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

ENGLISH only

Statement

**in Response to the Report of Ambassador Claude Wild, Chairperson of the
OSCE Informal Working Group Focusing on the Issue of Migration and Refugee
Flows**

**delivered by Ambassador Arman Kirakossian at the 1109th Special Meeting of
the OSCE Permanent Council**

July 20, 2016

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to thank the German Chairmanship for convening the special meeting of the Permanent Council on the issue of the ongoing migration and refugee crisis.

Our thanks go to distinguished Ambassador Claude Wild, Head of the Swiss Delegation, who conducted the responsible mission of the Chairperson of the OSCE Informal Working Group Focusing on the Issue of Migration and Refugee Flows in the most intelligent manner.

We thank Ambassador Wild and his team for elaborating the comprehensive report on the basis of discussions within the frames of the informal Working Group. We will need time to examine in details the content of the report, but it is certain that it encompasses many valuable findings and conclusions, which reflect both the current capacities of the Organization in the field of migration management and possible avenues of enhancing those capacities.

The Delegation of Armenia took active part in the activities of the Working Group in light of the increasing global displacement challenges and ongoing conflicts in Syria and Iraq, which have significantly affected Armenia. About 20.000 persons displaced due to the conflict in Syria have sought protection in Armenia, which makes it the third European country with the biggest number of refugees from Syria per capita.

We would like to stress the need to ensure regional cooperation between frontline, transit and receiving states in implementation of the OSCE Ljubljana commitments on ensuring open and secure borders in order to facilitate safe passage of refugees to the country of destination willing to receive them. OSCE together with its field operations is mandated to provide assistance in facilitating cooperation in border security and management. Cooperation between field operations located along the West Balkan route is a good point of departure in this regard.

Second, the frontline participating States have special responsibility to ensure receipt of refugees, escaping terrorist threat. We could consider the possibility of establishing permanent monitoring of most sensitive borders in the context of ongoing crisis, namely the external borders of OSCE with Syria and Iraq.

Though the scope of the report is limited to the ways of tackling the consequences of the current refugee and migration flows, we firmly believe that we need to address the underlying factors behind this challenge, namely the problem of foreign terrorist fighters. In this regard, we would like to reiterate our position on the need for the OSCE participating States to unconditionally implement their commitments under UN Security Council Resolutions 2170, 2178, 2199 and 2249 and the OSCE Basel and Belgrade Ministerial Declarations, including the Belgrade Declaration on Reinforcing OSCE Efforts to Counter Terrorism in the Wake of Recent Terrorist Attacks.

In particular, the OSCE participating States should prevent the use of their territories by terrorist groups for cross-border attacks against civilian populations, including religious and ethnic minorities in Syria.

Thank you.