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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

**Statement
in response to the address
of Margareta Cederfelt, President of the OSCE PA
as delivered by Ambassador Armen Papikyan
at the 1396th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council**

27 October 2022

Mr. Chairman,

The Delegation of Armenia warmly welcomes Ms. Margareta Cederfelt, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, back to the Permanent Council and thanks for her address. I echo colleagues and congratulate you on your re-election and wish you every success in your future undertakings.

Madame President,

Against the backdrop of an ongoing security crisis across the OSCE region and beyond, where the opportunities for traditional diplomacy are shrinking/extremely limited, the role and place of parliamentary diplomacy are of paramount importance. Democratically elected representatives must deliver on the will and expectations of their electorate, promote peace and diffuse tensions. Lively and heated political debates among parliamentarians at the OSCE PA can contribute to this, provided that they really represent the interests of their constituents, and are not just an extension of dictatorial and authoritarian regimes with all the ensuing consequences and ramifications. For such regimes, belligerence and war remain the main, and often the only, means to justify internal oppression and maintain their grip on power. Such regimes also deprive their people of access to national wealth for the sake of their own enrichment. Using these illegal proceeds, they are also actively engaged in corrupting foreign counterparts as well as international officials with the aim of whitewashing the tarnished image of their political masters.

Madame President,

I think you will agree that representatives of such regimes should not have a place in institutions championing the values of democracy and human rights, let alone hold high positions. This requires the OSCE PA to carefully review its respective procedures and take this serious challenge into account when entrusting high positions to certain parliamentarians.

President Cederfelt,

We were deeply disappointed by the deafening silence of the OSCE PA during the recent aggression of Azerbaijan against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Armenia, when more than 36/three dozen peaceful cities, villages and other settlements were subjected to intense shelling, innocent civilians were killed and wounded. The principles of the OSCE must not be interpreted selectively, wherever and whenever they are violated. Otherwise, one might get the impression that the notorious practice of silencing independent and critical voices has successfully infiltrated the Organisation. This clearly suggests that the OSCE PA needs to make more efforts in this regard.

We expect the OSCE PA to speak clearly and loudly against each and every violation of the Helsinki Final Act, first of all the use and threat of force, and to address all flagrant violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, as this is the only way to achieve trust and credibility.

Distinguished President,

We fully agree with you that we need a strong OSCE involvement in the South Caucasus to ensure lasting peace and stability. However, the OSCE's presence in the region has been consistently dismantled by one participating State, which feels a certain unease about any type of international presence there. In this regard, we hope that the OSCE PA and its leadership will support the OSCE needs assessment mission to Armenia following the open aggression of Azerbaijan against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Armenia in September this year. The successful implementation by this mission of the OSCE mandated activities will give reason to hope for the future prospects of the OSCE.

We also continue to remind you of the fate of the Armenian prisoners of war illegally detained in Azerbaijan, as well as the plight of the people of Artsakh, who continue to be deprived of any international support and assistance. Parliamentarians must find opportunities to protect their infringed rights and freedoms.

Last but not least, my delegation fully concurs with your assessment that the network of young parliamentarians provides a space where the voices of future leaders can be heard, and where we can promote the role of youth in peace and security. With this in mind, Armenia will host the next meeting of the informal network of young

parliamentarians, which will be held in Yerevan, on 12-14 November 2022, and we hope to see you, Madame President, among the participants of this meeting.

Mr. Chair,

In closing, let me once again reiterate Armenia's continued commitment to dialogue and co-operation within the OSCE's parliamentary dimension and wish you, Madame President, every success in your future endeavours.

Thank you.