

Chairmanship: Sweden

1339th PLENARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

1. Date: Monday, 11 October 2021 (in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference)

Opened: 10 a.m.
Closed: 11.30 a.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador U. Funered

3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 1: REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

Chairperson

- (a) *Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea*: Ukraine (PC.DEL/1572/21), United Kingdom, Slovenia-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Turkey; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Moldova, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1573/21), United States of America, Switzerland (PC.DEL/1567/21 OSCE+), Canada
- (b) *Deteriorating situation in Ukraine and continued non-implementation by the Ukrainian authorities of the Minsk agreements*: Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1568/21), Ukraine
- (c) *Statement by the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group issued on 8 October 2021*: United States of America (also on behalf of France and the Russian Federation), Slovenia-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra and San Marino, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1574/21), United Kingdom, Canada, Armenia (Annex), Azerbaijan (PC.DEL/1569/21 OSCE+)

Agenda item 2: REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
 CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE

Second Conflict Cycle Seminar of 2021, entitled “Strengthening the role of women and civil society in conflict prevention and resolution”, to be held in Vienna and via video teleconference on 12 October 2021: Chairperson

Agenda item 3: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

Announcement of the distribution of the next written report by the Secretary General on 21 October 2021: Director of the Office of the Secretary General

Agenda item 4: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

4. Next meeting:

Thursday, 21 October 2021, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1339
11 October 2021
Annex

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**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA**

Madam Chairperson,

At the outset, I should like to thank the distinguished representative of the United States of America for raising this current issue on the latest statement by the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group, which was released on 8 October. We also thank the delegations of the European Union, the United Kingdom and Canada for their statements.

This second statement by the Co-Chairs in the space of two weeks gives grounds for hoping that there will be consistency and continuity in the efforts to fully resume the negotiation process aimed at achieving a peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. An important development, in our view, is that following the first meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Armenia and Azerbaijan since the announcement of the ceasefire, during which a wide range of outstanding unresolved issues were discussed, the Co-Chairs held consultations with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, and the Vice President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Gilles Carbonnier, on pressing humanitarian problems requiring urgent solutions.

The immediate and unconditional release of all Armenian prisoners of war and civilian hostages held by Azerbaijan is the most critical humanitarian issue that remains unresolved, contrary to the requirements of international humanitarian law and in spite of the trilateral statement of 9 November 2020 on a ceasefire. Azerbaijan must finally heed the calls of the international community, comply with its obligations under international humanitarian law, abandon the malicious practice of concealing the true number of Armenian prisoners of war, and end the illegal incommunicado detention of these prisoners along with the mock trials and the imposition of lengthy sentences on them on the basis of bogus charges.

Full and unimpeded access by international humanitarian organizations so that they are able to carry out their mandated work in the Republic of Artsakh is all the more important for the people of Artsakh, who are trying to overcome the severe consequences of the recent illegal use of force and war of aggression.

It is particularly alarming that most of the Armenian historical and cultural heritage sites, including places of worship, cemeteries and monuments, together with thousands of museum exhibits, in the territories of Artsakh that came under the control of Azerbaijan have

been subjected to destruction, desecration and vandalism. In this regard, it is worth recalling that the Ghazanchetsots (Holy Saviour) Cathedral in Shushi, which within a few hours on 8 October 2020 was targeted by the Azerbaijani armed forces twice using high-precision weapons, was subsequently also vandalized and desecrated. Moreover, under the pretext of restoration work, the Azerbaijani occupation administration in Shushi is currently changing the architectural appearance of the cathedral in an attempt to erase its Armenian origin and identity.

Dear colleagues,

Despite the efforts of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs and calls from the international community to strictly adhere to the provisions of the trilateral statement of 9 November 2020, including ensuring a complete ceasefire and the termination of all hostilities in the area of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Azerbaijan continues its provocative actions along the line of contact with Artsakh and on the border with Armenia. On 9 October 2021, a civilian citizen of the Republic of Artsakh, Aram Tepnants, was fatally wounded by Azerbaijani sniper fire near the town of Martakert while he was carrying out agricultural work.

This killing of a farmer by sniper fire was a deliberate and cynical act that constitutes a flagrant violation of Azerbaijan's commitments under the ceasefire statement of 9 November 2020. It may also be indicative of the real intentions of Azerbaijan to undermine the implementation of the trilateral statement and the resumption of the negotiation process, and also to terrorize and force the population of Nagorno-Karabakh to leave their homes. Moreover, the intentional killing of an innocent civilian clearly demonstrates that the presence of the Azerbaijani armed forces near civilian settlements poses a real and immediate threat to their peaceful residents and their right to life. We strongly condemn this heinous crime committed by the armed forces of Azerbaijan and call for a full investigation into the murder and for punishment of all the perpetrators. It is worth noting that on the same day, the Azerbaijani armed forces opened fire near the village of Yeraskh, Armenia, wounding a further Armenian soldier.

Madam Chairperson,

The current situation in Nagorno-Karabakh is the result of a flagrant violation by Azerbaijan of several core principles of the Helsinki Final Act, namely refraining from the threat or use of force; peaceful settlement of disputes; equal rights and self-determination of peoples; and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. No one should be under any illusion that the results of the use of force, accompanied by war crimes and violations of international humanitarian law, can ever become the basis for a lasting and sustainable peace. Such a peace can only be achieved in the region through a comprehensive settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which must include determining the status of Artsakh on the basis of the realization by the people of Artsakh of their inalienable right to self-determination; ensuring the safe and dignified return of recently displaced population to their homes; and preserving the cultural and religious heritage of the region.

Madam Chairperson,

In closing, allow me once again to reiterate Armenia's readiness to continue our efforts to find a final and lasting solution to the conflict by political and diplomatic means,

based on the well-known principles proposed by the Co-Chair countries and their respective leaders. Only a negotiated and comprehensive settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict can pave the way for lasting peace and stability in the region.

Thank you.