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DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

Statement

on the High-Level Conference “Combating racism, xenophobia and intolerance in Europe” held in Yerevan on October 21-22, 2013

**delivered by Ambassador Arman Kirakossian at the 968th Meeting of the OSCE
Permanent Council
October 24, 2013**

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to take this opportunity and offer some more information to the Permanent Council on the High-Level Conference “Combating racism, xenophobia and intolerance in Europe”, which was held in Yerevan two days ago. Edward Nalbandian Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia and Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and Thorbjørn Jagland, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe opened the high level conference.

The conference was attended by a number of high-ranked guests, including Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, Vice-President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the CoE, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, President of the Council of Europe Conference of INGOs and Assistant Secretary General of the Arab League.

Representatives from CoE Member states and CoE major bodies including European Commission against Racism and Intolerance and the General Secretariat, as well as from international organizations - UN, OSCE, European Union and League of Arab States and local non-governmental organizations, academia and mass media participated in the work of the conference.

The Delegation of Armenia highly appreciates active participation of Mrs. Dunja Mijatovich and Mrs. Azra Junuzovic, Deputy Head of ODIHR's Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department in the light of strengthening the cooperation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe in that important area of combating racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance, and promoting European values through intercultural dialogue.

The agenda of the event included issues, which are cause of concern for the European societies, such as the use of racism and hate speech in political discourse, the role of political leaders and civil society in combating these challenges, the effective use of preventive tools, overcoming racial stereotypes, the role of human

rights institutions in combating racial and ethnic discrimination, eliminating the expressions of xenophobia and intolerance and spread of hate-speech on the social networks and media.

In his opening address Minister Nalbandian stressed that different manifestations of racism, xenophobia, intolerance and extremism are not new challenges. However, nowadays, when the perception of distance and time has changed, when the countries have become increasingly interconnected and information becomes momentarily available to millions of people through the Internet, the fight against these occurrences is becoming ever important and demanding.

In the same vein the Armenian chairmanship is supporting the “No Hate Speech” movement launched by the Secretary General and will also contribute to the activities in this framework financially. Armenian youth is now part of a pan-European campaign against hate speech online, and a number of activities have been undertaken at national level.

Thank You.