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DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

Statement

On Parliamentary Elections in Armenia

delivered by Permanent Delegation of Armenia at the 1141st Meeting of the OSCE

Permanent Council

April 6, 2017

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to thank the delegations of Malta, who took the floor on behalf of the European Union, the United States and the Russian Federation for their statements on the Parliamentary elections in Armenia.

We also took note of the EU statement circulated on April 3 by EU headquarters which unequivocally stated that the election result reflects the overall will of the Armenian people.¹

First let me share the outcome of Parliamentary elections. More than one and half million citizens of Armenia, which constituted more than 60% of eligible voters casted ballots on the Election Day. Four parties and blocks won seats in the Parliament, namely Republican Party with 49.12 %, Tsarukyan Block with 27,32%, Yelk Block with 7.77% and ARF Party with 6.57% votes.

These elections have been crucial in ensuring smooth transition from the semi-Presidential system to the Parliamentary Republic. Now when elections already took place it is important to reflect on changes it introduces to the political system of Armenia.

Elections were conducted on the basis on new Electoral Code which was itself an outcome of inclusive political process and agreement among the ruling and opposition parties represented in the Parliament. The civil society was also represented in the entire consultation process. The agreement fully addressed a significant part of the joint recommendations of the Venice Commission and the ODIHR, something that was acknowledged in the Preliminary Findings and Conclusions of the International Observation Mission.

This agreement was essential in two major points. First, it addressed all outstanding and divisive issues of previous elections including identification of voters and post-election publication of the signed voter list. Second, the agreement ensured strong ownership of the Electoral Code by all political forces and increased public trust and confidence towards

¹ Statement by the EEAS Spokesperson on the Parliamentary elections in Armenia,
https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/24071/statement-spokesperson-parliamentary-elections-armenia_en

elections. High turnout in the election day which was visible to all observers in the polling stations reflected the degree of public trust towards elections.

The high number of international and domestic observers was unprecedented in these elections. In order to ensure transparent implementation of the Electoral Code Armenia received unrestricted and increasing number of international observers from intergovernmental organizations including OSCE/ODIHR, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, CIS Secretariat and the Parliamentary Assembly, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and European Parliament in total approximately 650 observers. 49 Armenian NGOs accredited roughly 28 thousand observers in the elections. It should be mentioned that the Armenian NGOs included also in their ranks observers from international non-governmental organizations.

Thus Armenia fully met its OSCE commitments related to the international observers and we thank and acknowledge good work of all observation missions.

The efficiency of newly introduced Voting Authentication Devices has been widely acknowledged by all observation missions. Electronic voter identification prevented number of irregularities in these elections. Here, we would like to take this opportunity to thank the European Union, United States, United Kingdom and Germany for their financial assistance which made possible the introduction of these new devices. I would also like to recall the important contribution of the OSCE Office in Yerevan who co-organized number of events on Electronic Voting systems last year.

The observers well documented that the election day was calm and peaceful and we should add here that days which follow have been as such as well. No official claim or mass protest was made questioning the outcome of the elections. We agree with our international partners some of whom took the floor today that the elections result reflects the overall will of the Armenian people and voters were able to freely exercise their right to vote.

The observers establish that there were less irregularities on key aspects of elections. However, there are still reports on some deficiencies which will be thoroughly studied by the Government.

Aside from the right to vote, these elections brought positive change in protecting and promoting other fundamental freedoms. Newly elected Parliament will secure one fourth of women representation and four representatives of national minorities namely from Yazidi, Russian, Assyrian and Kurdish communities will get seat there.

We are ready to continue cooperation with all our international partners aimed at sustaining and furthering strong progress and success achieved by these elections.

Thank you.