



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

*1084<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting of the Permanent Council,*

*14 January 2016*

*in response to Minister of Foreign Affairs of Germany, H.E. Mr. Frank-Walter  
Steinmeier*

Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset, I wish to join other delegations in conveying our heartfelt condolences to Turkey and Germany, which recently suffered from a barbaric terror attacks in Turkey. We share the grief of families of the victims and wish speedy recovery to the wounded.

The Delegation of Azerbaijan warmly welcomes H.E. Minister Steinmeier to the Permanent Council and thanks him for comprehensive presentation of priorities of the German Chairmanship of the OSCE.

Germany takes the helm of the OSCE Chairmanship at a time of deep crisis in the Organization. Systematic attempts to challenge the territorial integrity, sovereignty and internationally recognized borders of OSCE participating States, double standards and selective application of the Helsinki Final Act Principles, violation of inherent balance of three dimensions of OSCE's comprehensive security concept lie at the core of crisis.

We need more dialogue, mutual understanding and constructive engagement to overcome the crisis. The OSCE, due to its comprehensive security concept and broad participation represents a unique platform in this regard. Azerbaijan welcomes German Chairmanship's intention to renew dialogue, rebuild trust and restore security in the OSCE and expresses its readiness for cooperation.

OSCE institutions and field missions have an important potential to diffuse tensions among the participating States. To that end Azerbaijan encourages the OSCE executive structures to act as bridge builders and utilize an entire toolbox of mandated activities, in particular a quiet diplomacy. Transparency and accountability of the OSCE field missions as well as adequate response to the legitimate questions of participating States over programmatic activities in the field are of key importance for maintaining

confidence within the Organization. We expect the German Chairmanship to improve effective oversight over the OSCE Office in Yerevan with a view to ensuring full conformity of its activities with the mandate, OSCE agreed principles, commitments and decisions.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Armenia's occupation of internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan remains the major obstacle to achieving a breakthrough in the negotiations. The main reason of that is that there is no pressure on Armenia to completely and unconditionally withdraw its troops, as it is demanded by relevant UN Security Council resolutions. A conciliatory attitude to the illegal presence of Armenian troops is accompanied by the attempts of the co-chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group to monopolize the peace process and prevent any external contribution to political solution of the conflict. As a result, the role of the OSCE and its Minsk Group in conflict resolution has been limited to extending a formal support to the co-chairs, with no sense of involvement.

Mr. Minister,

Such an indifferent attitude to the continued occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan comforts Armenia, but it is detrimental to our common responsibility rooted in shared values and agreed principles. We want to continue to believe in the OSCE's capacity to act in solidarity with participating States, whose sovereignty and territorial integrity have been violated. We still have faith that OSCE will demonstrate concern over continuing violation of fundamental rights of close to one million Azerbaijani refugees and IDPs. We need to regularly address a deteriorating situation in the conflict zone and to expose the impediments to progress in the peace process. In this regard, Azerbaijan encourages the German Chairmanship to revitalize the role of OSCE Minsk Group in Vienna and to put resolution of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict high on the OSCE agenda.

The future of the European Conventional Arms Control regimes and confidence-and security building measures is undeniably interlinked with the conflict situations. We acknowledge the need to update and modernize the relevant arms control and confidence-and security building regimes to better reflect the current military and security conditions. The principle of host-nation consent should be the basis of any such attempt and the integrity and legally-binding nature of the conventional arms control regime should be preserved. This process should also adequately address the challenges posed by existence of so-called grey zones in the OSCE area.

We share the view of the German Chairmanship that the second dimension should be reinvigorated with a view to utilizing its untapped potential for enhancing security and stability in our region. Effective public-private partnership and increased economic connectivity within the OSCE region can be an important measure in this context.

Azerbaijan as an initiator and active participant of regional and trans-regional transport corridors welcomes the intention of the German Chairmanship to include promotion of economic connectivity, transport corridors and trade facilitation into the agenda of the second dimension. We stand ready to further cooperation with the Chairmanship in these areas.

In the third dimension, radicalization, ethnic and religious intolerance and xenophobia threatens stability of the OSCE region. Dramatic increase in Islamophobic attacks across the OSCE region, as well as deliberate attempts in certain participating States to abuse the ongoing refugee crisis for narrow political interests is alarming. We deeply regret for the failure in Belgrade to enhance OSCE's efforts to combat intolerance and discrimination against Muslims and Christians and strongly encourage the German Chairmanship to keep this issue high on its agenda in 2016.

In conclusion, we thank once again H.E. Mr. Steinmeier for his presence at the Permanent Council and wish him and his able teams in Berlin and Vienna every success in their endeavors in chairing the OSCE in 2016.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.