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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

**Statement**  
**in response to the address of**  
**H.E. Ms. Margareta Cederfelt, President of the OSCE PA,**  
**as delivered by the Delegation of Armenia**  
**at the 1335<sup>th</sup> meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council**

*16 September 2021*

Madame Chairperson,

The Delegation of Armenia warmly welcomes Ms. Margareta Cederfelt in her first appearance at the Permanent Council as President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and wishes her every success during her term in office. We also thank Ms. Cederfelt for sharing her views on some of the pertinent issues and challenges that we face, and which, we believe, require an honest reflection and joint efforts.

Armenia values its co-operation with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and is convinced that as a forum for dialogue among the elected representatives of the OSCE participating States, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has a specific mission to raise and honestly and openly discuss all cases of violation of the fundamental principles of this Organisation, thereby contributing to the strengthening of comprehensive security and co-operation in the OSCE region.

Madame President,

We fully share your assessment on the role and importance of civil society in building resilient democratic societies. Their constructive and honest criticism should be taken as an asset and advantage, rather than an impediment. However, today we are often faced with situations where any dissenting opinion is severely punished, unlawfully persecuted, sometimes even brutal force, abduction and violence is used against representatives of civil society, which threatens their life and health. And the OSCE PA has an important role to play in addressing such issues evenly, with equal interest and without compromising on the principles of democracy and human rights for the sake of political, economic or any other interest.

Last year`s war of aggression against Artsakh and its people has revealed many deficiencies within the Organisation. Failure to address serious violations of the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, especially those pertaining to the non-use of force,

undermined the credibility of the OSCE as a security organisation. The situation resulting from the use of force and aggression cannot be tolerated, and we very much hope that the Parliamentary Assembly will resist attempts to make the use of force a tool for resolving conflicts and disputes.

Indeed, much remains to be done to ensure a lasting political settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict based on the well-known principles developed by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs, and we expect the OSCE PA to fully support their efforts. Among other things, the issue of the Armenian prisoners of war remains unresolved despite the clear obligations under international humanitarian law and the trilateral ceasefire statement signed by the leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation. Instead, we see mock trials of Armenian prisoners of war, continued hate speech and war-mongering rhetoric by senior Azerbaijani officials, intimidation of residents of Armenian border settlements, and much more.

Madame President,

We believe that the OSCE PA can offer its platform for dialogue on highly sensitive and complex issues, and can apply the tools of parliamentary diplomacy, while ensuring that discussions with the parties to the conflict are inclusive and involve elected representatives of all peoples, regardless of the status of the territory to which they belong.

Finally, let me also thank the OSCE PA and you personally, Madame President, for your active participation in the observation mission of the last parliamentary elections in Armenia.

I also take this opportunity to join you in thanking Ambassador Nothelle for the good co-operation during these years, and in connection with his forthcoming retirement, wish him all the best and every success.

Madame Chairperson,

In closing, let me reaffirm Armenia's unwavering commitment to dialogue and co-operation within the OSCE's parliamentary dimension and wish you, Madame President, every success during your tenure.

I thank you.