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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

**Statement**

**by Ambassador Armen Papikyan, Permanent Representative of Armenia**

**as delivered at the 1277<sup>th</sup> meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council**

**July 30, 2020**

***45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act***

Mr. Chairman,

From the outset, let me welcome the inclusion of the 45th Anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act as an agenda item of this Permanent Council meeting. This demonstrates the Albanian OSCE Chairmanship's acknowledgement of the continuing importance of commitment to the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the challenges we face today.

Though adopted 45 years ago at a different historical juncture and in a completely different geopolitical environment, the Helsinki Final Act is still relevant. Its adoption became possible mainly due to the demonstrated goodwill and good faith of the 35 participating States of the CSCE, which later transformed into the principle of consensus. It is hard to imagine reaching consensus on such a comprehensive document today among 57 participating States. The authors of the document were wise enough to seize the momentum of the constructive spirit and to develop a comprehensive set of indivisible and equal principles, which were acceptable and relevant back in 1975. They are still relevant today, provided that their comprehensive integrity and equality is not compromised by political preferences. This has been the consistent and long-standing position of Armenia regarding the Helsinki Final Act.

Mr. Chairman,

The fact that instead of just marking the 45th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, we discuss today as well the implementation of the founding document of this Organization and its principles is indicative enough, reflecting a number of challenges that the Helsinki Final Act has faced since its inception. Drafted with the purpose of détente and easing tensions between the Soviet bloc and the West, the Helsinki Final Act was ultimately designed for the people. The issue of human rights was the tone setting for the whole exercise.

After some 15 years, the first tangible results were produced. Nations who aspired to national independence and freedom have regained their sovereignty through exercising their right to self-determination. As a result, the CSCE, and later OSCE has developed and expanded both qualitatively and quantitatively.

However, the adherence by some participating States to the letter and the spirit of Helsinki are highly questionable. When one follows the pattern of behaviour of certain participating States, it becomes evident that they take irreconcilable, to put it mildly, positions with regard to the human component of the document, and therefore, the Helsinki Final Act as a whole. Apparently, some leaders are not comfortable with the integral part of the Act - the protection of human rights. In fact, this has been the case for quite some time. Continuing disrespect for human rights and fundamental freedoms has become the main reason for the vanishing of the spirit of Helsinki as well as became the main reason of existing conflicts in the OSCE area. The recent development in our Organization, is a clear example how one can disrupt the fragile and delicate balance.

Another fundamental principle of the Helsinki Final Act, which has been instrumental and vital in creating an appropriate and enabling security environment on our continent, is violated on a daily basis, and here I refer to the principle of refraining from the threat or use of force. In fact, this principle has been renounced by the leader of a certain participating State for many years, almost since its accession to this Organisation. I think everyone in this room would agree that statements coming from a state's leader announcing that international law is nothing and the only thing that matters is military power, are extremely alarming. And we are yet to see any reaction from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Mr. Chairman,

By presenting this grim but sober picture, nevertheless let me still express hope that the Helsinki Final Act will withstand these challenges and that we will be able to mark the 50th anniversary of this milestone document without any second thought. But for this we need to take stock of our achievements but more importantly of our failures in order to reinforce and reinvigorate this unique organisation of comprehensive and indivisible security from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

Thank you.