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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

Statement

**in response to the address of Pia Kauma, President of the OSCE PA
as delivered by Ambassador Armen Papikyan
at the 1438th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council**

07 September 2023

Mr. Chairman,

The Delegation of Armenia welcomes Ms. Pia Kauma, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in her first appearance to the Permanent Council and thanks for her address. We join colleagues in congratulating you on your election as President of the OSCE PA.

Madame President,

Since the last appearance of your predecessor Margareta Cederfelt at the Permanent Council back in January 2023, the situation in our region not only deteriorated but these days we are literary on the brink of a new war as Azerbaijan continues to escalate the situation with new attacks on the sovereign territory of Armenia and with the ongoing mass accumulation of heavy weaponry and troops across the entire border with Armenia and on the contact line with Nagorno-Karabakh.

All these new attacks are taking place against the backdrop of occupation of sovereign territory of Armenia and continued illegal detention of Armenian prisoners of war and civilian captives. The ongoing inhumane blockade of the Lachin Corridor, in sheer defiance to international law and, most notably, to the Orders of the International Court of Justice and the deliberate starvation of 120 thousand besieged people of Nagorno-Karabakh is an outrageous crime against humanity. In fact, only this episode violates anything else that we are supposed to defend here in the OSCE. Today the people of Nagorno-Karabakh not only are running out of food but they are running out of hope.

Madame President,

In the Vancouver Declaration which you recall in your address OSCE PA expressed hope that the situation will improve “through withdrawal of Azerbaijani military forces from the sovereign territory of Armenia and facilitation of the safe and transparent movement of people and commerce along the Lachin Corridor”. The OSCE PA also encouraged Azerbaijan “to engage in developing a positive agenda with the aim of guaranteeing the

rights and security of the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh in close co-operation with the international community”.

From the adoption of the Vancouver Declaration onward, Azerbaijan is doing quite the opposite: it continues to keep 120 000 people, among them 2000 pregnant women, 30 000 children and 20 000 elderlies, under effective blockade, it abducts ordinary people from the illegally installed checkpoint, carries out new attacks on the sovereign territory of Armenia resulting in new casualties. Just a few days ago, on 1 September 2023 Azerbaijan attacked the positions of the armed forces of Armenia leaving three servicemen killed and two wounded.

In other words, Azerbaijan brazenly disregards all the calls of the OSCE PA. And this has already become a new normal since this pattern of behaviour is well known. But what worries the most, Madame President, is that none of this has found any place in your address. And my question to you is, why in your statement you omitted one of the major ongoing humanitarian crises in the area of responsibility of the OSCE and how we should interpret your silence or omission?

Yet, you mention that “the OSCE is facing an existential crisis, exacerbated by the politicised withholding of financial resources and a systematic misuse of the consensus rule”. Rightly so, but this is just part of the truth. In our view, the main part of the problem is the notorious practice of staying away from inconvenient situations and avoiding mentioning or passing in silence other crisis situations in the area of responsibility of the OSCE. And it is exactly this approach, in our view, that is more and more questioning the relevance, credibility, I would say, even the very existence of this Organisation.

The purpose and meaning of this Organisation have been challenged turning the Means of this Organisation into Aims. The issue of the budget, as well as other administrative issues have become an end in itself.

Madam President, we very much hope that during your tenure OSCE PA will refrain from any activities that may be considered as legitimization of the use of force, promotion of the policy of ethnic cleansing, and glorification of war crimes. Regrettably, in the past we have witnessed this.

Madame President,

In November my country will host the autumn meeting of the OSCE PA. We really hope that the meeting in Yerevan will help to foster genuine inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation, and as you very eloquently put it “give hope to the commitments made in 1975”. But for that to happen bold actions are needed, especially from parliamentarians.

In closing, Madame President, let us wish you every success during your tenure.

Thank you.