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**DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA**  
**ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

ENGLISH only

**Statement**

**On the Constitutional Referendum in Nagorno-Karabakh**  
**delivered by the Permanent Delegation of Armenia at the 1034th Meeting of the OSCE**  
**Permanent Council**  
February 16, 2017

Mr. Chairman,

We took note of some interest with regard to the referendum which will take place in Nagorno-Karabakh. We will communicate this information to the authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh and stand ready to circulate information on the referendum in the OSCE if authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh deem it appropriate.

The right to vote and form constitutional framework of government is an inalienable 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.

It should be recalled that the international actors have acknowledged the need of the Nagorno-Karabakh people to organize democratically the public life of their population, something that Nagorno-Karabakh is doing much better than some of its neighbors according to the assessments of international leading human rights organizations.

The people of NK cannot put on hold the realization of their human rights until another party to the conflict recognizes their right to self-determination and moves towards resolution of the conflict.

The right to enjoy human rights including the right to life and good governance people of Nagorno-Karabakh earned in difficult circumstances by resisting the aggression and mass atrocities perpetrated by Azerbaijani armed forces back to 90s and in April 2016.

Armenia respects the right of people of Nagorno-Karabakh to determine their destiny and does not interfere in the internal affairs of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. In case the Azerbaijani side has certain issues in regard to the referendum, we encourage it to engage directly with the NK authorities.

We don't see much sense in responding to the usual mantras of the Azerbaijani Delegation and will limit ourselves to two remarks only. In its statement the Azerbaijani side referred to change of the name of the state. We see certain contradiction here. On one hand Azerbaijan tries to avoid any reference to the very name of Nagorno-Karabakh even in terminology of conflict and on the other hand it protests against putative change of name, which

is not accurate. According to the Article 1 of the current Constitution of the Republic, the notions Nagorno-Karabakh Republic and Artsakh Republic have identical legal validity. The notion of Artsakh dates back to more than 20 centuries and therefore cannot be seen as directed against the name of Azerbaijan which became a part of the South Caucasus region less than century ago.

The referendum cannot violate the Constitution of Azerbaijan, since NK people have never been a part of the constitutional framework of Republic of Azerbaijan. The latter was adopted in 1995, 4 years after NK declared its independence according to the legislation of the Soviet Union and the norms and principles of international law.

We don't know what Turkey supports as member of Minsk Group, but we are fully aware that Turkey was the only OSCE participating State and only country in the world, which openly supported large-scale military offensive of Azerbaijan against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh.

### **Right of Reply**

We noted the statement of the Delegation of France on behalf of the Delegations of the Minsk Group Co-Chair countries and we appreciate recognizing the role of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh in deciding their future.

Thank you.