



Chairmanship: Germany

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
(1126th Plenary Meeting)**

1. Date: Saturday, 31 December 2016

Opened: 2.10 p.m.

Closed: 2.30 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador E. Pohl

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

Agenda item 1: STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE
PERMANENT COUNCIL

Chairperson (Annex 1), Austria, Azerbaijan (Annex 2), Armenia (Annex 3),
Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre

Agenda item 2: REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

None

Agenda item 3: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

4. Next meeting:

To be announced



1126th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1126, Agenda item 1

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRPERSON

I understand that it was not possible to reach consensus in the Preparatory Committee today on the extension of the mandates of the OSCE Office in Yerevan, the Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan, the Office in Tajikistan, the Centre in Bishkek, the OSCE Observer Mission at two Russian checkpoints, nor on the revision of the 2016 Unified Budget. In all these decisions, we are however close to consensus.

The obstacle to reaching consensus on all these decisions today was an activity envisaged by the Office in Yerevan. In the course of our discussions, one delegation raised concerns that a planned activity of the OSCE Office in Yerevan, in the field of humanitarian demining, was not in line with the Mission's mandate. Let me inform you that, following the UB negotiations 2016, the German Chairmanship sent Special Representative Bächler to Yerevan to assess the character of the Mission's activities. Based on his findings, we came to the conclusion that the activity in question does not fall outside the Mission's mandate. However, we took note that concerns persist, and we believe that it is possible to meet these concerns.

Together with the incoming Austrian Chairmanship, we have been working to this end. It is highly regrettable that it has not been possible yet to agree on the extension of the mandate of the Office in Yerevan, although, in terms of substance, a solution acceptable to everyone has been found. The remaining questions are of purely procedural nature, and we are confident that they will be resolved shortly under the leadership of the Austrian Chairmanship. It is our understanding that this would also enable us to take the other decisions currently blocked. As we expect decisions on the mandates of the missions soon, we would advise the Secretary General not to initiate the closing procedure of those missions at this point.

Let me stress that field missions are of particular value to this Organization, and that it is our common duty to ensure their proper functioning. I would like to underline that issues related to particular activities of field missions should be raised, discussed and addressed in the framework of the budget negotiations. In this regard, I would like to draw your attention to the exceptionality of this situation, which is far from being an example for future mandate prolongations.

On a more general note: It is worrying to see that those participating States that, against the background of persisting conflicts, could benefit most from the OSCE and its

toolbox are the least inclined to compromise. The insistence on positions, the lack of flexibility even when concerns of substance have been met is detrimental to our work and to our common endeavours in promoting security and co-operation. Should such attitudes continue or become general practice, it would render the OSCE dysfunctional.

We did not intend to leave so much unfinished business to the incoming Austrian Chairmanship. However, let me repeat my firm conviction that the particular problem which stood in the way today will be solved quickly in the days to come. Dear Clemens, I wish you stamina and good luck!

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



1126th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1126, Agenda item 1

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF AZERBAIJAN

Mr. Chairperson,

The delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan regrets to inform the Permanent Council that it is not in a position to support the draft decision on extension of the mandate of the OSCE Office in Yerevan.

The Republic of Azerbaijan on a number of occasions drew attention of the Permanent Council that the activities of the OSCE Office in Yerevan, in particular in politico-military dimension, have been source of deep concern for Azerbaijan. We have underlined that OSCE assistance provided to Armenia through its field mission, in particular in politico-military dimension, in no circumstances should be utilized in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan or serve to consolidation of the occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan by Armenia. We have also underlined that that our support to the activities of this field mission will be depend on prevention of misuse of assistance provided or capacity acquired by the host country against legitimate security concerns of Azerbaijan.

In this context, we wish to recall that OSCE field missions both in Armenia and Azerbaijan were established in late 1990s on the basis of understanding that their activities would not cover issues related to the ongoing Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, since these issues are dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference. It was due to this understanding that former OSCE field mission in Azerbaijan had not engaged in any single activity related to alleviating of numerous consequences of the conflict, including in the humanitarian field.

It has become source of serious concern that over the past years the Office in Yerevan has been drawn into the demining-related activity, which is clearly a post-conflict rehabilitation measure. As it is clearly evident from responses we received from the Office in Yerevan, activities in this particular field are directly related to ongoing conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Within this programmatic activity, the Office extends support to Armenia's Centre for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise (CHDE) allegedly in settlements on the border with the Republic of Azerbaijan, which were mined by the Republic of Armenia in the course of its military operations against Azerbaijan.

The Republic of Azerbaijan conveyed its principled position to the Chairmanship and the Secretariat that Office's demining-related programmatic activities needs to excluded from its activities and underlined that making necessary adjustments to the planned activities of the

Office for the next year would be an important step towards securing collective support of all OSCE participating States for activities of the OSCE Office in Yerevan.

We proceed from a strong understanding that all OSCE field missions should be common assets for all OSCE participating States and as such they should act in accordance with body of the OSCE principles, commitments and agreed mandates and by no means should harm legitimate interests of other participating States through their activities.

It is of profound regret that intensive consultations with the current German and incoming Austrian Chairmanships, with participation of the Secretary General and the representative of Conflict Prevention Centre did not produce a result that would accommodate the concerns of the Azerbaijani side. As a way out of the current situation we agreed to the proposal of the current and incoming Chairmanships that they would issue a joint political guidance for the OSCE field mission in Yerevan, instructing it to terminate its de-mining related activities. Since OSCE field operations and institutions are operating on unified budget based on contributions from all participating States, their activities should be transparent to participating States. The would-be guidance to the Office in Yerevan will affect the programmatic activity of the Office and it is important for all participating States to be aware of its content. This would ensure transparency and accountability and would prevent reoccurrence of this undesirable situation in the future. Proceeding from this understanding, the delegation of Azerbaijan requested that the Chairmanships' directive should be distributed among all participating States with proper reference number.

Unfortunately, after long discussions it became clear that the Chairmanship is hesitating to distribute such guidance among participating States. Pressure and open blackmailing of the Republic of Armenia, which engaged in hostage-taking exercise and threatened the operation of other field missions and adoption of a decision on 2016 revised budget, makes it impossible to reach a solution to the situation.

Under these circumstances, the delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan is left with no other option but to refrain from supporting the draft decision on extension of the mandate of the OSCE Office in Yerevan as it stands.

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

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

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Annex 3

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STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA

Mr. Chairperson,

In response to your statement let me highlight that in recent years Azerbaijan has been trying to consistently reduce the OSCE permanent presence in the South Caucasus. First, it downgraded and then simply closed the OSCE Office in Baku. After the closure of that office Azerbaijani side is trying to target remaining OSCE field missions in the region by disseminating slander and groundless accusations. It should be recalled that last year Azerbaijan attacked the long-standing agreed language on the PRCiO permanent presence on the ground in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone.

The current unprecedented attempt to use a technical decision on the extension of the mandate of the Yerevan Office for attacking the last full-fledged OSCE mission in the South Caucasus should not be tolerated by all OSCE actors including the Chairmanship, Secretariat and participating States. Any unprincipled position can be perceived by Azerbaijan as an encouragement for its further destructive stance in the OSCE. We regret that the OSCE is conceived by Azerbaijan as a battlefield to promote its conflict perceptions by hostage taking attitude at the expense of the true spirit of co-operation of the remaining 56 participating States.

Armenia approached this OSCE issue encompassing the integrity of the family of OSCE field missions in responsible and transparent manner in line with the OSCE commitments, practice and procedure. We believe that standing united and firm on the basis of preserving the mandates of all OSCE missions without exception is essential to this end. We cannot create such an impression that OSCE damaging steps and misuse of the principle of consensus by Azerbaijan should be further tolerated.

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

Thank you.