

Chairmanship: Finland

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
(1513th Plenary Meeting)**

1. Date: Wednesday, 26 March 2025

Opened: 4.05 p.m.
Closed: 5.15 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador V. Häkkinen

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

Agenda item 1: ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF ARMENIA,
H.E. MR. ROBERT ABISOGHOMONYAN

Chairperson, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia
(PC.DEL/299/25), Secretary General, Poland-European Union (with Albania,
Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Moldova, Montenegro,
North Macedonia, San Marino, Serbia and Ukraine, in alignment)
(PC.DEL/303/25), United Kingdom, Kazakhstan (PC.DEL/288/25 OSCE+),
Norway (PC.DEL/316/25/Rev.1), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/287/25),
Uzbekistan, Germany (PC.DEL/297/25 OSCE+), Kyrgyzstan, Switzerland
(PC.DEL/298/25 OSCE+), Canada, Türkiye (PC.DEL/289/25 OSCE+), Italy
(PC.DEL/329/25 OSCE+), Liechtenstein (PC.DEL/285/25 OSCE+), United
States of America (PC.DEL/286/25), Greece, Cyprus, France, Turkmenistan,
Romania, Azerbaijan (Annex)

Agenda item 2: REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

None

Agenda item 3: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

4. Next meeting:

Thursday, 27 March 2025, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference



1513th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1513, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN**

Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset, I think everyone around the table is confused by the statement by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, to say the least. While some delegations had expectations that Armenia would use this opportunity to present its vision for peace and would proceed in a positive spirit, instead, the Armenian delegation used this occasion to replicate its worn-out allegations against Azerbaijan.

The presence of the Deputy Foreign Minister of Armenia at the Permanent Council meeting today provides an opportunity to review the implementation of the commitments enshrined in OSCE documents, starting with the Helsinki Final Act. Given some of the remarks pertaining to the bilateral normalization process between Azerbaijan and Armenia, we would like to provide our assessment of the current situation and of the way forward.

Despite the devastating consequences and unhealed wounds of the war and occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan over the past three decades, it was Azerbaijan which, after the end of the conflict and the restoration of the sovereignty of Azerbaijan over its entire territory, including the Garabagh region in September 2023, initiated the process of normalizing inter-State relations with Armenia based on five basic principles that include mutual recognition and respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity within their internationally recognized borders, and underscored the pressing need for concrete results along three specific tracks forming the agenda of bilateral discussions, namely: the soonest conclusion of a peace treaty; the delimitation of the State border; and the opening of all economic and transport communications in the region.

There is indeed a historic opportunity for the long-awaited peace and security in our region, and over the past years Azerbaijan has been demonstrating a strong political will to promote the peace agenda.

Since the start of the normalization process, Azerbaijan and Armenia have achieved significant progress on the issue of delimitation and demarcation of their borders through direct bilateral dialogue. As a result of the agreement reached by the border delimitation commissions of Azerbaijan and Armenia, four out of eight villages of Azerbaijan, remaining under the occupation of Armenia, were returned to the sovereign control of Azerbaijan, and

delimitation and demarcation of up to 13 kilometres of the State border was completed. This was the first time the occupied territories of Azerbaijan were returned through bilateral negotiations and that the two countries were able to complete the delimitation and demarcation of a portion of their State border.

Another significant step forward in the delimitation of the border was the signing and entry into force of the Regulation on the joint activities of the respective border commissions, which will guide efforts to carry out the next phases of delimitation work. Furthermore, on 16 January 2025, the 11th meeting of the State commissions on the delimitation of the State border between Azerbaijan and Armenia took place on the border between the two countries. During the meeting, the parties agreed to continue delimitation work from the northern section – starting at the tri-junction of the borders of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia – and proceed southward to the border with Iran.

Unfortunately, we cannot report any similar progress on the opening of all economic and transport communications in the region. Since 2020, Armenia, by putting forward various pretexts and preconditions, has failed to fulfil its obligations to unblock transport links in the region that would allow the unimpeded, safe and secure movement of citizens, vehicles and goods in both directions between mainland Azerbaijan and its Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. All allegations against Azerbaijan allegedly questioning the sovereignty of Armenia over its territory have been refuted by unequivocal statements by Azerbaijan. We expect that Armenia will finally take practical steps in opening up communications, which will be beneficial to Armenia itself and to the broader region.

Mr. Chairperson,

The progress that the two countries have achieved vividly demonstrates that direct bilateral negotiations are the best and only viable way forward in the normalization process, as has been consistently advocated by Azerbaijan.

As to the peace treaty, to which the Deputy Foreign Minister of Armenia referred, we would like to present our views on where we are now in this endeavour.

Indeed, this month, negotiations on the text of the draft Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and Interstate Relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia have concluded. This unprecedented positive development, widely commended by the international community, could have been achieved sooner, almost a year ago, if it had not been for various challenges and artificial delays. Armenia's refusal to agree on two articles that had remained unresolved dragged out the negotiations.

Now that the negotiations on the draft agreement have been finalized, no further delays in achieving sustainable peace and normalization between the two countries should be allowed. Let me make it clear: the signing of the peace treaty has never been an end in itself. It was meant to turn the page of confrontation once and for all, consolidate peace on the basis of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, and make it irreversible. However, there are still persistent challenges on the path towards normalization. Peace cannot be sustainable while territorial claims are still embedded in Armenia's constitution and other legislative acts.

To recall, the constitution of Armenia makes reference to the Armenian Declaration of Independence which, in turn, refers to the so-called joint decision on “Reunification of the Armenian SSR and the Mountainous Region of Karabakh”. The existence of such a legislative act, which, for example, for the European Court of Human Rights in its landmark decision on *Chiragov and Others v. Armenia* (2015) was clear evidence that Armenia strongly supported the incorporation of this region into Armenia, and references to this document, is a serious problem that must be addressed. Arguments that provisions of the draft peace treaty resolve this issue are not convincing and do not address the concerns of Azerbaijan. Even today, certain circles in Armenia refer to the same declaration of independence and the constitution to question the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Therefore, addressing this problem is important not only to create legal certainty, but also for Armenia to demonstrate that there is no ambiguity in its declared commitment to respecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan, and to ensure that no revanchist forces can exploit constitutional provisions to revive territorial claims against Azerbaijan now or in the future. Peace in the region cannot remain contingent on domestic legal or political scenarios in Armenia. This has been the consistent and principled position of Azerbaijan, upheld from the very beginning of the process; thus, presenting it as a so-called “new precondition” is wrong and unacceptable.

Another obstacle on the path towards normalization is directly relevant for this Organization. As we have consistently emphasized, with the end of the conflict, the time has come for the formal dissolution of the obsolete and irrelevant OSCE structures related to the former Minsk Process. These structures failed to produce any results in conflict resolution and to restore the violated principles of the Helsinki Final Act. Remaining of these structures – even only formally on the books – not only undermines the functionality of the Organization, but also constitutes a serious challenge for progress on the peace treaty.

Azerbaijan made a proposal to Armenia to jointly appeal to the OSCE to dissolve these structures. This would be a significant confidence-building measure signalling that the normalization process is irreversible and would bring both countries closer to concluding the peace treaty. However, here at the OSCE, we are witnessing the opposite. Armenia’s continued resistance to abolishing these obsolete structures raises serious questions about the sincerity of this country in its declared commitment to mutual respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity and to making *de facto* peace in the region irreversible. The statements by the delegation of Armenia here at the OSCE, whenever this topic is addressed, have increased suspicions about Armenia’s true intentions with regard to these structures and the normalization process more broadly.

We expected that the presence of the Deputy Foreign Minister of Armenia today at the Permanent Council would finally allow to take practical steps towards dissolving these structures. This would contribute to efficiency in utilizing the Organization’s scarce resources where they are needed the most, address the deficit of trust and constitute another significant step towards finally concluding the peace treaty. Unfortunately, it was a missed opportunity.

Mr. Chairperson,

Azerbaijan remains committed to engaging constructively and bringing the normalization process to a successful conclusion through bilateral dialogue. We expect Armenia to take a constructive, good faith approach to address the above-mentioned legitimate concerns of Azerbaijan.

We also call on Armenia to refrain from using the peace treaty negotiations as a pretext for a renewed smear campaign against Azerbaijan. The international community can play a vital role in this process by encouraging Armenia to take responsible and forward-looking actions.

Furthermore, Armenia should avoid steps that might undermine peace efforts or escalate tensions in the region. In particular, Armenia should put an end to its militarization efforts and avoid deploying destabilizing weaponry into the region, which poses a serious threat to regional peace and stability, especially given Armenia's past record of non-compliance with the norms and principles of international law and its failure to take any action to address past violations. Armenia must understand that the best guarantee for security and stability in the region is peace with Azerbaijan and other neighbours.

As to the allegations regarding military escalation on the border, which the Deputy Foreign Minister of Armenia referred to, indeed, recently, Armenian forces have fired at the positions of Azerbaijan, sometimes several times a day. Azerbaijan has provided all the necessary information and evidence pertaining to these shootings to the Armenian side, which has pledged to investigate these incidents.

In the meantime, the wider international community, including the OSCE participating States, also bears a heightened responsibility not to harm the ongoing process, that is to say to refrain from provocative actions and fuelling tension, including by transferring destabilizing weapons to Armenia.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you.