



Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan

1075th Meeting of the Permanent Council, 05 November, 2015

*in response to the Personal Representatives of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for
Tolerance and Non-Discrimination*

Mr. Chairperson,

We join previous speakers in welcoming Personal Representatives of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Professor Talip Kuchukchan, Rabbi Andrew Baker and Ambassador Alexey Avtonomov to the Permanent Council and thank them for their interesting presentations.

At the outset, I wish to underline that Azerbaijan supports strengthening of your mandates and further institutionalization of your offices. It is obvious from your presentations that many threats of religious extremism, intolerance and discrimination are observed both within and outside the OSCE region. Current migration crisis in Europe regrettably illustrates the persistence of intolerance and discrimination based on religion, race and ethnicity, in particular in the context of Islamophobia.

This factor demonstrates the importance of having more regular dialogue on these challenges, as well as inviting OSCE partners and neighbors for discussing these issues.

In the meantime, there is unique and positive experience of religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence of different faith communities in the OSCE region. It is important to promote such achievements and share them among the participating States.

Azerbaijan continues to advance values of tolerance, multiculturalism and understanding among peoples in our region and beyond. We are proud initiator of the “Baku Process” that provides a valuable platform for an open exchange of views among individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and

linguistic backgrounds and heritage living in different continents. We have established the International Center for Multiculturalism in Baku, which serves for promoting of inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue on regional and global level. In order to increase awareness of a unique experience of Azerbaijan, which has been a home for millennia for many world religions, we are hosting a number of international events. Among them I wish to underline the First European Games hosted this year in Baku, with the participation of more than 6000 athletes from 50 countries. In 2017, Azerbaijan will host the Islamic Solidarity Games. In 2016, we are planning to hold the 7th Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in Baku. This all testify to the willingness of Azerbaijan to promote the ideas of multiculturalism.

Mr. Chairperson,

We believe that due to its broad membership and comprehensive approach to security the OSCE could serve as a useful platform for exchanging best practices for promoting mutual respect, tolerance and understanding. In this context, we value the Basel Ministerial Declaration on Combating Anti-Semitism and look forward for substantial deliverables on enhancing efforts to combat intolerance and discrimination against Muslims and Christians, as well as enhancing inter-faith and inter-religious dialogue at the Belgrade Ministerial Council.

In conclusion, I wish to thank the Personal Representatives of the Chairman-in-Office for their presence at the Permanent Council and wish them every success in their important work.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.