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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

**STATEMENT**

**In Response to the Director of ODIHR, Mr. Matteo Mecacci  
as delivered by Ambassador Armen Papikyan  
at the 1349<sup>th</sup> meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council**

*16 December 2021*

Madame Chairperson,

The Delegation of Armenia warmly welcomes Director Matteo Mecacci back to the Permanent Council and thanks for his address.

Director Mecacci,

The 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ODIHR provides a good opportunity to take stock and assess both achievements and failures in the programmatic work over the past decades, to identify emerging challenges and define tasks. We hope that the events and discussions that were held in this regard were instrumental in finding ways to effectively address those issues through using the available mechanisms and tools. This year's Human Dimension Seminar on the challenges faced by women, including those displaced and at risk of displacement, was a much expected and timely event. We hope that its outcomes will contribute to intensifying the work in this direction and achieving tangible results in this area.

Armenia continued its effective cooperation with the ODIHR and benefitted from its expertise during this year, despite the many challenges posed by the war of aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan and its allies against the people of Artsakh and Armenia, as well as those related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are pleased to note that our cooperation covers a wide range of issues, such as democratic elections, freedom of assembly, media freedom, as well as the issues related to the alarming rise of hate speech and hate crimes in our region and beyond.

Taking this opportunity, let me once again thank you, Director Mecacci, and your team for the swift response to the invitation of the Armenian authorities to deploy an election observation mission for the early parliamentary elections in our country in June last year.

Let me also reiterate our readiness to host the ODIHR experts in the framework of their post-electoral visit and follow-up on recommendations.

We specifically value our cooperation in the area of countering hate speech and intolerance. In this regard we appreciate the provided by the ODIHR in delivering a series of training on countering hate crimes.

We fully share your assessment, Director Mecacci, of the increasing trend of hate crimes throughout the OSCE region, and in this regard we note ODIHR`s improved reporting on hate crimes in OSCE participating States. We encourage further improvement and development of this important instrument.

As you rightly pointed out, the progress in this area is greatly dependent on the ability and the willingness of the states to address this problem. Therefore, the recurrences of state-fueled or state-sponsored or state-promoted cases of hatred and hate speech, in particular, anti-Armenian hatred and hate crimes, combined with the prevailing impunity for such crimes, should be a matter of grave concern for all participating States. In this context, the recent ruling by the International Court of Justice on violations of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination targeted against persons of Armenian national or ethnic origin, is an important and relevant point of reference.

Dear Director,

My delegation attaches great importance to the genuine desire of participating States to make best use of ODIHR`s assistance and expertise to improve the implementation of their Human Dimension commitments. At the same time, one must distinguish between genuine aspirations and “false piety”. Thus, we caution the ODIHR to be vigilant when considering any possible activity or engagement with those participating States that are notorious for suppressing and violating human rights and fundamental freedoms, in order to prevent the abuse of the ODIHR’s reputation and standing for the purpose of whitewashing the abysmal human rights record and flagrant human rights violations by authorities of such states. In this context, we would suggest to the ODIHR, before any engagement, to conduct and share with the participating States a comprehensive review of the state of implementation of the human rights commitments by respective states and assess the possible impact of ODIHR’s engagement.

In closing, let me once again thank you, Director Mecacci, for our fruitful and effective co-operation and assure you of Armenia`s continued support.

I thank you