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## **Defending the right to live: A to-do-list with regards to achieving sustainable peace and further development for Nagorno Karabakh and its citizens**

Country: Armenia

*TOPIC as it pertains to the Parallel Conference:* Session 3: Strengthening OSCE ability to effectively respond to political and humanitarian crises situations—learning from past experiences and shaping recommendations for the future

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To be disseminated among delegates and participants of OSCE Parallel Conference  
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1. There is no more doubt left, that the humanitarian situation around Nagorno Karabakh has been growing tense and worse on a daily basis. Unprecedented violence on the border between Azerbaijan and Nagorno Karabakh *de facto* Republic (hereinafter - NKR) with daily shootings, casualties and deaths of soldiers and civilians cannot remain silenced any longer. The OSCE Minsk Group, which remains the sole internationally mandated body for conducting the peace process among parties involved, needs to address the sides namely, by pointing at the party to be blamed for violence at any specific occasion.
2. Continuing violations of the Ceasefire Agreement of May 1994, which holds Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno Karabakh authorities be responsible for achieving a lasting peace, cannot be ignored any further, as they potentially may drag the whole fragile region of South Caucasus and succeeding generations back into the scourge of war.
3. Warlike rhetoric and bellicose statements, made on a regular basis by the high-ranking officials of Azerbaijan, escalate the situation in the Line of Contact, thus granting more covert ill-manner justifications for the war to be resumed even without a direct call from the capitals – as a matter of unfortunate coincidence. Muted and unaddressed calls to all the parties by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmen and other stakeholders may encourage this aggravation. Instead, they should call them in a precise manner to refrain from harming the process and questioning the progress made so far.

4. The military buildup and arms race across the borders of NKR is the wrong way to achieve sustainable peace. While the leadership of Azerbaijan fuels the military budget with a significant growth each successive year after 2005 and does not hesitate to publicly underline that in various occasions, Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh follow the line of containment policy. Eventually, the Cold War logic of zero-sum game, after 20 years of its dead end, is still in charge in the periphery of Europe, which is ironically the core mission of OSCE, established to ease the tensions among known adversaries. The Astana Summit should openly urge the parties to refrain from these questionable policies.

5. While the authorities of only Armenia and Azerbaijan are directly involved in the negotiations abroad, it is commendable that Co-Chairmen put Stepanakert as a venue for their regional trips, thus bringing the protracted format of talks to its original three-party character. We would support the Minsk Group to engage the elected representatives of NKR, as prescribed by the OSCE Additional Helsinki Ministerial Meeting outcome document, dated March 24 1992, as the contradiction between OSCE legal documents and political processes should arrive at equilibrium to ensure meaningful peace process, as well as contribute to state-building in NKR. With this in mind, it sounds further inappropriate the continuing ignorance of OSCE to the democratic elections being held in NKR on a regular basis, based on their Constitution.

6. Aiming at bringing the emerging democracy of NKR back to the OSCE family of states, we call on the upcoming Chairmanships-in-Office, with the leading role of Lithuania for the year of 2011, to take courageous steps and invite the NGO and civil society representatives of Nagorno Karabakh to further OSCE Parallel Conferences. We believe, this will be a brave step on the way to the delayed integration of local organizations back to home – the Euro-Atlantic civil society family. Organizing a smaller-scale event in NKR will be an obvious sign of willingness and readiness to engage them.

*Astana, 25 Nov 2010*

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