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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 Address of Thorbjorn Jagland, Secretary General of the
Council of Europe
delivered by Ambassador Arman Kirakossian at the 1004th Meeting of the
OSCE Permanent Council

June 09, 2016

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to warmly welcome Mr. Thorbjorn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe and express our gratitude for his comprehensive address on key issues of common agenda of the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

We commend consistent and regular high level exchange at the level of leadership of our Organizations. Two weeks back we had the pleasure to host Minister Marina Kaljurand, Chair of the Committee of Ministers. Such visits and exchange of views are important to coordinate collective efforts of participating and member states of the OSCE and the CoE to maintain peace, security and stability in our wide region through active promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, rule of law and democracy.

Mr. Secretary General,

The cooperation between OSCE and the Council of Europe has enhanced in the field of protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, freedom of media, combating trafficking in human beings, fight against terrorism and promotion of tolerance.

We are pleased to note also firm position of the Council of Europe under your able leadership, when it comes to protection of human rights defenders, journalists and civil society members. Europe without political prisoners continues to be a strong objective of the Council of Europe and we appreciate your contribution in this regard..

We highly value the activities of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance in combating intolerance and hate crimes. The reports of the ECRI reflect the growing problems in the sphere of extremism, racism, hate speech and hate crimes targeting ethnic and religious minorities and also provide clear

recommendations in this regard. Combating xenophobia and hate crimes, in particular at the level of public figures is a long standing priority of Armenia both in the Council of Europe and the OSCE. We have encouraged the OSCE institutions to make best use of the rich experience of the Council of Europe in the area of tolerance and non-discrimination.

Mr. Secretary General,

Resolution of long standing issues, including conflicts and crises requires unequivocal and full respect for individual and collective human rights and fundamental freedoms. Safeguard of human rights, guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights should be of inclusive nature, covering all the area of responsibility of the Organization without any zones of exclusion. In this context we fully support unrestricted and full access of the Council of Europe including its monitoring bodies and mechanisms to the conflict areas, including Nagorno-Karabakh with the view to protect and promote human rights of the population living therein.

Therefore, our Organizations need to mutually supplement and reinforce each other's activities to raise efficiency of their response to common challenges.

At the end, I would like to stress that Armenia, as an active member of the Council of Europe, will continue to contribute to the objectives, values and principles of the Organization.

Thank You.

Reply to the Delegation of Azerbaijan

The statement of distinguished Azerbaijani Ambassador prompted me to share some additional remarks.

As for the interpretations of Azerbaijan as if the ECHR judgment on the Chiragov vs. Armenia case allegedly refers to the occupation of the Azerbaijani territories by Armenia, it should be stressed that the Judgment of the Court does not contain any such assertion.

We regret that Azerbaijan falsifies and exploits the decision of the court for covering up its policy of gross violation of the rights of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, including the right to life.

We took note that the Azerbaijani delegation failed to mention another judgement of the court adopted on the same day, on the case of Mr. Sargsyan vs.

Azerbaijan. The judgement recognizes the rights of Mr. Sargsyan who was forcefully displaced by Azerbaijan from the Gulistan village of the Shahumyan region.

The ECHR confirms that Azerbaijan exercised violence and expelled the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh. In the paragraph 216 of the Case the Court observes again that the applicant is one of the hundreds of thousands of Armenians who fled during the conflict leaving property and home behind. Getting familiar with the materials of the Case it becomes clear why Azerbaijan stays silent about this Judgment.

Finally, we fully agree with distinguished Mr. Jagland, that resolution of conflicts is impossible without protection of human rights, in particular the human rights of people living in conflict zones. The Council of Europe with its monitoring mechanisms has an important role to play in this regard. The April large-scale military offensive of Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh, which proved yet again that Azerbaijan conducts policy of «final solution» to the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, demonstrated the urgent need to ensure proper presence of international human rights organizations, including the Council of Europe in the NK conflict zone.

Thank You.