



**ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՊԱՏՎԻՐԱԿՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ**  
**DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA**  
**ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

**Statement**  
**in response to the address by the Special Representative of the European Union for the South Caucasus, H.E. Peter Semneby as delivered by Ambassador Ashot Hovakimian at the 850<sup>th</sup> meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council February 10, 2011**

Mr. Chairman,

We welcome Ambassador Semneby to the Permanent Council meeting and thank him for his statement. We wish we could have this statement beforehand to reflect on it properly.

Armenia is committed to strengthening political dialogue and deepening cooperation with the EU in all areas of mutual interest. The agenda of the Armenia-EU relations has been very rich during last year. Armenia-EU political dialogue has intensified significantly either through regular meetings of institutional bodies established under the PCA or through mutual high level visits.

The scope and nature of Armenia-EU relations has enlarged considerably in the past years, with the Eastern Partnership raising it to a qualitatively new level. Our cooperation is advancing based on the aspiration to foster closer relations between our peoples, to mutually enrich our cultures and to jointly shape our future on the basis of shared values and common objectives. It is in this context that the Armenian Government has offered to host events in 2011 under the Platform of People to People Contacts on Cultural and Youth projects.

Within the bilateral dimension of the Eastern Partnership we are advancing in renewing the contractual framework with the European Union. We have successfully launched the negotiations on Association Agreement on 19 July 2010 and we are determined to build upon the good progress we had registered so far and take the process further in a constructive and pragmatic manner. In terms of economic and trade development the establishment of a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area between Armenia and the EU will be a significant step forward, which will liberalize trade and codify regulatory alignment through binding commitments and institutional mechanisms.

The issue of visa facilitation remains of high importance for us. We expect that during the EU's Hungarian Presidency negotiations on visa facilitation and readmission agreements between Armenia and the EU will be launched and we would like to gradually move the process towards visa free regime with the EU.

The human rights and rule of law constitute key issues of our cooperation with the European Union. In 2009 we have stepped up our engagement in the field of human rights through a regular Human Rights Dialogue between Armenia and the European Union.

Mr. Chairman,

We heard Ambassador Semneby's comments and views on Nagorno Karabakh conflict. We are convinced that those views may have been different and perhaps more inclusive if only Ambassador would have visited Nagorno Karabakh even once, which we by the way always welcomed and supported. And since Ambassador Semneby has not visited Armenia during his last trip to the region let me very shortly touch upon the Armenian approach to the issue.

Armenia is committed to continue negotiations on the Nagorno Karabakh conflict resolution under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmen, which remains the only format internationally mandated to carry on the mediation efforts. The OSCE Summit held in Astana was an important stage in terms of registering the recent developments in the Nagorno Karabakh settlement process. The joint statement of the Heads of delegations of the Minsk Group Co-Chair countries as well as Armenia and Azerbaijan underscored that the settlement of the issue should be reached in a peaceful and negotiated manner, the use or threat of use of force was rejected. So did the Astana Commemorative Declaration emphasizing that increased efforts should be made to resolve existing conflicts within agreed formats. Only the specialized agreed mediation formats of conflict resolution can ensure the integrity, consolidation and continuity of the peace process. Attempts of engagement of other mechanisms can only endanger the peace process. Another risk that the peace process may face is the introduction of artificial timeframes. In this regard any efforts should be in line with the logic and proceedings of the peace process.

The confidence and security building measures stand as one of the components of the peace process. International community, the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmen in particular, have made several such proposals, including on separation of snipers from the Line of Contact, which were all rejected by Azerbaijan. Another idea put forward in this regard on promoting the dialogue between the people sounds as a legitimate one. The problem is in finding genuine interlocutors and avoiding politization. It is our conviction that authorities of the Nagorno Karabakh should play a central role in this regard, as the people of Nagorno Karabakh stand as the main beneficiary of such activities.

In conclusion, as this is the last appearance of Ambassador Semneby at the OSCE PC in his current capacity, let me wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.