



Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan

1076th Meeting of the Permanent Council,

12 November 2015

in response to the report by the Co-chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan welcomes the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group, Ambassadors Igor Popov, James Warlick and Pierre Andrieu, the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk and the head of the High-Level Planning Group, Colonel Markus Widmer to the Permanent Council. We took note of their reports and would like to share our position in this regard.

I would like to use the Co-Chairs occasional appearance in Vienna as a unique opportunity for critical assessment of dynamic of the OSCE Minsk process and its conformity to the situation in the conflict zone as well as respective positions of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

On November 10, 2015, the Spokesperson of the Foreign Ministry of Azerbaijan presented our official assessment of the activity of the OSCE Minsk Group co-Chairmen and I will quote some parts of it:

"OSCE document dated 23 March 1995 number 525/95 on the mandate of the OSCE MG Co-chairs ...endorsed that the Co-Chairs in their activities should be guided by the relevant resolutions of the UNSC (822, 853, 874, 884) the Charter of the United Nations and the OSCE Budapest Summit decision and should present report on the implementation of the UNSC resolutions to the President of the UNSC and Secretary General of the United Nations.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan repeatedly expressed its dissatisfaction that the OSCE Minsk Group co-Chairs has so far failed to fulfill the mandate entrusted by the UNSC. Within the period of more than 20 years OSCE MG co-Chairs did not yield any progress in the resolution of the conflict, figuratively speaking, not even a single soldier of Armenian armed forces left the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and not even a single refugee or IDP returned to the homes of origin.

The main cause of it is the conciliatory attitude of the OSCE MG co-Chairs to the continuous occupation of Azerbaijan's territory by Armenia.

It is very unfortunate, that there is still strong impression that with Armenia's support OSCE MG co-Chairs are trying to monopolize the peace process and keep existing status quo on the ground as it is.

Azerbaijan will continue its practice and activity on informing the international organizations and world community about Armenian aggression, occupation of its territories, notorious ethnic cleansing on its seized lands and blatant violations of norms and principles of international law.

OSCE MG co-Chairs must intensify their efforts to reach the breakthrough on the peace talks as they were tasked by the abovementioned UNSC resolutions and Presidents of their respective countries in their joint statements in L'Aquila, Muskoka, Deauville, Los Cabos and Enniskillen.

Azerbaijan by all means will ensure restoration of its territorial integrity and sovereignty within its internationally recognized borders.”

We believe that such a critical assessment of activities of the co-Chairs by the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry merits detailed discussion by the Permanent Council. Our Delegation encourages the OSCE participating States and the OSCE Minsk Group to consider the following political guidance for the mediators, if the OSCE has an interest in achieving a peaceful resolution of this conflict.

First, the OSCE MG co-Chairs should build their activity strictly in accordance with relevant provisions of the UNSC resolutions, OSCE Budapest 1994 Summit decision and UN Charter, which constitute the basis of their mandate.

Second, the co-Chairs must intensify their efforts to start the negotiations on comprehensive peace agreement without further delay.

Third, Armenia must be pressured to withdraw from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and the OSCE MG Co-chairs have to persuade Armenia to change the *status quo* in the interests of peace.

Fourth, the co-Chairs should cease their attempts to monopolize the peace process and to prevent any initiative aimed at advancing it. The Co-Chairs need to take more constructive attitude towards other international structures and bilateral initiatives promoting resolution of the conflict and take advantage of the opportunities they could offer. The OSCE Minsk Group must be revitalized and comprehensively address obstacles to the negotiation process.

Fifth, concerns over the attempts to consolidate the results of occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan must be promptly addressed by the OSCE Minsk Group and its co-Chairs as the situation there directly impacts on the prospects of conflict settlement. The co-Chairs must dissuade Armenia's provocations on the ground as it is detrimental to the peace process.

Mr. Chairperson,

Despite the above-mentioned difficulties to the peace process, which we hope that the co-Chairs will find it possible to rectify, the mere fact that Azerbaijan hopes that the negotiations will yield results is a sign of a genuine political will of the leadership of Azerbaijan to finding a peaceful end to the conflict. I would like to reiterate that Azerbaijan remains to be the most interested party in finding the earliest political solution to the harsh humanitarian, military, political,

economic and social consequences of the conflict and to restore the violated human rights of up to 1 million of refugees and IDPs, who we host since 1988.

In the meantime, the policy of Azerbaijan is very pragmatic and realistic. We cannot engage in the peace process that is not based on the mandate and tasking of the UNSC given to the co-Chairs and we will not conduct the negotiations just to imitate the peace process. The OSCE Minsk process should return to the right track.

I wish to emphasize that the policy pursued by Azerbaijan in the region and beyond so far has proven to be the only effective remedy to keep the prospects of peaceful resolution of the conflict. Armenia continue to be even more vulnerable and less independent, until it starts withdrawing its troops from Azerbaijan and changing its policy of reliance on the *status quo*. Regardless of the efforts of some external actors, especially the Armenian diaspora, to present the consequences of war with Azerbaijan as the *fait accomplis*, in reality the continued occupation of the Azerbaijani territories will continue to remain the major reason of isolation of Armenia from all regional and trans-regional projects as well as of enormous demographic, socio-economic and political challenges it faces.

The conflict can be resolved on the basis of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders. We will never reconcile with occupation of our territories. The sooner Armenia comprehends this irrefutable reality, the earlier the conflict would be resolved and the countries and peoples in the region would benefit from the prospects of cooperation and economic development.

In this context, we look forward for the next meeting between the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan and hope that this meeting will be instrumental in re-invigorating substantive talks on political solution of the conflict.

In conclusion, we thank once again the co-chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group, the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office and the Head of the High-Level Planning Group for the presence at the Permanent Council and wish them every success in their very challenging work.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.