



**Statement**

ENGLISH only

**In Response to the Address by the Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Croatia, H.E. Marija Pejčinović Burić**

**as delivered by the Delegation of Armenia at the 1189<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the OSCE**

**Permanent Council**

**June 14, 2018**

Mr. Chairman,

The Armenian delegation would like to warmly welcome Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Croatia, H.E. Marija Pejčinović Burić to the Permanent Council and thank for presenting priorities of the Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

Armenia has always advocated stronger interactions between the Council of Europe and OSCE through complimenting and supporting each other's efforts in advancing human rights in Europe.

We are pleased to note that there is a strong relevance between priorities of the OSCE Chair in Office and the Chair of the Committee Ministers of the Council of Europe. This fact reveals our joint assessment on most important challenges we face at the national, regional and international level.

Armenia supports strong emphasis on combating corruption. The issue of eradicating corruption stands high on the agenda of the newly formed Government of Armenia. The actions of Government in this regard are anchored on a societal consensus on inadmissibility of corruption in all its forms. The freedom of expression and media played very essential role in achieving such a societal consensus.

Armenia is ready to give new impetus to already successful cooperation with the Council of Europe and its special anti-corruption body namely Group of States against Corruption. It is encouraging that new draft action plan of the Council of Europe for Armenia, which is currently under discussion in Yerevan with involvement of civil society, envisages stronger cooperation to this end.

We firmly believe that corruption needs to be tackled at international level as well and OSCE has very clear commitments with regard to addressing corruption, which involves foreign and international officials. In this regard, we took good note of the actions undertaken in the Council of Europe and its Parliamentary Assembly against those who were involved in promoting such kind of practices in the organization itself. The international organizations, which are created to promote human rights and rule of law, should be resilient against all attempt to impose different set of values including corruptive practices.

That being said, let us also refer to another joint priority namely protection of cultural heritage. Armenia commends strong leadership of Croatia in this regard. We would like also to recall the efforts of Cyprus as former Chair of the Committee of the Ministers on introducing important regional instruments such as the Council of Europe Convention on Offences relating to Cultural Property. Armenia was among the first countries who signed the Convention and look forwards to the expansion of the state parties to this Convention.

Cultural heritage needs to be protected both at times of peace and war in areas of immediate hostilities and on the entire territories of the parties to the conflict.

We also appreciate the stance of the Council of Europe and its Secretary General on necessity of the application of the European Convention on Human Rights elsewhere in Europe without excluding any areas and peoples living therein.

In conclusion, we would like to wish every success to Croatia in leading the Council of Europe pledge our full support to the Croat Chairmanship to this end.

Thank you.