



## **Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

### **1061<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Permanent Council,**

**2 July 2015**

*in response to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Germany, H.E. Mr. F.W. Steinmeier*

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan joins previous speakers in warmly welcoming the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Germany, H.E. Mr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier to the Permanent Council and thanks him for comprehensive presentation on priorities of the incoming German Chairmanship in 2016.

Germany's chairmanship at the OSCE comes at a time when the OSCE community faces a deep crisis of trust within the organization caused by ongoing violations of the basic principles guiding inter-State relations in the OSCE area. This crisis has not started yesterday. Continued violations of participating States' sovereignty and territorial integrity, systematic efforts to challenge the inviolability of the frontiers through acquisition of territory by force observed for last 25 years gradually eroded the very basis of pan-European security architecture and lies at the core of current situation. At this critical juncture, genuine dialogue among the participating States is a must to overcome the crisis through re-establishing respect for the Helsinki Principles, in particular in conflict resolution, without double standards or selective approach.

The protracted conflicts in the OSCE area are at the heart of the OSCE-wide crisis. The lack of resolution of these conflicts, along with their devastating effect on peace and security at the regional level, pose real challenges for realizing our common vision of a security community free of dividing lines and zones with different levels of security. Effective implementation of existing arms control and CSBM regimes and their possible modernization is undeniably interwoven with the conflict situations. Military transparency, predictability and confidence cannot be established while the armed forces of one participating State continues to be illegally deployed in the territories of the other.

The effectiveness of the OSCE in achieving long-awaited solution to these conflicts is a test case for the reliability, as well as relevance of the Organization in European security architecture. Unless sustainable solution to the conflicts is achieved, the OSCE can hardly overcome the crisis of credibility and mistrust. We don't see a path to strengthen OSCE's role in conflict cycle without properly addressing the existing conflicts in the territories of the participating States. In this context, we are pleased to note that finding sustainable solutions to protracted conflicts will be one of the priority directions of the German Chairmanship in 2016.

Past experience illustrates that extending formal support to negotiation formats in protracted conflicts or expressing a wish for the tangible progress, without pressure on the occupying forces to change the status-quo and start the withdrawal process, are not enough for a breakthrough in the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. Ignorance of the OSCE towards the situation is not helpful for the solution of the conflict and comforts the occupying power to continue its policy. OSCE's capacity to contain tensions in the conflict zone and prevent escalation of the conflict can be built, if real situation on the ground is addressed. Such a capacity-building is proportionately dependent on the Organization's involvement into conflict resolution. Until OSCE's meaningful engagement is restored, we cannot accept equal blame sharing between the victim and the aggressor, and selective application of the Helsinki Principles. In this context, we strongly encourage the incoming German Chairmanship to fully utilize the potential of the OSCE Minsk Group, being one of the members of this format since its establishment.

In the meantime, the ongoing sufferings of millions of refugees and IDPs forcefully expelled from their homes as a result of conflicts should no longer be treated as "taboo" within this organization, especially in light of wide-range existing OSCE commitments on these issues. It is with deep regret that for a long time the issues of refugees and IDPs have been kept hostage for narrow-minded political agendas of certain participating States. Continuation of this situation would be tantamount to discrimination against our shared commitments in the third dimension. It is in this context that we strongly encourage the incoming chairmanship to give proper guidance to relevant OSCE executive structures and institutions, in particular CPC and ODIHR with a view to addressing the problems of refugees and IDPs.

With that, we thank Mr. Minister for his presence today at the Permanent Council and wish him and his able team in Vienna every success in their future endeavors.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.