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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

Statement
in response to the address of Margareta Cederfelt,
President of the OSCE PA, as delivered by
the Deputy Permanent Representative of Armenia
at the 1351st meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
20 January 2022

Mr. Chairman,

The Delegation of Armenia welcomes Ms. Margareta Cederfelt, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, back to the Permanent Council and thanks for her address.

Madame President,

Parliamentary diplomacy in general and the OSCE parliamentary dimension in particular, despite numerous setbacks and challenges, continue to remain an important platform for dialogue and political debate. We proceed from the understanding that in democratic societies parliamentarians represent the interest and the will of their constituents, provided that they have been elected through free and fair election processes.

Unfortunately, one cannot claim that all parliamentarians who are currently members of the OSCE PA meet this minimum requirement. The current situation undermines the standing or one may even say the credibility of the OSCE PA. I understand that ensuring the conduct of free and fair elections is a long standing challenge and requires concerted actions by all OSCE structures, but above all by respective OSCE participating States, who are considered to be strong supporters of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms. We hope that the OSCE PA in its proceedings and organisational work will take into account this challenge when entrusting certain parliamentarians with high positions.

Another challenge is the reports about the involvement of some parliamentarians in sophisticated corruption schemes, designed by one participating State to whitewash

its international image, which is a serious blow to the reputation and credibility of international Parliamentarism. I am sure, the distinguished President of the OSCE PA is well aware of the corruption scandal that occurred within PACE. This should serve as a stark reminder that authoritarian regimes may use the same mechanism in other inter-parliamentary structures in an attempt to cover-up its abysmal human rights records and wrongdoings. Therefore, we consider the creation of effective mechanisms to eliminate and prevent possible corruption risks within parliamentary structures seems to be a quite pertinent and necessary instrument.

Let me recall that during and after the war of aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan against the people of Artsakh and in view of the continued threat of force voiced on daily basis by the military-political leadership of this country, we have repeatedly emphasised the special role of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly as a forum of elected representatives to raise and openly discuss all cases of violation of the fundamental principles of this Organisation, thereby contributing to the strengthening of security and co-operation in the OSCE region. In this regard, I regret to note that some of these key issues were simply overlooked in your statement.

The OSCE PA should also pay particular attention to violations of international humanitarian law and the humanitarian consequences of wars and the use of force in the OSCE region, including in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone.

In particular, the fate of the Armenian prisoners of war should have been at the focus of the OSCE parliamentarians, primarily due to the humanitarian nature of the issue, as well as taking into account the advantages of parliamentary diplomacy as a flexible and less formal channel of communication.

Likewise, we constantly draw your attention to the plight of the people of Artsakh, who are deprived of any international assistance, as Azerbaijan continues its policy of isolation and illegal persecution, creating various obstacles in the exercise of their fundamental human rights and freedoms. The Assembly could and should have played a more proactive and depoliticized role in addressing the needs of these people.

Madame Chairperson,

In closing, let me once again reiterate Armenia's continuing commitment to dialogue and co-operation within the OSCE's parliamentary dimension and wish you, Madame President, every success in your future endeavours.

Thank you.