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

ENGLISH only

Statement
in Response to the Report of Ambassador Argo Avakov, Head of the OSCE
Office in Yerevan
delivered by Ambassador Arman Kirakossian at the 1110th Meeting of the
OSCE Permanent Council
July 21, 2016

Mr. Chairman,

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 Programme, 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 centre 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 centres. 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* dimension the key programme 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 centres, 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 programmes 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 programmes.

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.

In reply to Azerbaijan: 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 and we would like to call on Azerbaijani delegation to refrain from introducing its conflict perception to 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 late 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.

In conclusion, we would like to take the opportunity to wish Ambassador Avakov all success in his future efforts to ensure effective implementation of the mandate of the Office.

Thank you.