

Delegation of France

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF FRANCE AT THE
1118th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

10 November 2016

On Nagorno-Karabakh

As a Co-Chair country of the Minsk Group, I should like to add a few comments in a national capacity to the statement by the European Union.

In recent years we have witnessed an alarming deterioration of the situation along the line of contact. Each year, a sad record is broken in terms of new methods of combat used and the number of people killed. The outbreak of violence in early April reminded us of the extreme volatility of the situation on the ground. In spite of the relative calmness of the current situation, the risk of a resurgence of violence remains.

At the same time, diplomatic activity in the last few years has been particularly intense. Several presidential summits have been convened, enabling the parties to pursue regular dialogue at the highest level, which is vital, and to agree on certain confidence-building measures, which the parties must now put into practice. We draw the attention of the participating States to the importance of the exchange of information on missing persons as a humanitarian measure under the aegis of the International Committee of the Red Cross, which should be given all necessary support.

Negotiations on a lasting settlement are continuing on the basis of the proposals currently under consideration. We should like to pay tribute to the contribution by Ambassador Pierre Andrieu to the sustained efforts of the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group and to his personal commitment to resolving the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh in an atmosphere of solidarity, unity and good relations with the Co-Chairmen from Russia and the United States of America.

We should also like to take this opportunity to welcome the presence here today of Ambassador Stephane Visconti, who will officially take up his position as successor to Ambassador Andrieu on 14 November. We look forward to working with him in the future.

Finally, I should like to recall that France remains fully committed to the peaceful and lasting settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and will spare no effort in the future to make progress towards this objective in close co-ordination with the parties and within the framework of the Minsk Group.