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Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan
1171st Special Permanent Council Meeting,
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in response to Chairperson-in-Office, H.E. Mr. Angelino Alfano

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of Azerbaijan warmly welcomes Chairperson-in-Office, H.E. Mr. Angelino Alfano to the Permanent Council and thanks him for presentation of priorities of the Italian OSCE Chairmanship for 2018.

Azerbaijan highly values the willingness of Italy to take the responsibility of chairing our organization at this challenging period. We extend our full support to its open, transparent and inclusive approach based on joint ownership of all participating States. Our Italian colleagues can count on active and constructive engagement of the Azerbaijani Delegation in implementing the Chairmanship's agenda.

We welcome the key priority of the Italian Chairmanship to strengthen multilateralism, building upon the history of success of our Organization on the basis of all OSCE principles and commitments.

Italy takes the helm of the Chairmanship against the backdrop of erosion of rules-based European security order accompanied by increased complexity of threats and challenges. At this critical juncture, full adherence to the OSCE principles and commitments by all participating States is the prerequisite to restore the "Spirit of Helsinki" for building an effective pan-European cooperative and indivisible security system.

Existing conflicts deprives millions of people of their basic human rights and fundamental freedoms. Their plight can be effectively addressed only through restoration of justice and rule of law on the basis of full respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and inviolability of internationally recognized borders of states affected by the conflicts. Double standards applied by some states impairs the efforts to achieve peaceful solution of the conflicts.

We support the intention of the Italian Chairmanship to promote meaningful dialogue on matters related to the politico-military dimension. For that aim, the Structured Dialogue needs to be continued in line with its mandate identified in the Hamburg Declaration avoiding any premature narrowing of its scope. In this context, we encourage the Italian Chairmanship to ensure that risks and challenges emanating from existing conflicts are adequately taken into account in designing the Structured Dialogue process in 2018.

Azerbaijan remains firm in its belief that untapped potential of the second dimension has to be utilized with a view to enhancing comprehensive security through sustainable development. In this regard, promotion of economic connectivity through transport corridors in line with provisions of respective OSCE decisions is of paramount importance. Apart from that, we welcome the intention of the Italian Chairmanship to focus on such topics as development of human capital, promotion of good governance and digital economy, which are also among the priorities of the Government of Azerbaijan.

We strongly support the focus of the Italian Chairmanship on countering all forms of racism, xenophobia, intolerance and discrimination including those based on religious grounds. Azerbaijan as a strong proponent of multiculturalism and inter-cultural dialogue remains ready to support Chairmanship's initiatives, in this regard.

In conclusion, we once again thank Minister Alfano for his appearance at the Permanent Council and wish him and his able team in Vienna successful Chairmanship.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.