

ENGLISH only

Statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia

Mr. Edward NALBANDIAN

at the 16th OSCE Ministerial meeting

Mr. Chairman,
Dear Colleagues,

I would like to begin by thanking the Finnish Chairmanship-in-Office and Minister Alexander Stubb for the devoted and effective work throughout the year.

Helsinki is a city whose name will be forever linked to the basic principles governing the relations between the countries of the OSCE area.

It would be highly symbolic if here, in Helsinki, we set the basis for the future deliberations on the improvement of the capabilities of our Organization, which requires truly joint effort and efficient partnership. A discussion around an OSCE Charter and the legal personality of the OSCE could become a good basis to test various ideas and develop common positions through a dialogue. This is a time for united action and I hope that we will leave Helsinki with a clear commitment to strengthen the effectiveness of our organization.

Mr. Chairman,

Armenia is interested in continued cooperation within the OSCE in all three dimensions.

In human dimension we are ready to continue constructive cooperation with the OSCE/ODIHR, yet at the same time we support the re-evaluation of the role of the ODIHR and a higher level of its accountability before the member states. We are ready to work with all interested member states in this direction.

We are prepared to work towards developing a more consolidated approach in economic-environmental dimension in order to ensure its continuity and sustainability.

We note the importance of the dialogue on the OSCE political-military dimension. Conventional arms control is an issue of primary importance. The situation in our region makes the maintenance of the Conventional Arms Control Treaty more imperative. Full implementation of commitments is crucial for the security and stability of the area of application. Regrettably, Azerbaijan's massive military build-up conducted in violation of its international obligations has not received an adequate reaction from the majority of the state parties of the Convention.

An arms race can lead to a resumption of a military conflict. The situation becomes somehow classic – if there is a gun on the stage, it has to fire.

Europe obviously needs a new security architecture, which will take into account all the existing concerns. With this in mind, we think that a debate over a European security treaty can provide a good forum for the development of a commonly acceptable system.

That is why we support the proposal by Presidents of France and Russia regarding the convening of a summit to launch the negotiations on the implementation of the initiative to develop a European Security Treaty.

Dear Colleagues,

I would now like to inform you on the latest developments of the Nagorno Karabagh peace process for which OSCE has an important mediation role through the dedicated effort of the three Minsk Group Co-Chairs.

The negotiations on Nagorno Karabakh settlement received a new impetus at the Moscow meeting initiated by President of the Russian Federation in his capacity as a Head of Co-Chair state and the signing by Presidents of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia of the Moscow Declaration. The Co-Chairs supported and approved the Declaration, and we believed that it would intensify the peace process.

However, Azerbaijan misinterprets all the provisions of the Declaration going as far as stating, in particular, that the peaceful settlement does not exclude use of force. I wonder if there is any other state here, around this table, which could have such interpretation of the very clear notion of the 'peaceful political settlement.'

The other vivid example of the misinterpretation of the declaration and the whole process of negotiations, was the provocative non-paper distorting the whole sense of the peace talks circulated yesterday by Azerbaijani delegation, which I don't even want to comment.

Despite this, we would want to hope that we will be able to maintain the spirit and the positive momentum of the Moscow declaration and will advance towards the resolution of the conflict. This was also the vision of the declaration made yesterday by the three Co-Chair countries in framework of our Ministerial meeting.

Dear Colleagues,

There is one more long-standing problem which needs wise approach and political courage to be resolved. I would like to briefly touch upon the Armenian-Turkish relations, the normalization of which will highly contribute to the establishment of stability and security in the whole region.

The bold steps taken by the Presidents of Armenia and Turkey demonstrate political will and readiness to move forward. Of course, no one expects miracles and we were pragmatic enough not to think that all problems would be solved overnight. However, the important thing is to achieve a tangible result and not to negotiate for the sake of negotiations. We are looking for establishment of diplomatic relations and opening of borders without any precondition and we expect the same approach from the Turkish side. Parties continue to work and negotiate and I hope that together we will achieve what I believe is our common goal – normalize our relations and bring security and stability to our region.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, I would like to wish success to the incoming Chairmanship-in-Office and to ensure my distinguished Greek colleague, Minister Dora Bakoyanis that she can count on the support of Armenia in all her endeavours aimed at reaching security and prosperity in the OSCE area.

Thank you.