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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  
delivered by Ambassador Armen Papikyan,  
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Armenia  
at the 1288<sup>th</sup> meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council  
*November 5, 2020***

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset let me once again express our strong solidarity with the people and government of Austria and extend our heartfelt condolences to the families and friends of innocent victims of the heinous terrorist attack of November 2. Our thoughts and prayers are with those who lost their beloved ones. We also wish speedy recovery to the wounded. We condemn in the strongest term acts of terror, which should be denounced without any hesitation and selectivity. The masterminds and perpetrators should be brought to justice.

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to thank Ambassador Vuk Zugic for the presentation of the report on the activities of his office. The report comes at a time when the erosion of values and vanishing spirit of cooperation has culminated in a full-scale war in our region, undermining the concept of comprehensive security and cooperation, as well as challenging the prospective for building confidence and trust, essential conditions for the mandated activities of the OCEEA.

Ambassador Zugic,

You might recall, that this delegation highlighted repeatedly the basis for our interactions in the second dimension, clearly formulated and agreed upon in the OSCE strategy document which states that “Our cooperation should be based on solidarity, transparency, equal and non-discriminatory partnership, mutual accountability and full respect for the interests of all the OSCE participating States. If action in the economic field has a negative impact on other participating States, we will seek to minimize this, in line with our international obligations”.

Unfortunately, our constant calls not to engage in activities which were not consistent with this essential approach were not heeded. Instead of pushing countries for cooperation, fostering dialogue and diminishing tensions, activities aimed at further deepening the dividing lines and seeking to sideline a participating State were prioritized and supported. We were insisting that any project developed by the Office or requested by participating States should either have a strong cross-dimensional impact or serve the purpose of promoting peace and regional stability and should have been non-discriminatory in nature and based on inclusiveness. Unfortunately, we have to state that certain extra-budgetary projects implemented by the OCEEA neither had impact on human rights and security environment, nor served the purpose of cooperation and dialogue, thus, challenging the very concept of comprehensive and indivisible security of this organisation. Our concerns were proven to be justified.

Today one may insist that to some extent these years were a missed opportunity for the OSCE's economic and environmental dimension, despite the allocated resources, invested energy and time, to contribute to the achievement of the overall objectives of this organisation.

Therefore, we strongly believe that we need to thoroughly assess the scope of engagement of the OCEEA and possible impact its activities could or could have had as well as to understand the shortcomings before we could proceed further or continue our contribution to the activities of the OCEEA.

Ambassador Zugic,

I would also like to dwell on the environmental dimension of the activities of the OCEEA. You might be aware that during the past weekend we have seen a new development in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone, namely Azerbaijani military and its allies used white phosphorus in the forest areas of several communities of Artsakh. These forests are used by the civilian population of Artsakh as shelters against continued shellings with the use of military aviation, large-caliber artillery, combat UAVs and multiple launch rocket systems. I also would like to recall that the white phosphorus when used in civilian areas or against civilians constitutes a war crime considered to be a chemical warfare. I will come back to the issue of violation by Azerbaijan of all norms and principles of international humanitarian law at a later stage, but here I would like to hear what the OCEEA can and should do to address the issue of environmental impact that the use of the white phosphorus entails. For your information, 1815 hectares of forests have already been on fire due to the use of munitions containing chemical elements of white phosphorus causing major environmental disaster. I urge you to seek avenues in addressing the environmental aspects of this crime. This delegation stands ready to provide relevant information to your office about the use of white phosphorus in Artsakh by Azerbaijan and its allies.



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In conclusion let me once again thank you for your efforts and wish you every success in your future endeavors.

Thank you.