



Meeting of the Permanent Council of 14 May 2013

Address by H.E. Elmar Mammadyarov, Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan

I am honored to deliver this statement on behalf of Canada and Switzerland.

We warmly welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, HE Elmar Mammadyarov to the Permanent Council and thank him for his presentation.

Azerbaijan is a highly valued partner and an important member of the OSCE. All participating States have an equal responsibility when it comes to contributing to constructive discussions, solutions and implementation of commitments. Therefore we welcome your stated political will to actively contribute to the work of the organization, including in the Helsinki +40 process.

The protracted conflicts are a priority issue for the OSCE and we fully support all efforts to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict within the established format. We would like to assure you that the resolution of this conflict has the full attention of the OSCE. We will support all

efforts of the co-chairs that bring the Parties together and help reduce tension along the contact line and to alleviate people's suffering. We will support also any capacity-building efforts to make the OSCE better equipped to support peace processes.

We would also welcome Azerbaijan's full support to all the other activities of our organization that are in the interest of the 56 other participating states. It is unfortunate that on a regular basis, Azerbaijan is the only country that cannot join consensus on decisions we would like to pass. This slows down our work schedule and raises questions about your will to actively contribute to the work of our organization.

The presidential elections this autumn will be a significant event in your country. We are all committed to free and fair elections. According to the commitments in the Copenhagen document of 1990, participating States generally invite ODIHR observer missions to such important elections. Therefore we would like to know whether the international observers mission that you intend to invite would include an ODIHR observer mission.

In many areas the developments of Azerbaijan have come a long way since its independence. Your country lies at an important geographical crossroads and we acknowledge your achievements in terms of economic development. We also welcome the National Program for Action to Raise Effectiveness of the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms that was presented in PC last year.

In the mentioned Action Plan, there is reference to international organizations, including OSCE, and on the benefits that can be drawn by Azerbaijan in cooperating closely with them. We are very much

interested in supporting this and are convinced that an OSCE presence in Baku facilitates such cooperation. While it is, of course, up to the host country to decide on the profile of such a presence, we are convinced that a continued substantial presence of the OSCE in Azerbaijan is extremely useful to assist the Azerbaijani authorities in implementing its OSCE commitments in all three dimensions.

In conclusion we thank HE Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov for coming to the Permanent Council and look forward to continuing the dialogue with him and the delegation of Azerbaijan here in Vienna.