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

**Statement**  
**on the visit of the President of Turkey to Armenia on 6 September 2008**  
**delivered by Deputy Head of Delegation Armen Papikyan**  
**at the 732<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council**  
**11 September 2008**

Mr. Chairman,

First of all we would like to thank previous speakers, notably the European Union, Russian Federation and others, for their statements and encouraging messages.

Let me briefly provide some information and touch upon some fine points of the visit of Turkish President to Armenia. On 6 September this year, following the invitation of President Sargsyan of Armenia, President Gul of Turkey visited Yerevan, to attend a football match between the national teams of the two countries.

Before the game, the two Presidents with the participation of their foreign ministers held a meeting. President of Armenia thanked his colleague for accepting the invitation and noted that direct contacts are the only efficient way of normalizing relations between the neighbouring states.

During the meeting, the two Presidents exchanged views also on the recent developments and problems in the region. Noting that currently there are ample opportunities for the establishment of bilateral relations, they stressed the political will of the leaders of the two states to assume responsibility and take upon addressing the problems and creating the atmosphere of peace and trust in the region.

The President of Armenia stressed in particular that improvement of the relations would provide an opportunity to discuss any issue, even the thorniest ones. As President Sargsyan pointed out "We should strive to solve the problems as soon as possible, not to leave their burden to the future generations".

Serzh Sargsyan and Abdullah Gul also discussed the Turkish initiative on the creation of the Caucasus stability and security platform. Armenian president reconfirmed that Armenia has always welcomed dialogue and adhered to the confidence building, security and cooperation in the region.

The two Presidents stated that the meeting had been a serious impetus for carrying on the dialogue and should become a roadmap for the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the two states, who also held a separate meeting. While in Yerevan, the President of Turkey invited the President of Armenia to Istanbul to watch together the next qualifying game for the World Cup of the two teams.

The discussion of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of two countries focused on the issues of relations between Armenia and Turkey. During that meeting Foreign Minister Nalbandian welcomed the idea of setting up a Caucasus stability and security platform. Both Ministers stressed their determination to achieve full normalization of bilateral relations.

Mr. Chairman,

The fact that the meeting of the two Presidents took place at this moment had a significance both for a possible and hoped dialogue between the two countries and for exploration of what neighbours can do when the region is going through the period of heightened challenges. We believe that such initiatives can further contribute to any process of stabilization in the Caucasus where it is so needed at this moment.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.