



**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan
2016 Annual Security Review Conference
Opening Session**

on European Security

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan welcomes distinguished keynote speakers and thanks them for their comprehensive and thought-provoking presentations. In light of developments in the pan-European security architecture, we find today's discussions timely and topical, and in this regard, we would like to share our position regarding the future of pan-European security system and the role of the OSCE.

Ongoing violations of the Helsinki Principles, in particular those related to respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of the internationally recognized borders of the States lies at the core of current crisis of European security. Failure to demonstrate principled position in all protracted conflicts, attempts to misinterpret or selectively apply Helsinki Final Act principles have deeply undermined trust. Growing number of instances of the threat or use of force, as well as failure to ensure inviolability of internationally recognized borders of the OSCE participating States represent the most serious threat for the European security.

In the meantime, competition among politico-military and economic blocks within the OSCE area seriously affects European security environment. The non-aligned OSCE participating States face undue pressure from different sides, which undermines their right to define and choose their own security arrangements. We firmly believe that issues related to enlargement and interaction of politico-military and economic blocks and its impact on the non-aligned participating States should be in the focus of the OSCE. Comprehensive dialogue with those non-aligned states and elaboration of guarantees for respecting their sovereignty and territorial integrity should be initiated. For non-block countries, like Azerbaijan, the OSCE is the pan-European security guarantor, whose multinational engagement protects Azerbaijan from biases of unilateral involvement.

In this context, attempts to transform the Organization into an area of competing and opposing political-military groupings are troubling. Such a block-based competition and build-ups put under the question the indivisibility of the OSCE area. Therefore, Azerbaijan remains to be of strong view that the central role of the OSCE in maintaining peace and security in its area should be safeguarded and strengthened. In this regard, we continue to be a staunch proponent of modernizing and further strengthening of Organization's capacities and capabilities in all phases of the conflict cycle.

Azerbaijan firmly believes that the only way out of current crisis is restoration of unconditional respect for the Principles guiding inter-state relations as enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act. Our shared commitments contained in the OSCE documents establishes clear standard for participating States'

treatment of each other and of all individuals within their territories. Therefore, all OSCE commitments should be equally applied to all participating States without any exception, double standards, geographic or other preferences.

In this challenging time, the OSCE remains one of the cornerstones of the European security architecture and a pan-European security guarantor based upon shared commitments, norms and values. The Organization is a unique platform for dialogue and promotion of trust and has an important role to play in diffusing tensions in pan-European affairs. It remains viable as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, with crisis management mandate established by the OSCE Helsinki Document of 1992, conferring to the Organization more effective role in conflict prevention and resolution, complemented, when necessary, by peacekeeping operations.

At the same time, we would like to underline the undiminishing validity of OSCE's comprehensive security concept, which continues to be one of the most important comparative advantages of the Organization. In this regard, we reiterate our principled position on ensuring balance inherent in all three dimensions of security and calls upon all participating States, as well as OSCE executive structures to strictly abide by this in their approaches to various challenges facing the OSCE area.

In light of above-mentioned, we reiterate our readiness for open and genuine dialogue with all OSCE participating States in search of durable solutions to problems of European security based on our shared principles, norms and commitments.

In conclusion, we thank once again our distinguished keynote speakers for their contributions and wish them every success in their future endeavors.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.