



**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan
1148th Meeting of the Permanent Council,
1 June 2017**

*in response to Mr. Ivo Šrámek,
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for Security
and Multilateral Issues of the Czech Republic,*

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan warmly welcomes Mr. Ivo Šrámek, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic for Security and Multilateral Issues to the Permanent Council and thanks him for outlining the priorities of the Czech Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

The cooperation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe is based on respect for the aims and principles that these organizations stand for. Azerbaijan welcomes the priorities of the Czech Chairmanship and supports closer coordination and cooperation between the OSCE and CoE on the basis of principles of complementarity, transparency and democratic accountability.

Promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination is a matter of utmost importance against the background of growing challenge of Islamophobia in the European continent. Azerbaijan continues to be a strong proponent of multiculturalism based on mutually respectful dialogue among cultures and civilizations. We are of the view that the Council of Europe and the OSCE should redouble their joint efforts in this regard on the basis of existing set of commitments agreed within the two Organizations. Azerbaijan stands ready to contribute to these efforts.

Ongoing conflicts in Europe pose the most serious threat to peace and security, and challenges democracy and our shared values. Attempts to freeze these conflicts without sustainable solution undermine the vision for whole and free Europe without dividing lines. It is, therefore, of paramount importance for the both Organizations to redouble their efforts within their respective competences towards the earliest resolution of conflicts on the basis of their relevant decisions and documents.

As for the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, we would like to recall that before joining the Council of Europe, both parties undertook commitments for peaceful resolution of the conflict. Yet, we see apparent attempts to consolidate the *status-quo* to the detriment of security and stability at the regional and global levels.

Lack of condemnation of such a policy by both the OSCE and CoE not only appeases the aggressor that fails to implement its commitments, but also undermines trust in the peace process. Over the last year, the President of Armenia openly refused to engage in substantive

negotiations to change the *status-quo* of occupation and withdraw forces. Yet, neither the OSCE nor the CoE publicly condemned such a behavior and pressured on Armenia to cease its reliance on the *status-quo* created through illegal use of force against territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. We underline the urgency for taking consistent efforts to persuade Armenia to implement its commitments towards the settlement of the conflict.

The OSCE and its Minsk Group, mandated by the UN Security Council for the resolution of the conflict, should support efforts of other international organizations, including the Council of Europe, and take advantage of their assets and expertise. We deplore the practice of intervening with the activities of other organizations and preventing discussions of various aspects of the conflict resolution. In this context, we urge for revitalization of the sub-committee on the conflict of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and enhanced cooperation with the OSCE Minsk Group and its co-chairmen.

In conclusion, we once again thank Mr. Šrámek for his presence at the Permanent Council and wish him a successful Chairmanship.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.