience with the CSCE/OSCE had started in this very city back in April of 1992 when the representatives of newly independent countries were invited to take part in the CSCE "Round Table Europe" conference on the board of the "Mozart" ship on the way to Bratislava and back.

My second experience was Stockholm ministerial, wherein I was leading the delegation of Armenia. And I must admit that the atmosphere during those discussions and what we are experiencing today in this hall was very different. Back then there was an optimism for the future of our region, we were talking about the opening of the cold war borders, the indivisibility of Euro-Atlantic security, peaceful settlement of newly emerging crises, erasing of differences East and West, etc. Unfortunately, our success was cyclical and not comprehensive and if we look at it from linear perspective throughout the last 26 years we did not achieve much. We were not able to settle also the problems of the South Caucasus region. As a diplomat, I cannot be satisfied too. I was dealing with the NK conflict during my entire diplomatic career being bilateral Ambassador and Deputy Minister. As a head of delegation, I was involved in the Armenian-Turkish negotiation processes back in 1992-1993 and 2006-2009.

Thinking about our departure point and arrived destination one of John Lennon songs came into my mind. But it is not "Imagine" because its ideas of "no countries", "nothing to kill or die for", "no possessions", "a brotherhood of man" seem going to oblivion and are not achievable in 21st century. I am talking about "Nobody told me" that was written before he

was killed in 1980 and was published after his death. The song is not as perfect, but the words are relevant today as never before. I will read for you some parts of the poem:

"Nobody told me there'd be days like this
Everybody's talking and no one says a word,
Everybody's making love and no one really cares,
Always something happening and nothing going on,
Everybody's running and no one makes a move,
Everybody's crying and no one makes a sound,
Everybody's flying and no one leaves the ground,
Everyone's a winner and no one seems to lose
There's always something cooking and nothing in the pot,
Nobody told me there'd be days like this,
Strange days indeed".

Being a diplomat, optimist and dreamer by nature, I still have a hope that the desire to peace and common security will prevail in our region and the entire world. I believe that the modest but important success of Milan, where we were able to put something in the pot, could bring further understanding and cooperation among participating states. I would like to thank all Chairmanships since the Lithuanian that I was working with, and especially the Italian. Thank you, Alessandro and your team.

My thanks go to my dedicated team, to Vahe Gevorkian, Karen Muradyan, Robert Abisoghomonian, and Karen Kostandyan, and special thanks to my family, my wife Susanna and son Aram. They are both here, but please, don't ask them what they are thinking about OSCE.

STRONG TIES

Vienna, Interview to Society, No. 374, December 2018 – January 2019

You have been posted as Ambassador to Austria since 2011 – How would you say are the relations between Austria and Armenia in general?

Yes, it's been already 7 years of my mission as Armenian Ambassador to Austria that I combine with my duties of Permanent Representative of my Government to the OSCE, UN office in Vienna and to other international organizations.

Armenia regained its independence in 1991 and Austria was among the first countries that established diplomatic relations with us. It as in 1992, when I was First Deputy Foreign Minister of Armenia, working closely with all friendly countries, such as Austria.

In early 90s I travelled to Vienna many times. Since that time, and later on, when I assumed my duties s Armenian Ambassador to Austria, I felt and keep feeling of a warm attitude from Austrian authorities and Austrian citizens. I feel myself home, and I'm confident, every Armenian share this feeling.

Austria was among the nations that reacted immediately to the devastating Spitak earthquake in 1988. The Austrian Government provided the rescue service, humanitarian aid and engaged in aftershock rehabilitation. In Gyumri, the second city of Armenia, that was seriously affected by the earthquake, Austrians rebuilt a child's hospital, that was later, as a sign of appreciation, renamed to "Austrian Children's hospital of Gyumri".

Since the very beginning of independence, Austria has been an important contributor to the development of the Republic of Armenia. It's been already a quarter of a century as Austrian government persistently implements various projects aimed with the development of strong Armenian state economy. I would especially like to emphasize the recent projects of the Austrian Development Agency in the Armenian agriculture sector, focusing mainly on helping Armenian farmers produce organic food.

Politically, our relations are on the highest level: our supreme authorities regularly exchange visits, meet on various occasions in different international fora, hold political dialogue, consultations. Each second year, we pursue the sessions of the Armenian-Austrian joint commission of Science and Economy. The next is scheduled to take place in Yerevan, in the first part of the year 2019. We are bound by a series of important interstate agreements in almost all fields. There is the Austria-Armenia parliamentary group, headed by Mrs. Gudrun Kugler, that functions successfully in the Austrian Federal Parliament, and another parliamentary group – in the Armenian Parliament respectively. Our deputies, governmental agents and representatives of non-governmental organizations cooperate successfully in pursuing common goals, often share visions and approaches on various issues.

How many Armenians live in Austria? Does the Embassy collaborate with them? Do you organize special events with participation of the Austrian Armenians?

Armenians have been in Austria since the middle ages, but history preserves first records of the Armenian presence in relation with the renowned Viennese coffee tradition, first introduced in the Habsburg Empire by Johannes Deodato (Hovhannes Astvatsaturian, 1640-1725), as well as with activities of the Armenian Mechitarists Congregation, that was allowed to move and to settle in Vienna in 1810, upon the decree of Empress Maria Theresa, who permitted them to establish their monastery and church as well as to run their own printing house.

I have come to say that Armenian have always been warmly accepted by Austrians, regardless the reason that brought then to your beautiful country: those who survived the 1915 Genocide in Ottoman Turkey, who migrated here from Iran, Turkey or Syria, or those who were forced to move because of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in 1990s or later, have received equal generous reception and feasible aid from the people of Austria.

They integrated easily into the Austrian society without giving up their Armenian language, culture, religious traditions etc. The Armenian Apostolic St. Hripsime Church, located in the Vienna 3rd district, has been

operating since 1964. Austrian-Armenians have their own Saturday school, sports club, various cultural and educational organizations. The community of the Armenian Apostolic Church is officially recognized by the Austrian government as a religious community. Nowadays, the number of Armenians in Austria counts around 6000 people, while the majority lives in Vienna. They run their businesses, work in hospitals, universities, governmental and non-governmental institutions and centers and are involved in Austrian social and cultural life. A significant number of Armenians work in international organizations of Vienna.

Since the opening of the Armenian Embassy in Vienna in 1993, the Armenian community has cooperated closely with our diplomatic mission. We work together in many cultural, scientific and educational initiatives, aiming at showing the Armenian cultural heritage to the Austrian auditory and vice versa. The Embassy does its utmost to bring together Armenian and Austrian communities and to strengthen the economic and trade ties. This, we owe to the knowledge and expertise of the Austrian-Armenians who facilitate contacts, initiate joint projects etc. The Embassy and the Armenian community regularly hold consultative meetings, the Armenian organizations at all special occasions related to the Armenian statehood, national and religious festivities. Just a couple of months ago, on May 28 of 2018 in the Armenian Mechitarists Monastery we marked the 100 Anniversary of the establishment of the Armenian Republic, and this event with wide presence of the Austrian and international officials and individuals, was the best opportunity to bring Austrian-Armenians together to celebrate that prominent occasion.

How are the relationships between Armenia and EU?

One of the foreign policy priorities of Armenia is to form a closer relation with the European Union, with the European family, based on our common values, human rights commitments, undertaken within the framework of cooperation with the European structures and organizations. On November 24, 2017 in the margins of the 5th Eastern Partnership Summit in Brussels, Armenia and the European Union signed the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement – CEPA, which currently passes the period of ratification by the respective states – EU

members, including Austria. Both Armenia and the EU had already agreed upon not to wait for the ratification, which is a rather lengthy process, but to start with its provisional application starting from June 1 of 2018. We are very excited about this Agreement not only because it will open a new page of cooperation between my country and world's most sustainable and steadily-growing unions, but also because we wish to serve a nice example of cooperation and co-work between the European Union and the Eurasian Economic Union, where Armenia has become a member in 2014. We always been in favor of building bridges not walls, dialogue and not bravado.

Nikol Pashinyan – your new head of government – had a meeting with Federal Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel when she visited the Genocide memorial and confirmed an economic cooperation with Armenia – could you tell us more about this cooperation?

Yes, since the velvet, non-violent revolution took place in Armenia, a number of world leaders and/or their representatives visited my country in order to express their support to the will of the Armenian people to live in dignity and peace with their neighbours. Austrian Prime-Minister Sebastian Kurz, while attending the UNGA in New York at the end of September, congratulated Mr. Pashinyan in person on that occasion.

Mrs. Angela Merkel was among the first world leaders coming to Yerevan, who held important negotiations with President Sarkissian and Prime-Minister Pashinyan. Chancellor Merkel was really surprised and inspired by the warm reception and respect shown to her by the Armenian population. Then, at Francophonie summit that took place in Yerevan from October 10-11, the French President Emmanuel Macron, Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau and many other world leaders followed her example. We are still waiting for the others, and will be very happy to receive Austrian, Russian, Italian, Iranian and many other leaders.

Regarding the Armenian-German cooperation, I would point out that Germany is one of the main economic partners of Armenia and the export destination among the EU countries for Armenian goods. Germany is also one of the big donors for Armenian economy, including direct investments

and joint projects. We closely cooperate with German partners especially in the field of renewable energy.

But as Ambassador of Armenia to Austria I wish I could do more for bringing Armenian and Austrian businesses together. Nevertheless, I wish to state that the Austrian companies work successfully in Armenia. They make profit and contribute to the development of my country. In this regard, I have to pay tribute to the Austrian Chamber of Economy, to the Austrian Development Agency, to all Austrian governmental institutions, Austrian Airlines and other business communities, individuals, who made a tremendous job extending their hands to the inexperienced Armenian state and business. Regardless of all hardships and relative remote location, Austria built a bridge of cooperation, connectivity and cohesion with my country. I'm happy to announce, that just a couple of days ago we, alongside with the Austrian Chamber of Economy, obtained a very important agreement – to dispatch to Armenia a group of Austrian businesspersons in the beginning of next year with a certain mission – to familiarize themselves to the Armenian economic prospects, to meet Armenian partners and to elaborate new plans for a beneficial cooperation. We hope their mission will be successful and soon we will hear about boost in Armenian-Austrian economic ties.

This year the ancient Armenian capital – Yerevan, marked its 2800th Anniversary. This date unified not only all Armenian around the world, but also other nations, sharing with us common history and culture.

UN GENOCIDE CONVENTION AND THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Terezin, Czech Republic, Centre for Genocide Studies, December 10, 2018

At the outset I would like to thank the Theresienstadt Centre for Genocide Studies and its managing director Simon Krbec for inviting me for the opening lecture on occasion of the exhibition dedicated to the 70th Anniversary of the adoption of the UN General Assembly Convention “On Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide”, which is organized in cooperation with the Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to the Czech Republic, my colleague and good friend Tigran Seyranian.

Genocide is a twentieth-century concept for an age-old phenomenon, the killing of a defined population group. The word was coined during the Second World War, in 1943, by a Polish lawyer of Jewish descent Raphael Lemkin, who lived in the United States from 1941. Lemkin was looking for a word that would convey the full dimension of the Nazi murder of Jews, though he also was deeply conscious of precedents, especially the killing of Armenians in 1915 and 1916 by the Young Turk government of the Ottoman Empire. The Nazis’ attempt to exterminate the Jews was not the earliest instance of genocide in the 20th century, but it has become the template for evaluating and defining other genocides, particularly the Armenian Genocide.

Lemkin first used the word genocide in print in *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation – Analysis of Government – Proposals for Redress* (1944) and defined it as “the destruction of a nation or an ethnic group.” Lemkin joined the Greek word for a group, *genus*, with the Latin suffix for murder, *cide*, to create the word *genocide*. He launched a one-man diplomatic campaign to convince the newly formed United Nations that it should develop a treaty that would outlaw genocide. Lemkin insisted upon the relationship between genocide and the growing interest in the protection of peoples and minorities that was manifested in several treaties and declarations adopted following the World War I. He said that there was a need to strengthen the international legal instruments, pointing out particularly the inadequacies of the Hague Convention of 1907, which he

noted was “silent regarding the preservation of the integrity of a people.” The General Assembly passed an initial resolution in favor of such a treaty in 1946, and the final Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was approved on 9 December 1948. It came into effect in January 1951 with the ratification by the requisite number of states. Since then, more than 140 states have signed the Genocide Convention.

Prior to Lemkin's time, the international law recognized a limited number of so-called international crimes. As a rule, they were so designated not because of their shocking scale and extent but for more mundane reasons, namely, because they escaped the territorial jurisdiction of states; piracy is the classic example, a crime committed on the high seas. Other examples include trafficking in women, damaging submarine cables, and offenses relating to drugs, counterfeit currency, and pornography. In the early twenty-first century these would be more likely described as transnational crimes. Lemkin and others argued from a different perspective, proposing the recognition of international crimes where these represented serious human rights violations. The emphasis was not so much on the international dimension of their perpetration as on the scale or horror of the acts. Such crimes tended to escape prosecution not because of international difficulties in enforcement but because the state where the crime took place was unwilling to prosecute, generally because its government was complicit in the acts.

The beginnings of this new vision of criminal justice were already apparent at the time of World War I, when on 24 May 1915 Britain, France, and Russia warned that they would hold perpetrators of the Armenian massacres to account for ‘these new crimes of Turkey against humanity and civilization.’ But the idea that a state and its leaders could be held accountable for atrocities committed against their own nationals remained extremely controversial, and it was this lacuna in the law that Lemkin worked to fill.”

The term ‘crimes against humanity’ was formally defined by the Nuremberg Charter, during the prosecution of the Nazi war criminals. Article 6(c) of the Charter defines crimes against humanity as “murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, and other inhumane acts

committed against any civilian population, before or during the war, or persecutions on political, racial or religious grounds in execution of or in connection with any crime within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal, whether or not in violation of the domestic law of the country where perpetrated”.

There are many examples of genocides in the world history. Most modern genocides have occurred in the context of war or vast domestic upheaval, when old rules no longer apply and conditions of instability both heighten the sense of insecurity and open visions of great transformations, of finally laying to rest internal social divisions and creating a prosperous, harmonious future. The First World War was the landmark event because it created a culture of killing and revealed what highly organized states could accomplish. It is no surprise that the first modern genocide, that of the Armenians, occurred in context of total war when the Young Turk rulers were threatened by the Allied powers and demonized the Armenian population as traitors. At the same time, the Young Turks imagined a vast, homogeneous pan-Turkic empire, which could only be accomplished, they believed, through the deportation and massacres of Armenians. Similarly, Jews in Nazi Germany were subject to the most severe discrimination in the 1930s, but it was only in the context of total war that the Nazis unleashed the Holocaust.

The massacres and deportations of the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire are qualified by the genocide scholars as a genocide. In the *Editor's Introduction* of the *Encyclopedia of Genocide* Israel W. Charny listed the “the Armenian Genocide at the hands of the Turks” at the first place of the “past genocides in the twentieth century.” The crime committed by the Ottoman authorities to the Armenian nation fully corresponds to the definition of the special Convention of the UN General Assembly 1948 “On Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide” according to which “*genocide means the acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group*”.

This year mankind is commemorating the centennial of the end of the First World War, a great human catastrophe, which was unprecedented in scope and savagery: it claimed some 14 million lives — 5 million civilians

and 9 million soldiers, 20 million were wounded, several million became prisoners of war, were displaced or had to leave their native regions and resettle permanently. The First World War had tragic bearing on peoples that were not directly involved in. It has also left deep scars in the psyche and body of Armenian nation. The scale and scope of atrocities committed by the Young Turk government made it an unprecedented historical tragedy, which was aimed at a total annihilation of whole nations. The first modern genocide perpetrated under the cover of the First World War, which claimed one and a half million lives of the Armenian people, hundreds thousand lives of various religious and ethnic minorities, among them Greeks, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Yazidis, shows to what extent humanity can degrade in the absence of an international system of security and protection of human rights.

After the First World War, the world witnessed many massacres, Genocides, and wars, which took the lives of millions of people. The score of massacres and atrocities committed on the pretext of false theories of racial, ethnic, or religious domination during the twentieth century constitute a serious blemish on the record of human civilization. As 1984 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Most Reverend Archbishop Emeritus Desmond M. Tutu wrote: “And yet it is possible that if the world had been conscious of the genocide that was committed by the Ottomans against the Armenians, the first genocide of the twentieth century, then perhaps humanity might have been more alert to the warning signs that were being given before Hitler’s madness was unleashed on an unbelieving world.” The Armenian Genocide was a sad precursor to the Jewish Holocaust during the Second World War, genocidal campaigns in Cambodia, Rwanda, and Darfur. It is history repeating itself.

The fact that the Armenian genocide went unpunished was a major impetus for future dictators, who didn't think twice before issuing orders for a new crime. No international action was taken to condemn this crime, leading many – such as Adolf Hitler – to conclude that the international community was prepared to tolerate such acts of genocide, especially when they occurred in the “fog of war.” The Armenian massacres were very much on Hitler’s mind when in 1931 – before he came to power – be

discussed the need for a resettlement policy for non-German minorities: “We intend to introduce a resettlement policy. Think of the biblical deportations and the massacres of Middle Ages... and remember the extermination of the Armenians. One eventually reaches the conclusion that the masses of man are mere biological plasticine.” In 1939 Hitler echoed these words in the context of the treatment of the Polish population: “I have placed my death-head formations in readiness – for the present only in the East – with orders to them to send to death mercilessly and without compassion, men, women, and children of Polish derivation and language. Only thus shall we gain the living space [*Lebensraum*] which we need. Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?”

The Armenian Genocide is a reminder of the risks of not learning the lessons of history, the dangers of genocide denial, and the long-term negative consequences of allowing perpetrators to go unpunished. These were contributing factors for subsequent genocides. The knowledge of past genocides, such as the Armenian case, is the key to understanding and preventing future genocides. This proves the point that historians always make - those who forget the past are condemned to re-live it in the future. Although there is a 1948 United Nations convention aimed at prevention of genocides, we believe that this or any other document cannot be properly enforced unless previous massacres are exposed and examined. We consider the Armenian Genocide to be not only a tragedy of our nation, but also a crime against humanity of a global scale which was internationally recognized to have a preventive significance for the future of the humankind. Armenia works very actively with the United Nations and other international fora to achieve a universal condemnation of such acts in any part of the world. Therefore, an international recognition of the Armenian Genocide will serve the dual purpose of exposing the first Genocide of the twentieth century and prevent new ones from occurring. It was by the initiative of the Government of Armenia in 2015 that the UN General Assembly proclaimed the very day of the adoption of the Convention, the 9th of December, as the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the victims of the crime of genocide and the prevention of this crime.

In the modern world violence, mass killings, devastation and displacement have unfortunately, become increasingly frequent, resulting in humanitarian catastrophes and crises of a horrifying scale. Since recent years we have witnessed mass atrocities of Christians, Yazidis, Muslims and other ethnic and religious minorities in the Middle East, which triggered the mass exodus of the indigenous nations populating the region. The ongoing refugee and migration crisis that the EU faces since instability wounded the regions of the Middle East, Central Asia and North Africa, is the best proof that the only panacea of preventing crimes against humanity is the joint struggle against impunity and denial. It has become faultlessly clear that the international fight against such crimes against humanity as genocide, terrorism, ethnic cleansing, discrimination, mass deportation, must be given a new impetus with a new content, accompanied with efficient prevention tools.

The remembrance days for the victims of Mets Yeghern, Shoah, genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, and Darfur should be approached with universal willingness to move towards recognition and reconciliation. This requires political commitments by governments without subordinating that noble humanitarian cause to any bilateral or geopolitical calculations. I wish to emphasize the role that various governments, parliaments, international organizations, civil societies, academic communities play or should undoubtedly play in recognizing and remembering the past tragedies and preventing the conflicts and crimes against humanity in present day and in the future. Particularly, Austria and Germany, as the successor states of the Austro-Hungarian and German empires, recently had recognized their own responsibility for the crimes committed by the allied Ottoman Empire against its Armenian population and other minorities during the WW1. I would like to specially thank the Parliament of Czech Republic for recognition and condemnation of the Armenian Genocide.

The Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide is a noble and sad occasion for Armenians throughout the world, as it singularly represents the inglorious and frequent persecution of my nation. Our people are scattered all over the world since the Genocide led to creation of a Diaspora which is the descendant from men and women who lived in their ancestral

homeland for millennia before they were uprooted and cleansed away. In the absence of an independent and free Armenia, the Diaspora and its institutions have emerged as carriers of the custodianship of the Armenian legacy. 27 years ago, the Armenian tricolour was once again raised in Yerevan, symbolizing the rebirth of an independent homeland. Armenia's recovered independence is not a gift but the only way to consolidate a democratic and civil society based on shared values and the rule of law. We believe that the national task of today is to spare no effort in order to build a stable, democratic, prosperous and secure nation at peace with itself, and with its neighbours.

From the regional context, the Genocide is the thorny issue in the development of the sound security system in our part of the world, and a healthy bilateral relationship between Armenia and Turkey. Refusal to establish diplomatic relations with Armenia, denial of historic truth, land blockade and sealed borders in 21st century are unacceptable. Only acceptance of the historic truth can heal the deep-running discord between Turkish and Armenian peoples. Recognition of the Armenian Genocide can in no way be viewed as a threat, insult or attack on the Turkish people, and will only contribute to the self-confidence of any nation. Once free of this historic burden of Genocide denial, Turkey can work in concert with Armenia and other nations to promote peace and understanding in the whole region. Historic justice, remembrance, reconciliation, and peaceful coexistence are not ephemeral concepts but essential parameters in the rapprochement between Armenian and Turkish peoples. To quote from the Gospel according to John (Chapter 8, verse 32), "you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free". Many Turkish intellectuals, writers and academics have begun to go down that difficult road to introspection and study. Some are doing this publicly and with great transparency.

In conclusion I would like to express once again our appreciation to the Theresienstadt Centre for Genocide Studies for organizing this very important event – The Human Rights Day in Theresienstadt.

THE CENTER FOR CIVILIZATION AND CULTURAL STUDIES AT YEREVAN STATE UNIVERSITY

The Center for Civilization and Cultural Studies at Yerevan State University has been established in 2007 (<https://cccsysu.com/en/>). Since then, the Center has been involved in different national and international projects aiming to promote intercultural cooperation, people to people dialogue across open and closed borders as well as deepening understanding among different religions and civilizations. The research-based activity of the center has been anchored in the several theories authored by the founder and the director of the center, Ambassador David Hovhannisyan. Those theories, among them, the “Theory of Three Seas System”, the “Theory of Network State” and the “Theory of Adaptation Mechanisms” have been the subject of discussions and publications both in Armenia and abroad.

The staff of the center includes researchers specializing in different areas from Georgian, Iranian and Arabic studies to China studies and beyond. They are doing research from the perspective of cultural anthropology, security studies, religious studies and so on. This diversity of the research areas gives a special capacity to the center enabling to observe, analyze and understand different aspects of foreign relations from the divergent angles. This capacity gives also an opportunity to cooperate with different state and non-governmental organizations: the center itself and its members individually are working with the partnership of the Institute of Anthropology of NAS, with the Department of Arabic Studies of YSU, with the National Defense Research University of Ministry of Defense, with the NGO’s and international foundations like “Hazarashen”, “SMIL” foundation, Eurasia Partnership Foundation, Heinrich Boell Foundation, the CIVIC-Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations, Hrant Dink Foundation, Boon TV and others.

In the scope of research interests of the Center have been the transformation mechanisms of the Middle East societies, the changing Islam of Turkey, the adaptation mechanisms of Iran’s Shia Islam, the ways of construction of the histories in Armenia and Georgia, the current problems of higher education in Armenia and ways of resolving those

problems. On the basis of the research results the Center is publishing the Analytical Bulletin twice a year, as well as separate policy papers.

In addition to the analytical and research publications, the Center organizes round table discussions and seminars on the regional politics regularly, and its researchers are among the experts that give public presentations and media talks to share their expertise both situation-based and as broader knowledge.

“Three Seas System” as an analytical and prognostic model

The “Three Seas System” theory has been developed and formulated as a result of YSU Center of Civilization and Cultural Studies’ (CCCS) staff’s scientific and research activity. The director of the center, Professor David Hovhannisyan, has had several speeches in different international conferences on the topic. Besides, the professor has delivered several lectures in different research centers, including the Carnegie Foundation.

The concept of “Three Seas System” enables to present modern geopolitical, geo-economical, political and informational processes in the change of the categories of time and space, in other words in the principally new conditions of the creation of worldview and the image of the world. The concept with integrated approach monitors and analyzes the new features that have changed the essence of the perception of modern political, economic, cultural and social phenomena. Focusing on the Mediterranean, Black, and Caspian Seas, and on the spaces between their communicational areal, the concept analyzes in its entirety the developments of this mega-region and reveals the true reasons of different conflicts, explains the true motives of global power centers’ decisions and implemented programs. The concept pays special attention to the global process of networking.

The study of different divergences in the “Three Seas System” enables to predict the development of the events in the mega-region with high accuracy.

YEREVAN STATE UNIVERSITY
CENTER FOR CIVILIZATION AND CULTURAL STUDIES

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