

MC.DEL/20/05
5 December 2005

ENGLISH only



**Statement by
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the Republic of Armenia
13th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council**

**5-6 December 2005
Ljubljana, Slovenia**

It is 30 years since the Helsinki Final Act. The world and the purposes for which it was enacted are no longer with us. Yet the principles, norms and values of that document have endured the test of time, although the vehicles and instruments that have articulated and politically promoted and protected those fundamental principles of human rights and the rights of people, have adapted and changed.

Or perhaps they have endured *because* they have transformed themselves.

After all, the participating states, too, are not what they used to be. Though still in transition, Armenia, for example, is less fragile, less vulnerable, less inexperienced with the ways of an open society. Independence is already 14 years old. Our institutions are more democratic, our economy more private, our markets more liberal, our trade more diversified, our diplomacy unconstrained and free to interact with North and South, West and East.

Of course, our transition is not complete. But, frankly, everywhere in the OSCE region, economies are in some stage of transition, the rule of law is a work in progress, the movement from citizen rights to human rights still a difficult challenge.

Mr. Chairman,

We all know these things. The essential task before us is to make sure the rules, methods and practices of the OSCE adapt sufficiently and appropriately to remain effective and beneficial and not exacerbate the inevitably uneven power and influence among this group of 55 – where San Marino, Monaco and Liechtenstein are members together with the United States, the Russian Federation and the EU.

It was in a search for such prudent adaptation that in Sofia, at the last Ministerial, we opted to seek the assessments and recommendations of a Panel of Eminent Persons. Indeed, seven wise persons conferred and saw the need for modification.

Mr. Chairman,

Armenia remains ready to work further, to participate fully and try to make the OSCE as an organization become more resilient, more effective and more capable to meet the challenges ahead of us: terrorism, the consolidation of democracy, respect for human rights, the expansion of economic opportunity, managing migration in all its manifestations, the resolution of existing and emerging conflicts and the reconstruction and rehabilitation of areas affected by those conflicts. These challenges can only be met if all Participating States avoid seeing the world through the narrow prism of their own domestic political imperatives.

Mr. Chairman,

Today and 30 years from now, the integrity of the Helsinki Final Act will be protected and preserved only if the integrality of the document is respected. The Helsinki Decalogue is just like the Ten Commandments. Their functionality, appropriateness and efficacy depend on a unified approach, not an expedient and selective one.

That is why when the right of self-determination of the people of Nagorno Karabakh is callously dismissed, we insist on reminding the world that this is not a conflict between principles, this is a people's struggle for self-determination.

Since the conflict began, international developments and self-determination processes in different parts of the world have led to fundamental changes in international thinking on this issue. Relationships between states – new and old – are evolving. We have witnessed East Timor's independence through a referendum and the signing of an agreement in Sudan concluding a decades-old conflict on the basis of a referendum to be held in one part of the country. Today there are serious deliberations about Kosovo's future status. Among political, legal and academic experts, there is a growing awareness of the possibility and reality of recognizing the right of self-determination in certain circumstances.

Those circumstances nearly exactly describe NK today. Azerbaijan has no control whatsoever over Karabakh, which has achieved the attributes of complete sovereignty in the last 15 years. In addition to the duration and depth of its self-determination, Nagorno Karabakh's situation is further reinforced and made complete by the following facts. First, it seceded legally, according to the laws of the day. Second, the territory in question has never been within the jurisdiction of independent Azerbaijan. Third, Azerbaijan, in perpetrating violence against people that it considered its own citizens, has lost the moral right to custody over those people. And, finally, there is the *de facto* political reality of Nagorno Karabakh's proven ability to hold elections, govern its people, protect its borders and conduct international relations.

In other words, actually in Helsinki language, they are exercising their right to “without external interference, pursue as they wish their political, economic, social and cultural development.” This is their right. This was the world's promise to the peoples who lived on the other side of the Iron Curtain, and some of whom, like us, are sitting around this table, today. The people of Nagorno Karabakh are no less deserving of that promise.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, let me express Armenia's appreciation for the work done by the Slovenian Chairmanship. The proof of Slovenia's hospitality and generosity is evident throughout this Ministerial Council. We congratulate Belgium for its assuming the Chairmanship next.