

Delegation of France

**STATEMENT BY
AMBASSADOR VÉRONIQUE ROGER-LACAN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE TO THE OSCE,
AT THE 1094th (SPECIAL) MEETING OF THE OSCE
PERMANENT COUNCIL**

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On the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh

France agrees with the statement made by the European Union but would like to add a few points in its national capacity. France welcomes the arrival in Vienna of the representatives of the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group as well as the arrival of the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference. We thank them for the valuable information which they have shared with the Permanent Council today.

France, as a member and Co-Chair country of the Minsk Group, is alarmed by the renewed violence in the Nagorno-Karabakh region since Saturday, 2 April 2016. These utterly despicable acts of violence are detrimental to efforts for the peaceful and negotiated settlement of the conflict which has afflicted this area for far too long. This scale of violence is unacceptable and the ceasefire must be implemented and observed immediately by all parties. We understand that an agreement has been found to that end and we call for it to be respected. The parties must avoid any action on the ground or rhetoric which could cause an escalation of violence. We deplore the loss of human life, including civilian lives. We renew our appeal for the establishment of a mechanism for investigating violations of the ceasefire along the line of contact, which would be a crucial confidence-building measure and is more indispensable now than ever.

As a member of the Minsk Group, we support its mediation efforts towards a peaceful and negotiated resolution of the conflict. We recall that this negotiating forum is the only one to have been accepted by the parties and that the efforts already made have laid the basic foundations for a lasting settlement.

We therefore expect the parties to refrain from any violent action and to rigorously observe the ceasefire regime. It is crucial to return to high-level negotiations within the mediation framework granted to the Co-Chairmanship of the Minsk Group. A solution to this deadly conflict must be found swiftly, in compliance with the norms of international law and the international commitments which the parties have already undertaken.

France and the two other Co-Chair countries have spared no effort to ensure that stability returns to the area as quickly as possible and will continue to do so. Evidence of this is the regular dialogue of the French Minister for Foreign Affairs Jean-Marc Ayrault with his Armenian and Azerbaijani counterparts, in particular since the end of last week, and his meeting today at La Celle-Saint-Cloud with German Minister for Foreign Affairs Frank-Walter Steinmeier, as well as the visits to the area made by the French Ambassador and Co-Chairman of the Minsk Group, Pierre Andrieu. We feel the same way about the security of neighbouring countries, Europe, and the entire OSCE area. We are committed to any measures which could improve the life of the affected populations, and especially the action in the field by the International Committee of the Red Cross, whose work to provide an essential humanitarian presence should be encouraged, supported and strengthened.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson, and request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.