



**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan
1146th Meeting of the Permanent Council,
18 May 2017**

*in response to Mr. Maroš Šefčovič,
the Vice-President of the European Commission*

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan welcomes Mr. Maroš Šefčovič, the Vice-President of the European Commission, to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his intervention.

The role of the OSCE in matters related to energy security is limited to sharing of best practices among the participating States. The dialogue requires, among others, proper assessment and appreciation of contributions made by participating States without resorting to artificial balancing approaches. In this context, we believe that discussions on energy security in the OSCE could have benefitted from more genuine and comprehensive exchange of views.

Strategic partnership in the field of energy remains the cornerstone of our cooperation with the EU. Azerbaijan-EU energy partnership has been materialized through cooperation in realization of several regional and trans-regional projects, in particular development of the Southern Gas Corridor (SGC). The Joint Declaration on the Southern Gas Corridor recognized the Republic of Azerbaijan as a substantial contributor to – and enabler of – the Southern Gas Corridor. This Declaration underscores that creation of this route corresponds to the shared strategic objective of and the Republic of Azerbaijan and the European Union to diversify gas delivery routes and establish direct energy and transport links. Without Azerbaijan the SGC is not practically possible to be realized. All the infrastructure built currently within the SGC is dedicated to deliver the ShahDeniz gas from Azerbaijan.

We note with satisfaction the progress achieved in implementation the four segments of the Southern Gas Corridor and highlight strong political support for timely implementation of SGC as expressed during the 3rd Meeting of SGC Advisory Council, recently hosted by Azerbaijan.

We fully agree with that peace and security are strongly interlinked with energy security. In this context, we welcome the Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy, adopted in 2016, which reaffirms that “the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of states, the inviolability of borders and peaceful settlement of disputes are key elements of the European security order and these principles apply to all states, both within and beyond the EU's borders”.

We are pleased that intensive exchange of high-level visits between Baku and Brussels has been instrumental in giving impetus for enhancement of dialogue and cooperation in numerous areas of mutual interest. Recent visit of President Ilham Aliyev to Brussels in February 2017 has a special significance in this regard, since it opened a new chapter in EU-Azerbaijan relations with official launching of negotiations on a new bilateral agreement that will provide framework for wide-ranging cooperation.

Within this understanding, Azerbaijan is willing to further enhance cooperation with the EU in the energy field and also in other areas of common interest, such as connectivity, environment, education, tourism, culture and mobility, people-to-people contacts, as well as support for small and medium enterprises.

In conclusion, we once again thank Mr. Šefčovič for his presence at the Permanent Council and wish him success in his future endeavors.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.