



**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan**  
***1143<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Permanent Council,***  
***27 April 2017***

*on religious tolerance and non-discrimination*

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan thanks the Delegation of the Russian Federation for raising this important issue and bringing the statement of the CIS Council of Foreign Ministers to the attention of the Permanent Council. Azerbaijan has signed this statement and fully supports its content.

Growing trend of intolerance and discrimination against Muslims, Christians and members of other religions in the OSCE area seriously threatens harmony and stability of our societies. Islamophobic attacks and public rhetoric observed in the OSCE participating States are alarming. Azerbaijan favors comprehensive approach towards combating these negative phenomena with a view to enhancing dialogue and mutual understanding among the cultures and civilizations. OSCE with its concept of comprehensive security, inclusive membership and established partnerships is well placed to be a platform of cooperation in this regard.

We underline the important role of the ODIHR in promoting best practices of tolerance in diverse societies in light of its existing mandate and OSCE commitments. Further steps are needed aimed at enhancing the culture of respect for differences in the OSCE area in cooperation with the Chairmanship and the ODIHR. We encourage the participating States to take advantage of the OSCE's assistance to that end.

Against the background of rising threat of intolerance and discrimination, failure by participating States to implement the tasking of the Basel Ministerial Council to enhance OSCE's efforts in this field must be addressed. We call on all participating States to engage constructively in implementation of this Ministerial tasking and encourage the Chairmanship to facilitate discussions on this important matter ahead of Ministerial Council in Vienna.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.