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

Statement

in Response to the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group, the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, and the Head of the High Level Planning Group delivered by Ambassador Arman Kirakossian at the 1163rd Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council

November 09, 2017

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to warmly welcome the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group Ambassadors Igor Popov, Stephane Visconti and Andrew Schofer, the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk and the Head of the HLPG, Colonel Hans Lampalzer to the Permanent Council and thank them for their comprehensive reports. We welcome Mr. Andrew Schofer on assumption of the responsible mission of the Minsk Group Co-Chair.

We reiterate our full support for the agreed format of the Minsk group Co-Chairmanship and our commitment to the peaceful resolution of the NK conflict.

We appreciate consistent efforts of the Co-Chairs to advance peace process in the challenging context shaped by large scale military offensive in April 2016.

The Geneva Summit and the agreement to take measures to intensify the negotiation process and to take additional steps to reduce tensions on the Line of Contact is certainly one of the outcomes of these efforts.

We have already had opportunity to acknowledge the role of the Co-Chairs and their respective countries in de-escalating situation in April 2016 and afterwards. It should be added that in the reporting period de-escalation efforts of the Co-Chairs have been necessary due to continued ceasefire violations which resulted in new casualties. We took note that on the certain instances the Co-Chairs had to clearly identify the source of escalation which is necessary in the situation of the continued absence of relevant mechanisms of reducing tensions on the Line of Contact.

Steps to reduce the risk of further violence have already been agreed during the previous Vienna and St. Petersburg Summits and they include the creation of the OSCE investigative mechanism and expansion of the Office of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson. Armenia has unequivocally supported these measures.

Unfortunately so far these agreements have not been implemented as another commitment to maintain the ceasefire has continuously been challenged by Azerbaijan.

In our view there is no alternative for peaceful settlement of the conflict as much as there is no alternative for undertaking additional envisaged steps to reduce tensions on the Line of Contact.

The massive use of force in April 2016 and further ceasefire violations has seriously damaged the peace process. It has demonstrated that use of force cannot strengthen negotiation position of the party of the conflict resorting to it, but is able to harm peace process.

The prevention of the further use of force or threat to use force is essential for consolidation of the ceasefire regime and thus creating conditions for the advancement of the negotiation process.

In this context we hope that Azerbaijan will genuinely approach its commitments, including those undertaken in last three Summits.

We are convinced that use of force, particularly atrocities against people residing in conflict area should be unequivocally condemned. Armenia has been very clear that people of Nagorno-Karabakh, their security, self-determination and freedom today and in future cannot and will not be sacrificed.

Finally, let me highlight that Armenia reiterates its commitment to peaceful resolution of the conflict based on the three principles: non-use of force, equal rights and self-determination of peoples and territorial integrity in their entirety as outlined by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs and accepted by all the OSCE participating States.

We would like to thank the PRCiO and his dedicated team for their important role in the conflict area. We understand that the PRCiO Office's extremely limited resources both in term of personnel and equipment are impediment for OSCE comprehensive involvement on the ground, including monitoring activities. Armenia is convinced that the OSCE through its only international permanent presence in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict area should be actively involved in reducing tensions along the Line of Contact.

The neutral and impartial stance of the HLPG and all of its members along with equal and close interaction with all parties to the conflict is essential in promoting successful activities of the HLPG in line with its mandate. We see certain need to streamline the HLPG activities in line with its mandate.

Thank you.