



**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan  
1126<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting of the Permanent Council,  
31 December 2016**

*on the issue of extension of mandate of the OSCE Office in Yerevan*

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan regrets to inform the Permanent Council that it is not in a position to support the draft decision on extension of the mandate of the OSCE Office in Yerevan.

The Republic of Azerbaijan on a number of occasions drew attention of the Permanent Council that the activities of the OSCE Office in Yerevan, in particular in politico-military dimension, have been source of deep concern for Azerbaijan. We have underlined that OSCE assistance provided to Armenia through its field mission, in particular in politico-military dimension, in no circumstances should be utilized in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan or serve to consolidation of the occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan by Armenia. We have also underlined that that our support to the activities of this field mission will be depend on prevention of misuse of assistance provided or capacity acquired by the host country against legitimate security concerns of Azerbaijan.

In this context, we wish to recall that OSCE field missions both in Armenia and Azerbaijan were established in late 1990s on the basis of understanding that their activities would not cover issues related to the ongoing Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, since these issues are dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference. It was due to this understanding that former OSCE field mission in Azerbaijan had not engaged in any single activity related to alleviating of numerous consequences of the conflict, including in the humanitarian field.

It has become source of serious concern that over the past years the Office in Yerevan has been drawn into the demining-related activity, which is clearly a post-conflict rehabilitation measure. As it is clearly evident from responses we received from the Office in Yerevan, activities in this particular field are directly related to ongoing conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Within this programmatic activity, the Office extends support to Armenia's Center for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise (CHDE) allegedly in settlements on the border with the Republic of Azerbaijan, which were mined by the Republic of Armenia in the course of its military operations against Azerbaijan.

The Republic of Azerbaijan conveyed its principled position to the Chairmanship and the Secretariat that Office's demining-related programmatic activities needs to excluded from its activities and underlined that making necessary adjustments to the planned activities of the Office for the next year would be an important step towards securing collective support of all OSCE participating States for activities of the OSCE Office in Yerevan.

We proceed from a strong understanding that all OSCE field missions should be common assets for all OSCE participating States and as such they should act in accordance with body of the OSCE principles, commitments and agreed mandates and by no means should harm legitimate interests of other participating States through their activities.

It is of profound regret that intensive consultations with the current German and incoming Austrian Chairmanships, with participation of the Secretary-General and the representative of CPC did not produce a result that would accommodate the concerns of the Azerbaijani side. As a way out of the current situation we agreed to the proposal of the current and incoming Chairmanships that they would to issue a joint political guidance for the OSCE field mission in Yerevan, instructing it to terminate its de-mining related activities. Since OSCE field operations and institutions are operating on unified budget based on contributions from all participating States, their activities should be transparent to participating States. The would-be guidance to the Office in Yerevan will affect the programmatic activity of the Office and it is important for all participating States to be aware of its content. This would ensure transparency and accountability and would prevent re-occurrence of this undesirable situation in the future. Proceeding from this understanding, the delegation of Azerbaijan requested that the Chairmanships' directive should be distributed among all participating States with proper reference number.

Unfortunately, after long discussions it became clear that the Chairmanship is hesitating to distribute such guidance among participating States. Pressure and open blackmailing of the Republic of Armenia, which engaged in hostage-taking exercise and threatened the operation of other filed missions and adoption of a decision on 2016 revised budget, makes it impossible to reach a solution to the situation.

Under these circumstances, the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan is left with no other option but to refrain from supporting the draft decision on extension of the mandate of the OSCE Office in Yerevan as it stands.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.