
Chairmanship: Albania**1275th PLENARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

1. Date: Thursday, 16 July 2020 (in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconferencing)

Opened: 10.10 a.m.
Suspended: 10.40 a.m.
Resumed: 11 a.m.
Suspended: 1.15 p.m.
Resumed: 3.05 p.m.
Suspended: 6.20 p.m.
Resumed: 11.30 a.m. (Friday, 17 July 2020)
Closed: 12.50 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador I. Hasani

Prior to taking up the agenda, the Chairperson reminded the Permanent Council of the technical modalities for the conduct of meetings of the Council during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 1: ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF SWEDEN, MR. ROBERT RYDBERG

Chairperson, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden (PC.DEL/925/20 OSCE+), Germany-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/978/20), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/923/20), Kazakhstan, Switzerland (PC.DEL/959/20 OSCE+), Turkey (PC.DEL/951/20 OSCE+), Azerbaijan (PC.DEL/929/20 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/931/20), Armenia (PC.DEL/953/20/Corr.1), Norway (PC.DEL/924/20), Ukraine (PC.DEL/934/20), Canada (PC.DEL/935/20 OSCE+), Georgia (PC.DEL/966/20 OSCE+), Kyrgyzstan (PC.DEL/958/20 OSCE+), Belarus (PC.DEL/933/20 OSCE+), Holy See (PC.DEL/932/20

OSCE+), United Kingdom, Bosnia and Herzegovina (PC.DEL/947/20 OSCE+), Iceland (PC.DEL/963/20 OSCE+), Slovakia, Afghanistan (Partner for Co-operation)

Agenda item 2: REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

Chairperson

- (a) *Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea:* Ukraine (PC.DEL/936/20), Germany-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/980/20), Canada (PC.DEL/944/20 OSCE+), Switzerland (PC.DEL/961/20 OSCE+), Turkey (PC.DEL/939/20 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/921/20), United Kingdom
- (b) *Situation in Ukraine and the need to implement the Minsk agreements:* Russian Federation (PC.DEL/922/20), Ukraine
- (c) *Armed attack by Armenia against Azerbaijan:* Azerbaijan (Annex 1), Turkey (PC.DEL/937/20 OSCE+), Georgia (PC.DEL/967/20 OSCE+), Uzbekistan
- (d) *Military offensive by Azerbaijan on the north-eastern part of the State border of Armenia:* Armenia (Annex 2) (PC.DEL/955/20/Corr.2), Azerbaijan (Annex 3), Turkey (PC.DEL/938/20 OSCE+), France (also on behalf of the Russian Federation and the United States of America) (PC.DEL/957/20), France

Point of order: Azerbaijan

- (e) *Violence along the Armenia-Azerbaijan international border:* United States of America (PC.DEL/928/20), Kazakhstan, Germany-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Canada, Georgia, Moldova and San Marino, in alignment) (PC.DEL/982/20), United Kingdom, Azerbaijan (PC.DEL/930/20 OSCE+), Armenia (PC.DEL/956/20/Rev.1)
- (f) *Violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the Russian Federation:* United States of America (PC.DEL/941/20), Germany-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Canada, Georgia and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/979/20), United Kingdom, Russian Federation (PC.DEL/940/20 OSCE+)

- (g) *Wounding and illegal detention of a Georgian citizen by Russian occupation forces:* Georgia (PC.DEL/971/20 OSCE+), Norway (PC.DEL/949/20), Canada (PC.DEL/946/20 OSCE+), Germany-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/981/20), United Kingdom, United States of America (PC.DEL/942/20), Ukraine (PC.DEL/969/20), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/973/20)
- (h) *Sixth anniversary of the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 on 17 July 2014:* Germany-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Australia (Partner for Co-operation), Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/977/20), Canada (PC.DEL/945/20 OSCE+), United Kingdom, United States of America (PC.DEL/943/20), Ukraine (PC.DEL/970/20), Russian Federation, Netherlands

Agenda item 3: REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
CHAIRMANSHIP-IN-OFFICE

- (a) *Call for nominations for the posts of Secretary General, High Commissioner on National Minorities, Representative on Freedom of the Media, and Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights:* Chairperson
- (b) *Ambassadorial retreat held in Pöllauberg, Austria, on 13 and 14 July 2020:* Chairperson
- (c) *78th joint meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation and the Permanent Council, held on 15 July 2020, to address the topic of hybrid threats and modern warfare:* Chairperson
- (d) *20th conference of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons, to be held in Vienna and via video teleconference from 20 to 22 July 2020:* Chairperson

Agenda item 4: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

- (a) *Developments related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the OSCE field operations in South-Eastern Europe and Central Asia:* Secretary General (SEC.GAL/99/20 OSCE+)
- (b) *Participation of the Secretary General, on 10 July 2020, in the Virtual Counter-Terrorism Week 2020:* Secretary General (SEC.GAL/99/20 OSCE+)
- (c) *Meeting of the Secretary General with the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Ms. G. F. Waly, on 16 July 2020:* Secretary General (SEC.GAL/99/20 OSCE+)

- (d) *20th conference of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons, to be held in Vienna and via video teleconference from 20 to 22 July 2020: Secretary General (SEC.GAL/99/20 OSCE+)*
- (e) *Farewell remarks by the outgoing OSCE Secretary General, Mr. Thomas Greminger: Secretary General (SEC.GAL/100/20 OSCE+), Azerbaijan, Germany-European Union (Annex 4), Slovakia, Russian Federation (Annex 5), Turkey, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Switzerland (PC.DEL/960/20 OSCE+), Italy (Annex 6), United Kingdom, Austria (Annex 7), Chairperson*

Agenda item 5: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *Fourth anniversary of the attempted coup d'état in Turkey on 15 July 2016: Turkey (PC.DEL/952/20 OSCE+), Azerbaijan (PC.DEL/948/20 OSCE+)*
- (b) *Presidential election in Belarus, to be held on 9 August 2020: Belarus (PC.DEL/950/20 OSCE+)*

4. Next meeting:

Thursday, 23 July 2020, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference



1275th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1275, Agenda item 2(c)

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF AZERBAIJAN

Mr. Chairperson,

The delegation of Azerbaijan would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the large-scale military provocation by Armenia against Azerbaijan along the international border between the two States. On 12 July 2020, the armed forces of Armenia opened intensive heavy weapons fire, including artillery fire, on the border guard units of Azerbaijan deployed along the international border in the Tovuz district of Azerbaijan and attacked their positions. As a result, 11 members of the armed forces of Azerbaijan were killed and 5 were wounded.

Armenia engaged in artillery shelling of densely populated territories of Azerbaijan adjacent to the front line, deliberately targeting civilian populations in violation of all its obligations and the fundamental norms and principles of international law, including international humanitarian law. Thus, on 13 July, the Armenian armed forces shelled the village of Dondar Quşçu in the Tovuz district of Azerbaijan. On 14 July, Aziz Azizov, a 76-year-old resident of the village of Aghdam, also in the Tovuz district, was killed as a result of the Armenian artillery fire. Moreover, the shelling caused substantial damage to private and public property and infrastructure. Today, early in the morning, the Armenian armed forces resumed their armed attacks along the border and continued shelling civilian populations and villages in the Tovuz district of Azerbaijan. It is deplorable that Armenia is continuing its provocative actions even after the statement calling for de-escalation of the situation that was issued yesterday by the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group and the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference.

In response to this armed attack by the Armenian military, Azerbaijan resumed the exercise of its right of self-defence in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations and customary international law. The armed forces of Azerbaijan have taken the necessary countermeasures to suppress the artillery barrage by the Armenian armed forces and to deter these from further acts of aggression in order to ensure the safety of the civilian population. The situation currently remains tense.

The attempts by Armenia to bring the armed conflict directly to the Armenia-Azerbaijan border and to involve the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in the conflict are a grave miscalculation and will merely serve to escalate the

political situation in the region and pose serious threats to regional stability and security with unpredictable consequences. Azerbaijan enjoys friendly relations with all members of the CSTO, except for Armenia. That being said, we do not understand the bizarre statement issued by the CSTO Secretariat on 14 July calling for “an immediate restoration of the ceasefire regime in the CSTO responsibility zone”. We wish to stress that Azerbaijan is not in anyone’s “zone of responsibility”, and that if the CSTO genuinely wants to play a constructive role in the region, it should compel its Member State Armenia to comply with the norms and principles of international law, in particular the obligation, enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, to refrain from the use of force against the territorial integrity of States.

Armenia’s deliberate violation of the ceasefire attests to the hypocrisy of that country’s alleged adherence to the appeal for an immediate global ceasefire issued by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 23 March. This armed attack is not an isolated or sporadic act but part of Armenia’s systematic policy of using force and should be considered in the context of the Armenian leadership’s consistent attempts to derail the peace process by engaging in irresponsible statements and actions. We have repeatedly brought to the international community’s attention the fact that the Armenian armed forces’ illegal presence in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan remains the main cause of the conflict and of any escalations. By constantly carrying out provocations and stoking up tensions, by building up its military presence in the occupied territories, by illegally changing the demographic, cultural and physical character of the seized lands and engaging in unlawful economic and other activities – including the transfer of Armenian citizens into these territories – Armenia is pursuing the obvious goal of consolidating the status quo, which is unacceptable and unsustainable, as has also been emphasized by the Heads of State of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries.

Despite certain expectations, the calm situation along the front line since at least September 2018 did not result in any progress in the negotiations. On the contrary, even though the frequency of bilateral meetings between Armenia and Azerbaijan intensified to a certain extent, Armenia’s lack of political will to resolve the conflict crystallized into open resistance to any kind of progress in the political settlement process. Instead of delivering on its commitment to prepare its country’s population for peace, the current Armenian leadership is merely replicating its predecessors’ annexationist policy, in both word and deed.

The recent gross provocation by Armenia takes place against the background of continued attempts to challenge the established negotiation format. Armenian senior officials publicly disown adherence to the logic and understandings that for years have informed the OSCE Minsk Group-led negotiation process. The most recent reaction by the Armenian leadership to the step-by-step approach to settlement of the conflict, that was enunciated by one of the Co-Chair countries at high level, along with its attempts to misconstrue the key OSCE documents and decisions on a peaceful settlement of the conflict and the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, serves as vivid proof that Armenia is desperately seeking to thwart the peace process at all costs in order to prolong its occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan and thereby impose a fait accompli.

Azerbaijan has consistently pointed out that the current status quo and the tensions along the front line are not in its interests, and that it is indeed the party most keen on finding as swiftly as possible a durable solution to the conflict. However, the armed forces of

Azerbaijan will not stand idly by: they will respond adequately to any provocations and ceasefire violations by Armenia. It should be stressed that neither the ceasefire nor the United Nations Security Council resolutions from 1993 have divested Azerbaijan of its inherent right to self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations that solidified once and for all in view of Armenia's continuing aggression and occupation of our territories, which has been pronounced unlawful by the United Nations Security Council.

The Republic of Azerbaijan reiterates that the military occupation of its territory does not represent a solution to the conflict and will never produce a political outcome desired by Armenia. Resolution of the conflict is possible only on the basis of the norms and principles of international law, as enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act, in full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders. Azerbaijan rules out any political solution to the conflict beyond this framework, and its participation in the settlement process is based solely on that understanding.

The step-by-step approach – which in its first stage addresses the elimination of the major consequences of the conflict, starting with the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from the Nagorno-Karabakh region and other occupied territories of Azerbaijan – is based on the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and OSCE decisions, in particular the decision of the CSCE/OSCE Budapest Summit in December 1994, which define the mandate of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group. Any deviation from this established negotiation framework is a serious blow to the entire peace process and must be properly addressed by the international community, in particular by the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group.

The sooner Armenia reconciles itself to this reality, the sooner the conflict will be resolved and the sooner the countries and people in the region will benefit from the prospects of co-operation and economic development.

The lack of an adequate reaction by the international community to Armenia's irresponsible, warmongering statements and aggressive actions have only contributed to that country's sense of impunity and permissiveness that led to Armenian adventurism. It is therefore more urgent than ever to bring Armenia back to the logic of the Minsk Process.

Azerbaijan calls upon the international community, including the OSCE and the OSCE Minsk Group, to demand that Armenia cease the illegal occupation of Azerbaijan's territories, withdraw its troops from all seized lands and engage constructively in the conflict settlement process in accordance with the provisions of United Nations Security Council resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993) and the norms and principles of international law.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.



1275th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1275, Agenda item 2(d)

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA

In recent days the Republic of Armenia has come under armed attack by Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijani military offensive along the north-eastern part of the State border between Armenia and Azerbaijan and attacks on settlements and civilian infrastructure in Tavush Province in the north-east of Armenia, has compelled our delegation to raise this matter under the agenda item “Current issues under the title “Military offensive of Azerbaijan on north-eastern part of the State border of Armenia”.

Let me start by giving a chronology of the developments on the border.

On 12 July, at around 12.30 p.m. the servicemen of the Azerbaijani armed forces on a UAZ military vehicle crossed the Armenia’s State border in the direction of Tavush Province and drove towards the Armenian military position close to the village of Movses. After a warning from the Armenian side, the Azerbaijani soldiers left the vehicle and retreated to their positions. An hour and a quarter later, at around 1.45 p.m. the Azerbaijani military again attempted to take over the same outpost, now using 82 mm calibre mortars and combat groups. This attempt was repulsed by the Armenian armed forces.

That same evening, the Azerbaijani side resumed its shelling of the same position using 82 mm calibre mortars and tanks. The shelling of Armenian positions continued at intervals of 15 minutes throughout the following day.

On 13 July, the Azerbaijani army resumed its aggressive actions, using a wide range of offensive weaponry including heavy artillery, large-calibre mortars and tanks. Moreover, combat- and reconnaissance-type unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) were also used. (As of today, the Armenian armed forces have shot down around 13 Azerbaijani UAVs, including a Hermes 900 UAV, which had been used to coordinate and direct artillery fire on the ground in real-time mode.)

On the same day, Azerbaijan started combining its attacks on military targets with assaults on settlements and civilian infrastructure in Tavush Province of Armenia. The villages of Chinary and Aygepar were shelled using 82 mm and 120 mm calibre mortars. Fortunately, there were no casualties among the civilian population.

The aggression and attacks on Armenian positions and territory continued on 14 July as well. The Azerbaijani military, infuriated by its lack of success on the battlefield, vented

its frustration by targeting the Armenian town of Berd using combat UAVs and even Grad-type multiple-launch rocket systems. As a result, two production facilities – namely, a factory manufacturing personal protective equipment and a brandy distillery – were damaged, as was a gas pipeline. Later in the day, the Armenian village of Aygepar once again came under attack, resulting in damage to around a dozen residential buildings. Thanks to the professional work of the local authorities and emergency services, we have managed to avoid casualties among the civilian population.

All in all, as a result of the recent Azerbaijani offensive, 4 Armenian servicemen have been killed and around 11 have sustained injuries of various degrees. Two police officers were also wounded.

Deliberate targeting of the civilian population and infrastructure is not a new tactic employed by Azerbaijan. We have seen it being used for years – notably during the April War of 2016, when the Azerbaijani army's actions amounted to gross violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. This policy is yet another manifestation of hatred, xenophobia and intolerance against the Armenian people, which is officially promoted at the highest level in Azerbaijan. Such actions and the stance of the Azerbaijani authorities should be condemned in no uncertain terms. The Azerbaijani political and military leadership must be held fully to account for what they have done and for what they are doing.

Despite an agreement on the cessation of hostilities, combat groups of the armed forces of Azerbaijan earlier this morning resumed military operations on the Armenian State border near the villages of Aygepar and Movses, using mortars and heavy artillery. After a proportionate response from the armed forces of Armenia, the Azerbaijani combat groups withdrew with losses. Having failed to make any gains on the battlefield, the Azerbaijani military units began shelling the aforementioned two villages, once again deliberately targeting the civilian population and infrastructure.

It should be stressed that this most recent aggression was a treacherous violation of an agreement on the cessation of hostilities that had been reached earlier. Moreover, it came after a statement made on 15 July in which the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group and the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office had welcomed the establishment of relative calm on the border.

As a result of their short-sighted policy, Azerbaijan's military and political leaders have arrived at an impasse and are now resorting to perilous, ill-conceived steps, for which they will bear full responsibility – also before their own people.

I should now like to recall the political and military build-up that took place before the offensive and that clearly attests to the latter's premeditated nature.

The escalation of the situation on the ground was preceded by attacks and allegations levelled against the agreed mediation format, that is, of the OSCE Minsk Group by President Ilham Aliyev. Moreover, the Azerbaijani President – who is notorious for making constant territorial claims towards Armenia (notably the capital city of Yerevan and the Zangezur region in southern Armenia) and lamenting that “modern Armenia is built on Azerbaijani lands”, and so on and so forth – has reverted, in his public statements and speeches in recent months, to warmongering and bellicose rhetoric, assuring his country's

population of Azerbaijan's ability to solve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict militarily. This rhetoric was criticized by the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group, who in their statement of 30 June, issued following meetings held with the Armenian and Azerbaijani Foreign Ministers via videoconference on 29 and 30 June, expressed their concern about the "recent provocative statements" and "inflammatory rhetoric".

In addition to engaging in such inflammatory rhetoric at the highest political and military level, Azerbaijan recently conducted a large-scale military exercise without prior notification and in clear violation of the Vienna Document. Moreover, it is symptomatic that Azerbaijan is not among the almost 180 countries supporting the United Nations Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our delegation has constantly drawn the Permanent Council's attention to the anti-Armenian hate propaganda promoted by the Azerbaijani leadership. This propaganda is, in our view, a tool used to consolidate the society against an "external enemy" and divert its attention from the country's domestic problems, such as the dictatorial nature of the authorities, endemic corruption and an abysmal human rights record that features violations of almost all the fundamental rights and freedoms.

Anti-Armenian hatred and sentiment in that country has reached a dangerously high level, where even a slight manipulation by the Azerbaijani politico-military leadership can cause it to spill over into military flare up or even large-scale aggression either on the Armenia-Azerbaijan border or along the Line of Contact.

We strongly believe that such deliberate and consistent actions by the Azerbaijani authorities, which among others have the effect of undermining the ceasefire regime established by the trilateral ceasefire agreements of May 1994 and February 1995, are aimed to create favourable conditions on the ground for resorting to large-scale hostilities. The events of the past few days have once again proved that our assessment of the situation is, unfortunately, correct.

As always, Azerbaijan is trying to cover up its large-scale military offensive against borders and sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia by putting forward false allegations against Armenia. I will make use of this opportunity to resolutely reject those allegations, especially those claiming that civilians have been targeted by Armenia's armed forces. The Armenian military has never deliberately targeted or fired at any Azerbaijani settlement. At the same time, we have ample evidence that Azerbaijani artillery units were positioned either within, or in close proximity to, civilian settlements, making those settlements highly vulnerable. More specifically, satellite imagery is available that shows artillery batteries in the village of Dondar Quşçu, in the Tovuz region, which is located some 10 km from the front line. (We will distribute these open-source photographs together with our statement.) As already mentioned, this deplorable tactic is not something new. It was already used by the Azerbaijani military during the April War of 2016, and serves as further evidence of the total disregard of that country's political and military leadership for the safety and security of their own population, let alone the peoples of Armenia and Artsakh.

It has long been the tradition in Azerbaijan to blame Armenia for all its failures and inability to deliver on its own commitments. It is obvious that Armenia has no reasons whatsoever for wishing to escalate the situation. However, that is not so with the Azerbaijani

authorities, which back in April 2016 already tried to divert the attention of their country's society from domestic problems by unleashing a military attack against Nagorno-Karabakh at the cost of many human losses. In repeating the same pattern today, the Azerbaijani authorities are seeking to deflect public anger over the dire socio-economic situation, and to gain imaginary advantages in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Such a policy did not yield any results in 2016, nor will it do so today. On the contrary, it threatens to undo the modest achievements of the past two years towards building trust among societies and preparing populations for peace.

All these military actions were accompanied by a surge in information warfare and cyberattacks. The Internet and social networks were flooded by disinformation and downright fake news, intended above all to spread panic among the population of Armenia. It goes without saying that these attempts failed – on the one hand, because of Armenian citizens' high level of trust in their government and, on the other, because of timely public information updates provided by the Armenian authorities.

Azerbaijani hackers tried to disrupt the free flow of information by launching cyberattacks against the official website of the Armenian Government and against the websites of Armenian media outlets, especially those which have a high level of credibility and are active in the area of investigative journalism.

All the aforementioned actions by Azerbaijan in the political, military, diplomatic and cyberspace spheres clearly demonstrate that this recent escalation on the north-eastern part of the State border between Armenia and Azerbaijan was a carefully orchestrated and premeditated operation.

Mr. Chairperson,
Dear colleagues,

The events of recent days have also been remarkable in terms of the unequivocal and swift reaction of the international community, at the level of States and international organizations alike. In this regard, I wish to express through you, Mr. Chairperson, our appreciation to the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for his balanced statement. We would also like to thank all our partners and friends who made it abundantly clear that military adventurism is not acceptable and will never be tolerated. This stance has brought home to the Azerbaijani leadership that its way of "solving" issues is not in line with international norms, principles and laws. Nor is it in line with Azerbaijan's own commitments and obligations.

Against the background of almost universal calls to cease armed hostilities and restore the ceasefire, we have, however, heard some discordant voices, coming from certain OSCE participating States, which we consider as a direct encouragement and giving carte blanche to Azerbaijan. In the current volatile situation, such behaviour is absolutely irresponsible and unacceptable. I am referring in particular to the statements made by Turkey and the Turkish delegation just a few minutes ago.

On 12 July, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey – a country that, as I wish to stress here, is a member of the OSCE Minsk Group – issued a statement in which the Turkish authorities not only expressed their unconditional support to Azerbaijan, in fact justifying

Azerbaijan's use of force on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, but also disseminated utterly false and misleading information. Moreover, on 14 July, the Turkish Ministers of Defence and Foreign Affairs and later President Erdoğan himself expressed their support and readiness to assist Azerbaijan in any way and manner.

Turkey's provocative attitude and its groundless accusations against Armenia attest to the fact that this country has not been acting as a member of the OSCE Minsk Group, but, rather, as a party involved in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. This fact makes it even more impossible for Turkey to play any role in the issues related to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, within international, and particularly the OSCE framework.

The aforementioned statements by the Turkish authorities did not come as a surprise to us, since we have never been under any illusions or had any doubts as to their position and allegiances. Turkey is well known for its unfriendly attitude towards Armenia. However, the recent statements should be viewed and assessed against the background of the wider context of the current Turkish leadership's neo-Ottoman geopolitical and military policies. For several years now, Turkey has been pursuing a policy of "bringing back the Ottoman Empire" – if not territorially, then at least by transforming the regions of Middle East, North Africa and the Caucasus into zones of its exclusive political and military influence. All the destabilizing military engagements and foreign policy moves by Turkey in recent years attest to this. The most recent example is the statement made by President Erdoğan as he announced the reconversion of the Byzantine-era temple of Hagia Sophia from a museum into a mosque, in which he linked that decision to a revival of Islam from Central Asia to Europe. We believe these policies and approaches of Turkey should raise serious concerns.

Mr. Chairperson,

After the large-scale aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan against Artsakh in 2016 there was a consensus and agreement that we need to take additional steps and introduce new tools that would help to considerably reduce the risk of resumption of military hostilities. I am referring here to the agreements reached previously on enhancing the monitoring capacity of the Office of PRCiO and establishing an OSCE investigative mechanisms on ceasefire violations.

We believe that the recent military offensive against Armenia and subsequent developments could have been avoided if these investigative mechanisms had been introduced in time. The suspension, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, of monitoring activities by the Office of the PRCiO - the only international presence on the ground – made the situation even worse.

We firmly believe that this recent escalation proves the absolute necessity of taking the steps that I have mentioned, which, hopefully, will help put an end to the endless "blame game" of who, when and how violated the ceasefire.

I truly hope that participating States will support the introduction of an international system of reliable ceasefire monitoring and back all other initiatives aimed at creating an environment conducive to peace, building trust between the peoples, and preparing populations of all sides of the conflict for peace.

Mr. Chairperson, I kindly ask you to attach this statement to the journal of today's meeting.

Thank you.



1275th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1275, Agenda item 2(d)

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF AZERBAIJAN

Mr. Chairperson,

Since the current situation is a kind of watershed in the conflict settlement process, it is worth recalling some key developments from the past few years in order to understand the context better.

After the election of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and the installation of the new Government of Armenia in May 2018, the Azerbaijani authorities were asked by a number of leaders at different levels to give the new Armenian leadership time to acquaint itself with the peace process. Azerbaijan agreed to this request and backed up its positive attitude with efforts aimed at reducing ceasefire violations, establishing a direct line of communication, arranging for mutual visits by journalists and implementing various other confidence-building measures intended to help prepare the two countries' populations for peace.

We maintained our commitment to the process even after Armenia began taking clearly provocative steps in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group and the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference recognized last November at the Permanent Council that the ceasefire had been generally observed, with skirmishes reduced to an unprecedentedly low level. They confirmed the existence of an atmosphere that is conducive to productive discussions on a peaceful settlement, as was also reflected in OSCE documents of the time. However, the situation of unprecedented calm along the front line and atmosphere conducive for substantive talks registered in the peace process did not translate into actual progress on resolving the conflict.

The main reason for the impasse is Armenia's refusal to accept the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and relevant OSCE documents and decisions – including the Budapest Document “Towards a Genuine Partnership in a New Era” adopted by the Budapest Summit of the CSCE in 1994 – as the framework for resolution of the conflict. These documents form the basis of the mandate of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group, and the OSCE was tasked by the United Nations Security Council with implementing them. Yet, the Armenian Prime Minister has publicly rejected the step-by-step approach to resolution of the conflict agreed on by the OSCE participating States. He has refused to withdraw the Armenian troops from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, attempted to change the negotiation format, proclaimed the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region of

Azerbaijan to be part of Armenia, and held illegal “elections” in the occupied territories during the COVID-19 pandemic. Together with his family and members of the Armenian Government, he has personally participated in festivities in the occupied city of Shusha. He has denied the very existence of a 80,000-strong Azerbaijani community in the Nagorno-Karabakh region and continued to use force to prevent the Azerbaijani internally displaced persons from returning to their homes and property, thereby violating their basic human rights. All these actions are tantamount to destroying the peace process.

Azerbaijan has adequately responded to the irresponsible behaviour shown by Armenia at various levels and drawn the international community’s attention to the possible implications of that behaviour for the peace process. We requested the OSCE Minsk Group and its Co-Chairs to condemn these actions by the Armenian leadership, which are obviously detrimental to the agreed framework for resolution of the conflict and merely serve to consolidate the results of Armenia’s illegal occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan.

Furthermore, last year Azerbaijan presented the OSCE participating States, the Minsk Group and its Co-Chairs with irrefutable evidence of illegal activities by Armenia in the occupied territories, which are undermining the peace process. In particular, the Armenian Government and Armenian diaspora organizations are jointly pursuing the policy of implanting settlers of Armenian origin from Syria and other countries in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan as well as many other illegal activities. Azerbaijan requested both the OSCE and the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group to react immediately to such a gross violation by Armenia of its obligations under international law.

I reiterate my appeal to the OSCE participating States to address the problems we are facing in the negotiation process and to persuade Armenia to desist from and reverse its illegal activities in the occupied territories.

Unfortunately, the Co-Chairs chose to remain silent on both counts. They neither criticized the reckless statements by Prime Minister Pashinyan nor condemned the illegal activities by Armenia in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The Co-Chairs’ inaction has regrettably been mirrored at the OSCE, allowing Armenia to continue its provocative actions both with regard to the negotiation process and within the conflict zone. As a result, the Armenian leadership now openly defies the United Nations Security Council resolutions that form the basis for the Co-Chairs’ mandate, wilfully misinterprets the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and explicitly manifests hatred and discrimination against the Azerbaijani community of the Nagorno-Karabakh region. The Co-Chairs’ failure to respond adequately to such obvious abuses and violations by Armenia has led to a situation in which some participating States, clearly abiding by double standards, are selectively applying the principles of the Helsinki Final Act to the resolution of conflicts in the OSCE area.

The lack of condemnation of and indignation at Armenia’s actions by the international community has fostered in that country a sense of impunity that significantly diminishes the prospects for peace. The Armenian Prime Minister used his almost two-year-long “grace period” evidently to buy time so as to consolidate the results of the occupation and cause the negotiations to drag on.

The public rally that took place in Baku yesterday, with the participation of more than 50,000 Azerbaijanis who came together in a powerful display of solidarity with and support

for the President and the armed forces of Azerbaijan, was triggered not least by the growing frustration in Azerbaijani society over the failure of the peace process.

Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov yesterday summoned the French Ambassador to Azerbaijan in his capacity of representative of an OSCE Minsk Group Co-chair country in order to reiterate Azerbaijan's concerns about the artificial delays to the conflict settlement process, which are creating new risks and challenges to regional stability and security. One specific issue raised at that meeting was the acts of violence and vandalism perpetrated by members of the Armenian diaspora in France on the premises of the Embassy of Azerbaijan in Paris and the Azerbaijan Cultural Centre – a further display of hatred and Azerbaijanophobia. I hereby request the French delegation to ensure proper protection and security for the Azerbaijani diplomatic mission on French territory in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. I make a similar request to other participating States. For, according to reports in the press, the diplomatic missions of other OSCE participating States that had expressed support for resolution of the conflict on the basis of Azerbaijan's sovereignty and territorial integrity were attacked and vandalized by aggressive mobs.

Some of the delegations here have argued that there is no military solution to the conflict. I, too, very much want to believe that we can manage to resolve the conflict peacefully in line with the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and OSCE decisions. However, one cannot expect Azerbaijan to remain committed to a peaceful resolution of the conflict while others disregard our repeated appeals for the impediments to peace to be addressed. We consistently demonstrated a constructive approach and kept tolerating the flawed situation that had been artificially created at the OSCE and within the peace process. But this cannot continue any more. We will no longer put up with imitation of negotiations. Mere calls by the Co-Chairs to build up an atmosphere conducive to the restoration of the peace process are redundant and unacceptable. We have been there since 2018. The period of calm along the front line was not used by the Co-Chairs effectively. What we now need is concrete proposals to eliminate the consequences of the conflict, as laid down in the Budapest Document and endorsed by relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Azerbaijan believes that the potential for a peaceful resolution of the conflict has not been exhausted, and that we should fully use the OSCE as a platform for rectifying the situation and removing serious impediments to the peace process so as to achieve a breakthrough in the negotiations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1275

16 July 2020

Annex 4

Original: ENGLISH

1275th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1275, Agenda item 4(e)

**STATEMENT BY
THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

The delegation of Germany, in its capacity as EU Presidency, passed the floor to the representative of the European Union, who delivered the following statement:

Mr. Secretary General, dear Thomas,

The European Union had advocated the reappointment of you, Thomas, as Secretary General as well as the reappointment of the heads of the three autonomous OSCE institutions.

We fully support the important role of the Secretary General, the work and the strong and flexible mandates of the three institutions.

We believe that you, Secretary General, as well as the heads of the three institutions have served well the Organization over the last three years, in accordance with the respective mandates to uphold the OSCE principles and commitments.

Mr. Secretary General, dear Thomas,

For the last three years, you have been the visible face and the inner motor of the OSCE – an organization you have been closely related to already long before your present office, and an organization you have rightly described on many occasions as a complex but indispensable forum for dialogue.

As a devoted multilateralist, you have deployed tireless efforts during your term as Secretary General to make this Organization more visible, effective, and productive – in short, as you liked to proclaim: “Make it FIT FOR PURPOSE”.

In your capacity as head of the Secretariat, and in close co-operation with the Albanian Chairmanship, you also steered the Organization effectively through the difficult, challenging early times of the COVID-19 outbreak.

In the name of the European Union and its Member States, I am honoured to express our deepest gratitude to you, Mr. Secretary General, dear Thomas, for the excellent work you

have done to the benefit of this Organization, its dedicated staff in Vienna and in the field, and all participating States.

I kindly ask that the text of this statement be attached to the journal of the day.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1275

16 July 2020

Annex 5

ENGLISH

Original: RUSSIAN

1275th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1275, Agenda item 4(e)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

Secretary General,
Dear Thomas,

You have had the demanding task of co-ordinating the work of the OSCE structures in a difficult time of growing politico-military tensions in the Euro-Atlantic area and a high degree of mistrust among the participating States. The scale of the challenges to European security has only underscored the need for effective channels of inter-State communication with a view to de-escalation, rapprochement of positions and the development of collective approaches to counter common threats. This is precisely what the OSCE is for.

It is highly unfortunate that the burden of international problems weighing on our Organization has led to the current situation, in which the participating States have been unable to ensure continuity in the leadership of the OSCE Secretariat. I should like to emphasize that this has happened despite your extreme professionalism.

We appreciate your sincere effort to bring the Organization to the forefront of international relations. We note the special quality of the dialogue that you have managed to establish with participating States, including Russia. I remember with great warmth our meetings in Vienna and Moscow during various multilateral events. Our dialogue has also been commended by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergey Lavrov. We have always appreciated your finesse and your desire to understand in detail the nuances of the positions of the participating States and to focus the sometimes difficult discussions on a search for compromises.

I have no doubt that your supreme personal and professional qualities will be in high demand both in the service of your homeland, Switzerland, and in the development of international co-operation.

Allow me to wish you, dear Thomas, good health and success in your future endeavours.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1275

16 July 2020

Annex 6

ENGLISH

Original: ITALIAN

1275th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1275, Agenda item 4(e)

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF ITALY

I apologize for taking the floor after the Swiss delegation.

Italy aligns itself with the statement by the European Union, but I should like to add a few words in a national capacity and on a personal level.

It is with great sadness that Italy takes note of the failure to reappoint Ambassador Greminger as Secretary General of the Organization.

Dear Thomas, we worked very well with you and your staff during our Chairmanship in 2018, but it is actually an honour for me to have worked with the Austrian Chairmanship in the selection process that led to your name being chosen as Secretary General.

I believe that the path that led to the ill-chosen decision not to renew your appointment is proof that when tactics prevail over strategy, the result is always disastrous.

Dear Thomas, I personally recognize a kindred spirit in you – a diplomat like me who believes in multilateralism and the need to improve it while preserving the essential aspects of dialogue and an open ear for one another.

It is in this spirit that I wish you every personal and professional satisfaction in the future, and I hope that what has happened will make others in this room reflect deeply. It is always much easier to destroy than to build. You are a builder, my friend.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1275

16 July 2020

Annex 7

ENGLISH

Original: GERMAN

1275th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1275, Agenda item 4(e)

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF AUSTRIA

Mr. Chairperson,

Please allow me, as representative of the host State, to say a word of farewell to Secretary General Ambassador Greminger.

Austria regrets that the 57 OSCE participating States did not manage to extend or renew the mandates of the incumbent heads of the four OSCE executive structures. The Organization's central bodies are thus without leadership at a challenging and critical time for multilateralism. We therefore hope that the new appointment process will be rapid and as smooth as possible so as to restore the seamless functioning of the Organization.

I should like to thank Secretary General Greminger for the outstanding co-operation during the past three years, particularly during Austria's OSCE Chairmanship in 2017.

Secretary General, dear Thomas,

We have always supported your innovative efforts on behalf of the Organization and shared your vision of the OSCE. We should therefore like to express our gratitude to you for your tireless energy and sincere commitment to the OSCE and its canon of values and to wish you all the best for your future career.

I am sure that you will meet up with the OSCE again in one form or another.

Heartfelt thanks.