



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
TO THE OSCE

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STATEMENT

in response to the Report by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

as delivered by Ambassador Andranik Hovhannisyan

at the 1567th Meeting of the Permanent Council

4 June 2026

Mr. Chair,

The Delegation of Armenia warmly welcomes High Commissioner Christophe Kamp back to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his comprehensive report.

We attach great importance to the mandate of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, which remains one of the OSCE's most important instruments for conflict prevention at the earliest stage. This mandate has lost none of its relevance. On the contrary, in the current fragile security environment, it has acquired renewed urgency.

Tensions involving national minorities rarely emerge in isolation. They are often rooted in discrimination, the denial of fundamental rights and attempts to suppress or erase the identity, language, religion, culture and historical memory of communities. Addressing such concerns early, through dialogue, inclusive policies and respect for human rights, is essential to preventing escalation and preserving peace and stability.

We particularly welcome the attention devoted in the report to contested historical narratives, and we look forward to the upcoming issuance of the Siena Recommendations on Contested Histories. We believe this is a timely contribution. The three policy areas identified in the Recommendations - the legal and policy sphere, public spaces and education - capture with precision the domains in which historical memory shapes inter-community relations, both within societies and between neighbouring States.

In this context, we cannot but emphasize the importance of countering the rise of hate speech, xenophobia, racism, intolerance and aggressive nationalism, which are among the earliest warning signs of looming violations of the rights of national minorities. Dehumanizing rhetoric trivializes violence and paves the way for persecution and, in the gravest cases, for atrocity crimes. Hate speech breeds hate crimes. The existence of early warning tools does not, regrettably, translate automatically into early action, and we count on the High Commissioner to continue alerting participating States whenever such patterns emerge.

Armenia also wishes to emphasize the importance of protecting cultural and religious heritage in the context of national minority rights. Cultural and religious sites, monuments, cemeteries, places of worship, manuscripts, inscriptions and other expressions of heritage are not merely material objects.

They are living evidence of the identity and memory of communities. Their protection is indispensable for mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and reconciliation.

We also wish to commend the High Commissioner for the dedicated attention given in the report to the situation of women and girls belonging to national minorities. We appreciate the recognition that women belonging to national minorities play important roles in conflict prevention, social cohesion, dialogue and reconciliation.

Mr. Chair,

At the national level, Armenia remains committed to strengthening the protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities. The Constitution of Armenia provides for the allocation of seats in the National Assembly to representatives of national minorities, thereby ensuring their participation in the country's political life.

The protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities in Armenia is also prioritized as an important component of the National Strategy for the Protection of Human Rights. As an important step forward, the Ministry of Justice of Armenia has drafted the Law "On National Minorities." Following interagency and public discussions with the participation of civil society, as well as review by the Venice Commission, the draft has been revised in line with best international standards.

Mr. Chair,

In closing, we reaffirm Armenia's commitment to strengthening cooperation with the High Commissioner and to supporting the effective implementation of his mandate across the OSCE area.

Thank you.