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**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan
Special meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council No.1033
15 January, 2015**

*in response to the address delivered by the Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia,
H.E. Mr. Ivica Dačić*

Mr. Chairperson,

We warmly welcome the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia H.E. Mr. Ivica Dačić to the Permanent Council as the Chairperson-in-Office and thank him for outlining the priorities of the Chairmanship.

The pan-European security architecture is at a critical juncture. We need to restore trust and confidence among the OSCE participating States through re-dedicating ourselves to the Helsinki Principles in their entirety and strictly observing them in our relations vis-à-vis each other. The OSCE community should be united against the deviations from these principles, including the manifestations of double standards and selective interpretations of the Principles.

Recent upsurge of terrorism across Europe illustrates urgent necessity for enhancing tolerance and inter-cultural dialogue. Taking this opportunity I would like to extend our condolences to the French colleagues over terrorist attacks in Paris. The rise of radicalism, extremism, ethnic and religious intolerance and xenophobia is a common concern for the entire OSCE community and requires bold actions on behalf of our organization.

In this context, the relevant OSCE institutions under guidance of the Chairmanship should undertake efforts to address these problems through implementing their respective mandates without double standards, geographic or other preferences.

Mr. Chairperson,

The protracted conflicts in the territories of the OSCE participating states represent the most serious challenge for all three dimensions of comprehensive security. The OSCE should re-double its efforts with a view to resolving the conflicts and eliminating their harsh consequences.

In this regard, the OSCE's indispensable role as a forum for negotiations for the settlement of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan is yet to be materialized. The discussions with the mediation process of the co-chairs of the Minsk Group in more than 20 years have not yielded any tangible results, which in turn creates impression that the OSCE is fine with the status-quo and only interested in containing the conflict.

We encourage the Serbian chairmanship to take practical steps to reinvigorate the negotiation format of the OSCE Minsk Group with a view to finding a soonest resolution of this conflict. The Azerbaijani side is of firm belief that the more we discuss the issues related to the conflict within the OSCE, including in the "Helsinki+40", Security, Economic and Environmental and Human Dimension Committees, as well as Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Cooperation, the better OSCE Participating states would be informed about the challenges we face on the path of settlement.

Azerbaijan stands ready to discuss reasonable confidence-and security building measures that could serve to move beyond the status-quo created in the result of illegal use of force and massive expulsion of hundred thousands of Azerbaijanis from their native lands. In this regard, we strongly believe that withdrawal of Armenian troops from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and dialogue between the conflict affected communities, namely the Azerbaijani and Armenian communities of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan, is the most necessary and demanded confidence building measure, and hope for active contribution of the Serbian chairmanship for realizing such a dialogue.

While discussing numerous issues pertaining to the third dimension, we should also pay adequate attention to the gross violations of rights of the refugees and IDPs across the OSCE area. Azerbaijan will continue to raise these problems at appropriate formats and in this regard, we hope for constructive approach by the Chairmanship and participating States.

Azerbaijan is a strong advocate of harmony and dialogue among different cultures and civilizations and stands ready to cooperate with the Chairmanship in furthering the spirit of dialogue and tolerance across the OSCE area.

We are also looking forward to working with the Serbian Chairmanship on the topics of good governance and transparency, including promotion of accountability across all sectors of society, namely, public and private sectors, media and civil society, as well as combating illegal economic activities and their linkages with corruption. We would be ready to share our best practices in these fields.

I would like to conclude by wishing every success to our Serbian colleagues.

I thank you.