



**Statement**

**in Response to the Address of Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic H.E. Ivo Šrámek delivered by the Permanent Delegation of Armenia at the 1148th Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council**

**June 01, 2017**

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to warmly welcome H.E. Ivo Šrámek, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for Security and Multilateral Issues of the Czech Republic and express our gratitude for outlining the priorities of the Czech Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and presenting his vision on cooperation between our Organizations.

Both the OSCE and the Council of Europe are highly relevant regional organizations, which share the same goal of promoting peace, security and stability in our wide region through active promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, rule of law and democracy. The exchange of high level visits between Chairmanships of our Organizations is illustrative of the high level of cooperation between our Organizations.

We appreciate the positive interaction of the Council of Europe with the OSCE and its executive structures, including the institutions. Such cooperation will contribute to creation of synergy between our organizations in their efforts towards protection and promotion of human rights.

Armenia has consistently advocated making use of the 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. 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.

We attach utmost importance to 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.

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome the priorities of the Czech Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers, in particular that of promoting of human rights of people belonging to disadvantaged groups, such as national and ethnic minorities.

Today one of the persistent problems in the OSCE area is violation of human rights under the pretext of combating terrorism, which especially target ethnic and religious groups.

In this regard we share the call of the Czech Chairmanship to strengthen the protection of the rights of all persons without discrimination through the implementation of the recommendations of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). Armenia has been vocal in condemning hate speech and xenophobia targeting ethnic and religious groups, especially its use by public figures in the political discourse.

Mr. Minister,

In conclusion, we would also like to wish every success to the Czech Republic in leading the Organization and pledge our full support to the Czech Chairmanship in its endeavours.

Thank you.