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**PERMANENT MISSION  
OF TURKEY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY,  
AMBASSADOR YUSUF BULUÇ**

**732<sup>ND</sup> MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL  
11 SEPTEMBER 2008**

We thank our European Union partners for marking their positive appraisal of the visit of the President of Turkey to Yerevan, Armenia, in response to an invitation by his Armenian counterpart, President Sargsyan, on 6th September, through the Presidency's Statement and to bring the same to the attention of the Permanent Council today.

Equally, I thank those Participating States, which have expressed their views in regard to this event either by their alignment with the EU statement or through interventions on a national basis.

Let me begin by pointing out that we share the words in all these statements to characterize the nature of the visit, as well as the outlook and the hopes entertained therein.

Your capitals will have picked up the press statement issued by the Turkish Presidential Office, announcing the premises on which the President has accepted this invitation.

It was felt that the opportunity to be engendered by the visit, coinciding with the developments in the Caucasus, which continue to be a cause for concern for the peoples of the region, should be utilized for the common good of these people as a whole. Furthermore, the prospect of creating a climate of friendship and preparation of a fresh ground for the elimination of obstacles that put distance between the peoples of Turkey and Armenia who, as a matter of fact, share a common history, were strong incentives encouraging the Turkish President to make this trip to Yerevan.

While due credit would go to the President of Armenia for taking the lead in extending his invitation, once the visit got underway, the outcomes will have become the fruits of their joint initiative.

It has given my President satisfaction to have completed his visit on a positive note, based on his assessment that he had a productive encounter with his Armenian counterpart, as their meeting imparted some hope that, given a mutually expressed will by the leaders, the parties would find ways for engaging in a sustained dialogue with the goal of remedying, in the first instance, a mutually felt deficit of confidence.

He welcomed, particularly, the expression of support by Armenia, for Turkey's initiative to establish, through joint efforts by the countries of the region, a platform for stability and cooperation in the Caucasus, a project that has received positive acknowledgment also in the EU statement.

We hope that President Sargsyan would, on President Gül's invitation, visit Turkey to coincide with the return match of the national teams.

As a concluding remark, I wish to point out that the final score of the football match in Yerevan did not at all cloud the positive tone and spirit of the visit.