

Delegation of Switzerland

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF SWITZERLAND AT THE
955th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

6 June 2013

**In response to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Armenia,
His Excellency Mr. Edward Nalbandian**

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Edward Nalbandian to the Permanent Council and thank him for his interesting observations. We are pleased to take this opportunity to congratulate Armenia on assuming the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. We welcome the priorities of your Chairmanship, which you have just outlined for us. Switzerland also particularly values the call for close co-operation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe. This co-operation should do more than simply raise our dialogue to a higher level. Both organizations should also apply their expertise to joint projects and conferences, as much at headquarter level as on the ground.

Switzerland also values the constructive co-operation with Armenia within the OSCE. This co-operation lays solid foundations for us to tackle the current and future challenges of the OSCE, such as Helsinki+40. Switzerland supports the efforts of the OSCE to find a solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict within the established formats. This conflict continues to merit the OSCE's full attention. We are following the high number of violent clashes along the Line of Contact with concern. We urge both parties to step up dialogue, build a constructive climate, and, ultimately, find an agreement from which both countries and the region as a whole will benefit.

We welcome the fact that Armenia invited an OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) mission to observe the presidential elections held in February. When the opposition expressed doubts about the outcome of the election, the Armenian authorities and the ODIHR agreed to investigate these accusations in a post-election report. We welcome this constructive attitude on the part of Armenia.

After the May 2012 parliamentary election, Armenia set up a working group to examine the recommendations of the ODIHR mission. During the February 2013 presidential elections, the ODIHR observed various cases of misuse of administrative resources and problems regarding legal appeals. We call upon Armenia to consider these issues, as well as

the other recommendations contained in the final report, and to implement the recommended measures.

We also appreciate the valuable efforts of the OSCE Office in Yerevan. The Office provides support to Armenia in significant reform initiatives such as police training and the “Guillotine programme” to minimize bureaucracy. The close collaboration on the ground is truly exemplary and we are impressed by the determination of the Armenian authorities to implement these reform plans.

In conclusion, we thank Minister Nalbandian for his statement to the Permanent Council and wish Armenia every success in its Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.