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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 Address by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office,
H.E. Mr. Karl De Gucht,
delivered by Ambassador Jivan Tabibian
at the 587th Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
January 12, 2006

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

It is nice to see you sitting in that chair at the Opening Session. Our most warm welcome to Minister de Gucht, the Chairman-in-Office, who is mostly in Bruxelles and he has a great team here, in Vienna with whom we have already some familiarity and effective co-operation.

As you and many others indicated, as we began the past year there were some institutional vulnerabilities and a little bit of weakness. It was a difficult year but we came out in much better shape. The Slovenian Chairmanship in co-operation in the last months with the incoming Belgian Chairmanship resolved two very sticky issues that sometimes are more symbolic than real: the budget and the scales of contribution. Our excitement and our celebration is more due to the fact that they may indicate a greater degree of co-cooperativeness, some indication of good will and good faith. Previously, we had to wait for months before we got a budget.

The other significant thing was that we began the year with some mandated need to call Eminent Persons to come and advise us. They did, and therefore a lot of the activities of last year were taken up by looking into their recommendations, our consultations and what conclusions we could draw and what actions we could adopt. We have enabled ourselves to tackle the reform question or “increasing the effectiveness of the OSCE” question in a way that while it remains incomplete, by adopting a “roadmap”. On this roadmap, at least we think of it as a roadmap, we must follow it through and maintain and sustain a continuous dialogue.

Here let me interject a personal perception that when we accept such a roadmap, that is not a commitment but it is an indication of our willingness to engage in the discussions in good faith and to make every effort to address the issues raised in the roadmap. Why do I emphasize the notion of engagement? It is because quite often some countries such as mine, we are very justly brought to justice for not fully following our commitments. I know very clever legalistic minds will tell me there is a great difference between commitment and engagement. From our point of view, seeing people respecting their engagements is very telling of whether they are serious about moving forward. We put engagements and commitments, while legally different, in the same category: states leaving up to what they have accepted to deal with.

Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Minister,

You have heard a long list of statements that quite often and almost without exception repeat all the priorities you mentioned. My delegation will ask for your forgiveness if we do not give you an itemized reading of what we heard and what we feel about each, for the one good reason that your list of priorities which is quite comprehensive, as every Chairman tries to be, does not fall from the sky. That list reflects, emerges out of our own former decisions, our desires and our agendas. The list you have is a reflection of over the years and last year what this group and member states have worked with and made certain decisions. One can only rearrange the list of priorities in ranking them, but it would be rather bizarre if anybody did not share your view that those issues are important. You have not invented actually any new one; therefore the burden is on us to live up to what we gave you as an inspiration, a source, a basis.

When we look at priorities, my delegation, if you allow me this reflection, thinks of four ingredients as to what makes a priority: what is necessary, what is desirable, what is possible and ultimately, what is doable. Things can be possible, not always doable. The combination of those will create what we think of as priorities and from what I heard, many delegations have a rather more specific way of ranking them, of telling which one is of more interest to them. We have ours, we will not bother you with it here. You will particularly hear some of them when, as we look forward to it, receiving you in Yerevan; I can assure you that the discussions will not be limited just to the Nagorno Karabagh issue. We will engage in some other of your priorities but if you hear it there it may have a different flavor.

Therefore, in implementing your priorities we see the following challenges. The first challenge is that through the OSCE we ought to create stability without stasis through adaptation; freezing a situation is not always a good option. We must deal with security threats, but recognize that they are as much within states as between states, and remain alert to the dilemmas between security and human rights. We must pursue prosperity, but without exacerbating the gap between the “haves” and the “have nots” which are at the source of many social and political conflicts. That gap cannot be allowed in many ways to amplify social injustice. We, of course, must pursue human rights, but without hiding behind clever hierarchies of who is human, to what degree humans are humans and entitled to certain protections. Of course, we must continue to pursue democracy and democratization, but accept with some humility that democracy is not just a series of cosmetic rituals.

Finally, on the issue of regional co-operation, my delegation is really convinced that regional co-operation is not only a pay-off of peace and conflict resolution, but is a necessary, useful step in creating the atmosphere within which regional co-operation may lead to and facilitate peace and resolution.

Let me conclude by saying that I think the Belgian Chairmanship has a nice context in which it is working at the OSCE in a family atmosphere because I was just imagining that the European Union now is at its zenith of what I would call its “collaborative context”: the Chairmanship, the previous Chairmanship, the next Chairmanship, the Secretary General, the Director of ODIHR, High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Representative on Freedom of the Media and of course, I welcome

right next to me, which is always the EU, the Presidency of the EU. It is an “EU Club” that has its presence and its contribution to make to our activities. Therefore, within this “club” we expect cohesion, co-operation and shared values will facilitate and enhance the work of the Chairmanship.

One last item. We do welcome the new Troika: we have been familiar and in close co-operation with the outgoing Slovenian Chair and we are very personally excited about having Spain join that group.

With these notes, let me please welcome you again and say good luck to you and therefore also good luck to us, all member states. Our interdependence cannot make that sentence into simply a polite formality.

Thank you.