

**Chairmanship: Albania****1295th PLENARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

1. Date: Thursday, 10 December 2020 (via video teleconference)

Opened: 10 a.m.  
Suspended: 1.20 p.m.  
Resumed: 3 p.m.  
Suspended: 5.55 p.m.  
Resumed: 10 a.m. (Friday, 11 December 2020)  
Suspended: 1 p.m.  
Resumed: 3 p.m.  
Closed: 3.35 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador I. Hasani  
Ms. E. Dobrushi

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

Agenda item 1: ADDRESS BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE  
COUNCIL OF EUROPE, MS. MARIJA PEJČINOVIĆ BURIĆ

Chairperson, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (PC.DEL/1714/20),  
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 and Liechtenstein,  
members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia,  
Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1764/20), Russian  
Federation (PC.DEL/1712/20), Turkey (PC.DEL/1774/20 OSCE+),  
Azerbaijan (PC.DEL/1733/20 OSCE+), United States of America  
(PC.DEL/1713/20), Switzerland (PC.DEL/1768/20 OSCE+), United  
Kingdom, Georgia (PC.DEL/1765/20), Holy See (PC.DEL/1715/20 OSCE+),  
Kazakhstan (PC.DEL/1751/20 OSCE+), Norway (PC.DEL/1737/20), Ukraine  
(PC.DEL/1717/20), Germany (PC.DEL/1724/20 OSCE+), Armenia  
(PC.DEL/1728/20), France (PC.DEL/1721/20 OSCE+), Greece

Agenda item 2:

ADDRESS BY THE PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE OSCE CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE ON COMBATING RACISM, XENOPHOBIA AND DISCRIMINATION, ALSO FOCUSING ON INTOLERANCE AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST CHRISTIANS AND MEMBERS OF OTHER RELIGIONS; THE PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE OSCE CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE ON COMBATING INTOLERANCE AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MUSLIMS; AND THE PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE OSCE CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE ON COMBATING ANTI-SEMITISM

Chairperson, Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Anti-Semitism (CIO.GAL/221/20 OSCE+), Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims (CIO.GAL/219/20 OSCE+), Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, also Focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions (CIO.GAL/220/20 OSCE+), 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 country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1763/20), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1719/20), Azerbaijan (PC.DEL/1738/20 OSCE+), Turkey (PC.DEL/1775/20 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/1720/20), Holy See (PC.DEL/1718/20 OSCE+), Kazakhstan (PC.DEL/1748/20 OSCE+), Canada, Ukraine, Armenia (PC.DEL/1730/20), Uzbekistan, Belgium (PC.DEL/1769/20 OSCE+)

Agenda item 3:

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS, MR. P. MAURER

Chairperson, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (PC.DEL/1716/20 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/1761/20), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1722/20), Azerbaijan (PC.DEL/1732/20 OSCE+), Turkey (PC.DEL/1778/20 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/1723/20 OSCE+), Switzerland (PC.DEL/1734/20 OSCE+), United Kingdom, Georgia (PC.DEL/1766/20 OSCE+), Kazakhstan (PC.DEL/1750/20 OSCE+), Norway (PC.DEL/1736/20), Ukraine, Canada, Armenia (Annex 1)

Agenda item 4: REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

Chairperson

- (a) *Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea:* Ukraine (PC.DEL/1727/20), 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/1762/20), Switzerland (PC.DEL/1735/20 OSCE+), Turkey (PC.DEL/1770/20 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/1731/20), Canada, United Kingdom, France (PC.DEL/1725/20)
- (b) *Situation in Ukraine and the need to implement the Minsk agreements:* Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1726/20), Germany (also on behalf of France) (Annex 2), Ukraine
- (c) *Aggression of Azerbaijan against Artsakh and Armenia with the direct involvement of Turkey and foreign terrorist fighters:* Armenia (Annex 3)
- (d) *Human Rights Day, observed on 10 December:* Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1755/20) (PC.DEL/1757/20), 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, Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1760/20), United States of America (PC.DEL/1743/20), United Kingdom (PC.DEL/1740/20 OSCE+), Canada, Turkey (PC.DEL/1777/20 OSCE+), Belarus (PC.DEL/1747/20 OSCE+), Azerbaijan (PC.DEL/1739/20 OSCE+), Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan
- (e) *Violations of freedom of the media in Latvia:* Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1749/20), Latvia (PC.DEL/1742/20 OSCE+), Ukraine
- (f) *So-called elections in the Transnistrian breakaway region of the Republic of Moldova:* Moldova (PC.DEL/1745/20 OSCE+), Georgia (PC.DEL/1767/20 OSCE+), Ukraine
- (g) *Concerns about democratic standards and violations of international obligations by the authorities in Ukraine:* Hungary (PC.DEL/1758/20 OSCE+), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1752/20), Ukraine
- (h) *Joint statement by the heads of delegations of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries:* Russian Federation (also on behalf of France and the United States of America), 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 and San Marino, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1759/20), United Kingdom, United States of America (PC.DEL/1744/20), Canada, Azerbaijan (Annex 4), Armenia (Annex 5)

- (i) *Victory Day in Patriotic War of Azerbaijan on 8 November 2020: Azerbaijan (Annex 6), Turkey (PC.DEL/1776/20 OSCE+)*

Agenda item 5: REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP-IN-OFFICE

- (a) *Twenty-Seventh Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, held in a virtual format in Tirana on 3 and 4 December 2020: Chairperson*
- (b) *Extension of the function of the Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre/Deputy Head of the OSCE Secretariat as Officer-in-Charge/Secretary General of the OSCE: Chairperson*
- (c) *Informal meeting with the Chief Monitor of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, to be held in a virtual format on 14 December 2020: Chairperson*
- (d) *Call for alignments with the statement on the OSCE's efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic delivered at the Twenty-Seventh Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council: Chairperson*
- (e) *Closing ceremony of the Albanian OSCE Chairmanship, to be held on 17 December 2020: Chairperson*

Agenda item 6: REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SECRETARIAT

- (a) *Twenty-Seventh Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council and its side events, held in a virtual format in Tirana on 3 and 4 December 2020: Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/186/20 OSCE+)*
- (b) *Update on the COVID-19 situation across the OSCE's executive structures: Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/186/20 OSCE+)*
- (c) *Women, peace and security expert round table for Central Asia, held in a virtual format on 2 and 3 December 2020: Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/186/20 OSCE+)*
- (d) *Award ceremony of the OSCE-IFSH (Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy) essay competition on conventional arms control and confidence- and security-building measures, held in a virtual format at the meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation on 9 December 2020: Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/186/20 OSCE+)*

Agenda item 7: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *Farewell to the Permanent Representative of Romania to the OSCE, Ambassador C. Istrate: Chairperson, Dean of the Permanent Council (Liechtenstein), Romania*
- (b) *Presidential election in Portugal, to be held on 24 January 2021: Portugal*

4. Next meeting:

Thursday, 17 December 2020, at 10 a.m., via video teleconference

**1295th Plenary Meeting**

PC Journal No. 1295, Agenda item 3

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA**

Mr. Chairperson,

We would like to warmly welcome the distinguished President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Mr. Peter Maurer back to the Permanent Council and thank him for providing updates on the activities of the ICRC.

Armenia highly values the role that the ICRC and the whole movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent plays in conflict and post-conflict situations. It is indeed important that both the Committee and the movement are in the midst of us, setting up important standards and doing important humanitarian work that spills over around the globe. It is the movement that makes an important contribution in translating noble principles of international humanitarian law. However, more efforts should be made to promote compliance with international humanitarian law, especially in conflict-affected areas, and to consolidate the movement as an important institute, humanitarian pillar and grassroots chapter of global civil society.

It is also important to underline that the international humanitarian law is neither a theoretic exercise, nor a set of declarations and statements of goodwill. There are clear-cut and well-defined commitments and obligations that States have voluntarily undertaken, and they must strictly follow and implement those obligations in good faith. Moreover, the Geneva Conventions, their Additional Protocols, the Hague Convention and other relevant documents are an integral part and parcel of international law, and the norms defined therein are peremptory. In this regard, it is worth recalling the recently adopted OSCE Ministerial Council decision on the prevention and eradication of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, which, *inter alia*, calls on participating States to fully co-operate with the ICRC in conformity with their obligations under international humanitarian law.

Mr. Chairperson,

As you are aware, since our discussion last year, the situation in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict area has aggravated immensely. Armenia commends the role the ICRC has been playing in the aftermath of the recent war unleashed by Azerbaijan against the people of Artsakh. For a long time, the ICRC has been the only international presence on the ground, which despite all the setbacks, managed to conduct its operations in an even-handed

and fair manner. It is important that the ICRC was able to navigate the complex configuration of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and deliver on its mandate in a status-neutral manner.

Today, it is praiseworthy that the ICRC has been able to establish good working channels of communication with the occupying forces of Azerbaijan, the Russian peacekeeping forces, the Defence Army and the Emergency Situations Service of Nagorno-Karabakh to carry out this work.

We highly appreciate the good offices of the ICRC and its team on the ground in facilitating the exchange of prisoners of war and repatriation of civilian hostages abducted by Azerbaijan in violation of all norms of international humanitarian law. Very important work is underway to find and repatriate the remains of the fallen combatants, which is further complicated by the difficult geographic terrain, harsh winter weather conditions and the abundance of mines and other explosive ordnance on the ground.

Nevertheless, despite the ICRC's involvement in many activities on the ground, let me highlight some of the priority areas requiring urgent action. The first and most pressing issue is the release and return of prisoners of war and civilian hostages. Almost every day, extremely disturbing videos appear on social networks showing degrading and inhumane treatment of Armenian captives (beheadings, humiliation, etc.) by the Azerbaijani military. Therefore, everyday counts. On this particular issue, I would like to highlight the following:

- Armenia proposed that the ongoing negotiations on the exchange of prisoners of war and civilians be based on the principle “all for all”;
- After the initial exchange of prisoners of war and civilian hostages on the basis of the principle of “all for all”, Armenia proposes to transfer newly discovered or detained persons unilaterally, without delays or any preconditions.

Mr. Chairperson,

The civilian population of Artsakh bore the main burden of the military hostilities. Indiscriminate and systematic attacks on civilian settlements and facilities have resulted in severe destructions, as well as displacement of approximately 60 per cent of Artsakh's population. At the same time, the large number of unexploded ordnances, including cluster munitions, endangers the safety of civilians, especially children, given their objective vulnerability in such circumstances.

Another cause for grave concern, where we believe the ICRC can be of help, is the cases of enforced disappearance of Armenians. After the announcement of a ceasefire, on 11 November, 34 Armenian civilians were captured by the Azerbaijani armed forces on their way from Goris to Stepanakert. We are concerned, and our concerns are well justified, that these people are subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment. The Office of the Human Rights Defender of Artsakh has already submitted the names of those people to the ICRC.

Mr. Chairperson,

Armenia, for its part, continues to act in accordance with its obligations under international humanitarian law, in particular, the norms and provisions enshrined in the Third Geneva Convention – humane treatment of prisoners of war, including but not limited by providing the ICRC representatives with access to detainees. And we will continue to strictly abide by the letter and spirit of the four Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols.

In conclusion, let me wish you, Mr. Maurer, every success in your extremely difficult tasks and assure you that you can count on our support.

Mr. Chairperson, I kindly ask you to attach this statement to the journal of the day.

I thank you.

**1295th Plenary Meeting**

PC Journal No. 1295, Agenda item 4(b)

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF GERMANY (ALSO ON BEHALF OF FRANCE)**

In its statement just now in the Permanent Council, Russia questioned the impartiality of France and Germany within the Normandy format. On behalf of France and Germany, I should therefore like to exercise our right of reply.

Regarding the assertion by our Russian colleague that our two countries refused to take part in the Arria formula meeting on the implementation of the Minsk agreements organized by Russia on 2 December in New York, I should like to point out the following.

Russia took the initiative to convene this meeting without prior consultation with the members of the Normandy format. France and Germany have made repeated suggestions to Russia that would have allowed the meeting to take place in a balanced format. Russia did not respond to any of these suggestions and rejected them all. As a result, France and Germany ultimately had no choice but to stay away from the meeting.

France and Germany remain highly committed to a solution to the conflict in eastern Ukraine within the Normandy format.

The Minsk agreements are still the only framework for resolving this conflict. All of these agreements were signed on behalf of the Russian Federation by its official representative. Russia therefore clearly and bindingly assumed responsibility for the peaceful settlement of the conflict and the implementation of the provisions of these agreements.

France and Germany urge the Russian representatives, instead of attempting to question the impartiality of France and Germany, to participate constructively in the negotiations in the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group and call on Russia to exert its influence locally on the de facto representatives of the territories not controlled by the Ukrainian Government.

France and Germany welcome the progress achieved on the ground since the end of July and the clear reduction in ceasefire violations. We urge the parties to continue in this manner to make progress towards the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements with

a view to achieving a fair and lasting peace and the restoration of full Ukrainian sovereignty over Donbas.

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

**1295th Plenary Meeting**

PC Journal No. 1295, Agenda item 4(c)

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA**

Mr. Chairperson,

A month ago, the Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan, President of Russia Vladimir Putin and President of Azerbaijan agreed to cease the hostilities and stop the bloodshed in Artsakh.

Azerbaijan and its allies – Turkey and foreign terrorist fighters and jihadists – unleashed the war against Artsakh and its people in pursuit of policy of ethnic cleansing and annihilation of Armenian people. War crimes and crimes against humanity, destruction of cultural and religious heritage, inhumane and degrading treatment of prisoners of war and civilian captives, enforced disappearance of Armenians – these are the means and policies employed by Azerbaijani authorities to wipe out the Armenian population of Artsakh and to erase all traces of their existence in their ancestral homeland.

In the aftermath of the war against Artsakh, we are still no closer to the settlement of the conflict. Moreover, the cruelty, inhumane and degrading treatment of captured Armenians, both military and civilian alike, exceeded all the worst expectations. The pages of Azerbaijani users of social media are full of images and video footage showing cruel and degrading treatment of Armenians, such as humiliation, arbitrary and summary executions, ISIS-style beheadings and mutilation of dead bodies, etc.

The preliminary examination of a number of bodies revealed cases of murder of wounded persons and mutilation of dead bodies. Moreover, according to the testimony of the Human Rights Defender of Artsakh, as a result of a search operation conducted from 13 to 21 November, the bodies of three civilians were found in Shushi, who were brutally killed by Azerbaijani soldiers.

The cruel treatment and execution of two Armenians in the town of Hadрут captured by the Azerbaijani military has already been assessed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights as an act amounting to war crime.

The Human Rights Defender of Artsakh issued five reports on cases of torture and inhumane treatment of servicemen of the Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) Defence Army and captured Armenian civilians by Azerbaijani soldiers covering the period from 27 September 2020. The latest of these reports was published just a few days ago. Those

reports are not disseminated through open channels, as they contain instances of extreme cruelty and violent graphic content. We stand ready to share those reports with all of our colleagues, warning them to exercise due caution while examining their content.

For many years, Azerbaijan has been shielding itself from any investigation of the crimes it has committed under the pretext of its claims to sovereignty. They also took advantage of the fact that international presence on the ground was absent due to COVID-19 pandemic. We have urged the Co-Chairs and the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office to visit the region and take active steps within their respective mandates to address the pertinent issues on the ground.

Mr. Chairperson,

A month after the end of hostilities, the issue of the exchange of prisoners of war and civilian hostages is among the priority tasks of the Armenian Government. We are actively engaged with relevant international structures and expect a similar commitment from Azerbaijani side.

It should be recalled that the first paragraph of Article 118 of the 1949 Geneva Convention III provides that “Prisoners of war shall be released and repatriated without delay after the cessation of active hostilities”.

However, a month after the statement on ceasefire, we are still discussing technical details, modalities, etc., which is utterly unacceptable taking into account the enormous suffering of prisoners of war and civilian hostages who are subjected to inhumane and degrading treatment.

One should realize that failure to address this issue in full, in a satisfactory and comprehensive manner, will ultimately negatively affect any prospects for implementing steps to address the consequences of aggression.

Moreover, the perpetrators and masterminds of the crimes committed against Armenian prisoners of war and civilian hostages must be brought to justice and punished. Impunity for such heinous crimes as executions of prisoners of war and civilians, beheadings, mutilation, humiliating treatment of elderly people will further encourage those with poisonous mindsets to continue their crimes.

We believe that given the number of videos and the number of soldiers implicated in these atrocities, there was some kind of tacit approval or condonement both by the commanders and the Azerbaijani authorities in general.

As of today, we have not heard any public statement of condemnation of the crimes committed by Azerbaijani soldiers against prisoners of war and civilian hostages, who should have been protected in line with the norms of international humanitarian law. On the contrary, the silence of the Azerbaijani authorities in the face of such atrocities can only be perceived as connivance and encouragement of impunity for such crimes.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Azerbaijani aggression instigated and actively supported by Turkey, which 105 years ago committed the Armenian Genocide, revived the legitimate existential concerns of the Armenian people, proving that our perceptions of the immediate threat from Turkey are fully justified and substantiated.

Mr. Chairperson,

We have learned that yesterday Azerbaijan, with the participation of the President and other high-ranking officials from Turkey, organized a military parade to glorify the aggression of Azerbaijan, Turkey and foreign terrorist fighters and jihadists against Artsakh.

In fact, it was a parade glorifying the victory of terrorism over civilization and the shared values of humanity and international order, the victory of the use of force over the concept of peaceful settlement of disputes.

However, leaving aside the moral considerations of this show, I would like to draw the attention of the participating States, and in particular the Co-Chair countries of the Minsk Group to the statements made by the presidents of Azerbaijan and Turkey, which in fact revealed the true face and intentions of these two countries with respect to Artsakh and Armenia.

What was the message? Turkish President praised the words and deeds, and recalled the spirit of Enver Pasha, who was the War Minister of Ottoman Empire and one of the masterminds of the Armenian Genocide of 1915. Moreover, he was the one who led Turkish devised Islamic Army of Caucasus invasion into Caucasus and responsible for the massacres and atrocities committed against Armenians in Baku and Artsakh in 1918.

Whereas, the President of Azerbaijan openly and unequivocally laid territorial claims on the territory of Armenia, particularly the Southern Syunik province, the Lake Sevan and the capital city of Yerevan. What is this, if not the preparation of grounds for another aggression? What kind of message is this? And what should be the reaction of this Organization and indeed of the international community? We expect that the Minsk Group Co-Chairs will react swiftly and without undue and artificial balancing formulations and will clearly condemn these covetous intentions of these two States with regards Armenia and Artsakh.

And it is only symbolic that two days ago, on 9 December, the world was commemorating the victims of the crime of genocide and of the prevention of this crime. Back in 2015, Armenia guided the international efforts to designate 9 December as the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime.

Genocide and other mass atrocities are usually pre-planned, and are carried out by targeting the civilian population, destroying cultural and religious heritage, and spreading extreme hatred. All these actions were carried out against the people of Artsakh during the aggression unleashed since 27 September 2020, which was planned and implemented by

Azerbaijan with the full political and military support of Turkey and the involvement of foreign mercenaries and terrorist fighters. Thus, with new victims of genocidal actions, the Armenian people were once again exposed to existential threat.

The deliberate attacks on cultural and religious sites and monuments of Artsakh, their desecration or attempts to change the denomination of churches and monasteries are an outrageous manifestation of intolerance and clear violation of norms of international law and our values and should be strongly condemned.

Azerbaijani actions were not only a violation of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its Protocols, but also could be considered as cultural genocide within the framework of the policy of erasure of Armenian presence in their ancestral lands, which Azerbaijani Government has been implementing over the past 30 years by systematically destroying the Armenian historical heritage.

To prevent a new cultural genocide by Azerbaijan there is a need for a quick response on part of the international community in order to hold the perpetrators accountable, as well as to prevent such actions.

Mr. Chairperson,

The humanitarian crisis that ensued following the aggression against Artsakh needs to be addressed urgently and comprehensively. In this context I shall highlight the importance of providing conditions for the return to Artsakh of the recently displaced population and protecting their rights.

Tens of thousands of children, women, elderly, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups are deprived of basic rights and conditions, such as food, healthcare, education, and many others. As winter approaches, the situation gets more complicated. One of our current priorities is to conduct an urgent needs assessment. And we would like to express our gratitude also on behalf of the people of Artsakh to all those countries which provided humanitarian assistance or pledged to do so.

Mr. Chairperson,

There can be no durable peace without justice. Any attempt to establish a peace without investigation of all the violations of the international humanitarian law and international human rights law shall fail as it would not be accepted as a fair and even-handed settlement by the affected population.

Moreover, impunity granted to the perpetrators of the horrendous war crimes shall have an adverse impact on any attempt to establish durable peace, thus paving the way for their recurrence.

The peace and security of the region could be achieved only through political and negotiated settlement of the conflict within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship, which would tackle the core substantive issues of the conflict, above all

the issue of the status of Artsakh based on the realization of the right to self-determination of its people.

Mr. Chairperson, I kindly ask to attach this statement to the journal of the day.

I thank you.

**1295th Plenary Meeting**

PC Journal No. 1295, Agenda item 4(h)

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF AZERBAIJAN**

Mr. Chairperson,

The delegation of Azerbaijan took note of the statement by the delegation of the Russian Federation who read the Russian translation of the joint statement by the heads of delegations of the Minsk Group Co-Chair countries as well as statements by the European Union and aligned countries, the United Kingdom, the United States of America in national capacity and Canada, and find it biased, irrelevant and unacceptable for the Azerbaijan-owned process of post-conflict rehabilitation, reconstruction and reintegration of our territories. We disagree with the emphasis made in the co-chairing countries statement and consider that the rationale and timing behind it serves the interest of those who still believe in a solution alternative to the implementation of the 10 November trilateral statement agreed by the leaders of Azerbaijan, Armenia and the Russian Federation.

Azerbaijan and Armenia as the parties to the 10 November agreement are bound by the obligations contained therein. The only possible role for the OSCE and its participating States and structures is to extend the support to the implementation of the trilateral agreement. At this stage Azerbaijan does not consider it appropriate to discuss in the OSCE anything beyond the framework of issues and steps identified in the trilateral agreement.

Azerbaijan was neither the initiator of the decades-long military confrontation, nor the party that brought the peace negotiations to a failure. Over the past 30 years Azerbaijan repeatedly appealed to the OSCE Minsk Group and its Co-Chairs to implement the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council that they themselves as permanent members adopted in response to the occupation of our territories by Armenia. But, our calls fell on deaf ears. Armenia enjoyed the impunity over its illegal actions due to a lack of pressure on her, despite the fact that the mediators defined the situation of no war and no peace, status quo and occupation as unsustainable. Azerbaijan won the war, changed the status quo, ended the occupation of its territories through military-political means and established the basis for building peace in the region. Most importantly, we dealt a heavy blow to the ideological basis that underpinned for decades territorial claims of Armenia and its protagonists.

Therefore, support to the return of the refugees and internally displaced population to their homes in safety and dignity and restoration of normal and peaceful life of both Azerbaijani and Armenian communities on an equal and non-discriminative basis within

internationally recognized territories of sovereign Azerbaijan can serve as a best motivation for normalization of inter-State relations with Armenia. We are open for such an engagement since we believe that after signing of the trilateral agreement and ending the war, Azerbaijan and Armenia can close the page of military confrontation and enmity between our countries.

The new realities established by Azerbaijan are offering a unique opportunity to consolidate peace in the region and set it on the course of mutually beneficial comprehensive multilateral co-operation that can eradicate the risks of new wars in the region. Yesterday President Ilham Aliyev in the presence of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced the idea of setting up a regional multilateral co-operation platform where all countries of the region can benefit from it. The Co-operation Platform will be based on the experience of decades-long strategic co-operation of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey, effectively functioning trilateral formats of co-operation like Azerbaijan, Russia and Iran as well as Russia, Turkey and Iran. If the Armenian leadership will draw the right conclusions from the war with Azerbaijan, abandon its groundless claims and accusations and work towards strengthening peace and security in the region, they can also join this multilateral co-operation and benefit from it.

The question is where the OSCE and its participating States are standing vis-à-vis this co-operation format emerging in the region? How helpful is their repeated denial of reality on the ground and regional efforts to consolidate peace and security in this part of the OSCE? How long those who spoke before me on this agenda item are going to refer to the trilateral statement of 10 November as mere ceasefire, when the trilateral agreement according to its authors is stemming from and addressing the same set of measures that the OSCE Minsk Group and its Co-Chairs could not have negotiated for decades. I believe that answers to these questions, first of all, should be given by the delegations of France, the United States of America and those concerned European Union Member States, who feel somewhat alienated from the region and attempt to prove that whatever have not been agreed in the trilateral agreement of 10 November can be imposed on the OSCE or realized through their parliaments, local structures or corrupt politicians.

Secondly, I find it odd that the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the OSCE, instead of promoting the implementation of the trilateral statement signed by President V. Putin, attempts to reanimate old and obsolete concepts and puts forward unfounded allegations. The Russian President himself unambiguously cautioned the external actors to refrain from impeding the peace-building efforts by the countries of the region and stressed that failure to implement the trilateral agreement by Armenia would be a suicide for this country.

We believe that the OSCE will greatly benefit, if the Russian Federation informs the Permanent Council on the dynamics in the region and seeks support by the OSCE and its participating States to its peacekeeping role in Azerbaijan. Such an approach by the delegation of the Russian Federation in Vienna will advance the peace efforts and prevent further alienation from the region of the OSCE Minsk Group, its Co-Chairs and those OSCE participating States instinctively supporting three Co-Chairs. Alienation might meet the interests of some forces, but certainly not in the interests of Azerbaijan and countries of the region in the long-term perspective.

Our delegation sees no point in responding to allegations of the Armenian representative, which apparently lost sense of reality. The Armenian delegation continues to defy the common sense and refuses to draw lessons from the recent past, which proved at a very high price for this country that its policy driven by ethnic and religious-based hatred and racial discrimination and craving for medieval-era territorial conquest can lead to nothing but to more conflict and instability, causing more sufferings and misery for the Armenian people. I suggest the Armenian delegation to abandon its obsolete and falsified conflict narrative, to honour their Prime Minister's signature under the 10 November trilateral agreement and to accept and reconcile with new realities on the ground, which is imperative for sustainable ceasefire and peace.

Finally, in general, Azerbaijan finds the practice of issuing statements on behalf of the co-chairing countries and then publishing it as their position on the website of the OSCE as abusive interpretation of their mandates and detrimental to their credibility. Nothing in the OSCE agreed decisions authorizes or empowers these three countries to impose their joint national positions on the parties to the conflict. The mandate of the co-chairing country of the OSCE Minsk Group as well as international law obliges France, Russia and the United States of America to strictly adhere to principles of neutrality, impartiality, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity envisaged in relevant international documents regulating international mediation activities.

Azerbaijan calls on the co-chairing countries to honour their international obligations and pursue their respective activities in accordance with the OSCE principles and commitments, which will ensure collective support from all participating States during consideration of their request for budgetary allocations in the Unified Budget for 2021.

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

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

**1295th Plenary Meeting**

PC Journal No. 1295, Agenda item 4(h)

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA**

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank the delegation of the Russian Federation for once again drawing the attention of the Permanent Council to the joint statement by the heads of delegations of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries issued on 3 December 2020. We also thank the delegations of the European Union, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada for their statements.

The OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs continue to be the only internationally agreed format, which over the years has accumulated the necessary knowledge of the history and root causes of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and honestly, in an impartial and neutral manner, has been carrying out mediation efforts to achieve a peaceful and negotiated settlement of the conflict. We reiterate that all issues related to the peace process should be discussed within the format of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs and in close co-operation and co-ordination among them.

In this regard, we took a positive note of the joint statement of 3 December, which once again shows the unity and determination of the Co-Chair countries in pursuing a negotiated, comprehensive and sustainable settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, in line with the basic principles of non-use of force or threat of force, territorial integrity and the equal rights and self-determination of peoples.

We note in particular the importance of the Co-Chairs' call for the full and prompt withdrawal from the region of all foreign mercenaries, compliance by the sides with their obligations under international humanitarian law, in particular with regard to the exchange of prisoners of war, civilian hostages, repatriation of remains, as well as protection and preservation of historical and religious heritage.

We agree with the view that the 9 November statement reached with the mediation of the Russian Federation can become the first step towards a comprehensive and sustainable settlement of the conflict. However, there can be no such settlement without addressing the core substantive issues of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, including the status of Artsakh. Attempts to present the results of the use of force, aggression, occupation and disregard for the right of the people of Artsakh to self-determination as a final solution to the conflict will not succeed. Neither will they lead to long-term peace and stability in the region.

The trilateral statement, and I underline statement, of 9 November should be viewed without prejudice to the final political settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Only a negotiated, comprehensive and sustainable settlement, which respects the rights of all, may bring peace and reconciliation to the South Caucasus region.

Mr. Chairperson,

I am not going to comment on the false and distorted narrative of the essence of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict that we have just heard from the Ambassador of Azerbaijan. I believe that especially after yesterday's statement of the President of Azerbaijan, the delegation of that country should think twice before blaming anyone for having claims of territorial nature.

The statement of the Ambassador of Azerbaijan clearly demonstrates who is gradually losing the sense of reality.

Thank you.

**1295th Plenary Meeting**

PC Journal No. 1295, Agenda item 4(i)

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF AZERBAIJAN**

Mr. Chairperson,

Yesterday the people of Azerbaijan celebrated the end of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict and marked the victory in the Patriotic War with a military parade on the Freedom Square in Baku. The Presidents of Azerbaijan and Turkey Ilham Aliyev and Recep Tayyip Erdogan attended the ceremony. More than 3,000 military personnel and around 150 pieces of military equipment, including the state-of-the-art military equipment, missiles, artillery systems and air defence systems paraded through the streets of Baku in celebration of Azerbaijan's victory. Some war trophies, including destroyed military hardware seized from the armed forces of Armenia during the war were displayed at the event. We would like to present to the Permanent Council some of the images from the celebration in Azerbaijan of long-awaited peace.

The Azerbaijani nation has put an end to almost 30 years of injustice, illegal occupation of its territories, ethnic cleansing and forceful expulsion of its population. As a result of the "Iron Fist" counter-offensive operation launched by the armed forces of Azerbaijan, which lasted for 44 days, Azerbaijan liberated a significant part of its occupied territories, and on 8 November by liberating the city of Shusha forced the Armenia's armed forces to capitulate and voluntarily withdraw from the remaining occupied districts of Aghdam, Kalbajar and Lachyn.

On this solemn day we pay tribute to 2,783 servicemen and 100 civilian martyrs of Azerbaijan who sacrificed their lives for the restoration of territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country. Their heroic deeds, bravery and selflessness will be eternally cherished in the hearts and minds of the generations of the Azerbaijanis. We wish a speedy recovery to all wounded and affected by the conflict and express our readiness to continue extending our enduring support to them.

Azerbaijan would like to convey its deep gratitude to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his entire delegation for joining the celebration of victory. The Turkish servicemen, which marched alongside the Azerbaijani armed forces through the Freedom Square in the victory parade, have shown a vivid example of the famous "One Nation, Two States" slogan shared by the founding fathers of Azerbaijan and Turkey. Moral and political support extended by Turkey from the very first moments of the Patriotic War will always remain a source of pride for every Azerbaijani citizen. We will never forget the

support and solidarity of our friends and partners around the world who firmly stood with Azerbaijan in the decisive moments for our nation.

Azerbaijan highly appreciates the efforts of the Russian President V. Putin who negotiated the trilateral statement of 10 November between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The personal engagement of the President of Russia to put an end to this conflict and his signature under the trilateral agreement represents his extremely important contribution to peace in our region and the guarantee of the irreversibility of this process.

I wish to remind the Council that the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict started in the end of 80th with the violent expulsion of more than 200,000 Azerbaijanis from their historic lands in Zangezur, Goyca, Irevan and other parts of the present-day Armenia. This had followed by the genocide of Azerbaijanis in the city of Khojaly and military occupation of the ancient Azerbaijani city of Shusha in Karabakh on 8 May 1992. By May 1994, Armenia had expanded its occupation deeper inside the Nagorno-Karabakh region and other seven adjacent districts of Azerbaijan. Close to one million of Azerbaijanis became internally displaced or refugees.

The United Nations Security Council in its four resolutions condemned the use of force and occupation of the Azerbaijani territories, reaffirmed that the Nagorno-Karabakh region and other recently occupied territories remain an inseparable part of Azerbaijan and demanded the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from all the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Other international organizations, including the OSCE and its participating States, had reaffirmed their support to the United Nations Security Council resolutions and unequivocally condemned the occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan.

Regretfully, the mediation efforts by the OSCE Minsk Group and its Co-Chairs over the last three decades yielded no substantive results and Armenia continued to consolidate the occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan and enjoyed impunity from the illegal actions it carried out therein such as resettlement of its own population and from abroad, illicit trafficking of natural resources, changing and misappropriating cultural and religious heritage of Azerbaijan, transferring a significant amount of heavy weapons and arms to those territories and building up fortifications and military installations. Did the Minsk Group Co-Chairs see it? Of course they did. How many times they travelled to the region and assessed the situation? Why they did not address effectively the challenges to the peace process? Why they did not inform the Minsk Group and OSCE that Armenia is preparing for a new war for new territories, but not for the implementation of the OSCE Budapest Summit decision and United Nations Security Council resolutions to immediately withdraw from the territories of Azerbaijan? I hope that history will provide the correct answer to these questions, but for now I leave it at their conscience.

In such a situation when international law is ignored, resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and OSCE decisions are not implemented, selective application of OSCE principles and double standards is undeniable reality in the Organization, when the Armenian Prime Minister openly challenged the peace process and mediators tried to share the blame between the aggressor and the aggrieved, when Co-Chairs clearly attempted to

impose an unjust and unfair solution scenario on the party to the conflict, military-political approach in the conflict settlement becomes unavoidable.

Azerbaijan successfully exercised its inalienable right to self-defence on its internationally recognized territory. Despite provocative indiscriminate shelling by tactical ballistic missiles by Armenia of densely populated residential areas in Ganja, Barda, Tartar and other cities, Azerbaijan continued to react to such provocations on the battlefield by neutralizing legitimate military targets of Armenia. Beside the fact that law and justice was on our side, one of the key reasons of success of Azerbaijan was due to the consistent policy of the leadership to strengthen our independence, build a strong economy and train and equip the professional army. Over the last 26 years Azerbaijan based on the will of its nation and own resources, with support of its partners, has realized all of its ideas and projects in energy, economy, trade and transportation, humanitarian, cultural and religious spheres, established trustful and mutually beneficial high-level dialogue and built up a broad network of reliable and strong partnership relations with all of its neighbours and beyond, except Armenia.

In the meantime, same 26 years consecutive Armenian Governments misled its people, diaspora and its corrupt politicians and parliamentarians about delusional independence of illegal separatist regime, development of strong and professional and fully equipped Armenian army, benefits of maintaining the occupation of Azerbaijani territories under occupation and increasing reliance on the conflict. Based on its strength, resolve and the national unity the Azerbaijani armed forces led by the Commander-in-Chief President Ilham Aliyev blew up those delusions within 44 days, played its historic mission and restored the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan.

Now the region faces a new post-conflict reality formed by the 10 November trilateral agreement. The future of the Armenian nation and the unfortunate situation from which it can break free is closely linked to the normalization of relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey as well as the unconditional implementation of the agreement.

The OSCE participating States must understand that in new realities on the ground Azerbaijan will not engage within the OSCE in any activity going beyond the framework of the trilateral agreement. In the meantime, attempts to reanimate old proposals and ideas, which do not enjoy consensus, will generate false expectations in Armenia and promote revisionist policies and may trigger unpredictable devastating consequences for the future of this country and its statehood. Therefore, we once again call, first of all, on the OSCE Minsk Group and its co-chairing countries to focus their attention and efforts on the support to implementation of the trilateral agreement.

I wish to conclude by the slogan of the President Ilham Aliyev voiced throughout the Patriotic War and in yesterday's parade: Karabakh is ours, Karabakh is Azerbaijan!

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

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.