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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT

**In response to the Report of the Activities of the OCEEA
as delivered by Ambassador Armen Papikyan,
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Armenia
at the 1305th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council**

11 March 2020

Madame Chairperson,

The Delegation of Armenia would like to thank Ambassador Vuk Zugic for the presentation of a regular report on the activities of his office.

Armenia's position on the Economic and Environmental Dimension of the OSCE in general, and the activities of the OCEEA in particular, is well known. We strongly believe that the economic and environmental activities of the OSCE, as an organization whose mission is to promote security and cooperation, should, first and foremost, be aimed at increasing the security of the participating States through co-operation. We also believe that the potential of the OSCE's Economic and Environmental Dimension in building trust and confidence is not fully exploited.

Madame Chairperson,

Activities in the second dimension must be based on solidarity, transparency, equal and non-discriminatory partnership, mutual accountability and full respect for the interests of all participating States. This approach is a fundamental prerequisite for successful cooperation in this dimension and is in line with the OSCE Hamburg Ministerial Council decision.

Therefore, any activity implemented by the OCEEA, including extra-budgetary projects, must not harm the interests of another participating State, must be in compliance with OSCE commitments and be strictly balanced between the objectives of this Organization and the needs of the benefiting participating States. We strongly believe that projects that do not meet these requirements cannot and should not be implemented under the umbrella of the OSCE with the involvement of the OSCE

Secretariat, whereas any ongoing project that does not correspond to these criteria should be discontinued.

Therefore, having said that my delegation reiterates its position that "Promoting Green Ports and Connectivity in the Caspian Sea Region" extra-budgetary project, which is being implemented by the OCEEA, does not meet the above criteria, contains conflict-related elements, is discriminatory in its purpose and does not enjoy the support of all participating States. Consequently, we are not in a position to agree to using the knowledge and expertise of the OSCE Secretariat, accumulated over the years through our common contributions to the OSCE Unified Budget, to implement a project, which is aimed at further deepening the dividing lines in the region. We regret that, despite our calls, the second phase of the project has been initiated. And in this regard, we would like to express our disappointment with the position of the Secretariat in this issue, which instead opted to not take into account the legitimate concerns and objections voiced by Armenia as well as disregard the relevant OSCE commitments.

The concerns and objections of Armenia are relevant and legitimate in light of the recent events in our region resulting in flagrant violation of all OSCE principles and commitments. And in light of the recent statements made by the President of Azerbaijan on 4 and 5 March, containing the same anti-Armenian propaganda and hate speech as well as aggressive rhetoric, our approach is even more legitimate.

Madame Chairperson,

In closing, since this is the last appearance of Ambassador Zugic at the Permanent Council in his capacity as Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, I would like to wish him every success in his future endeavours.

I thank you.