



**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan**  
***138<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Permanent Council,***  
***01 September 2022***

*Presentation of priorities  
of the incoming Chairmanship 2023 - North Macedonia*

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of Azerbaijan warmly welcomes H.E. Mr. Bujar Osmani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia, to the Permanent Council and thanks him for presenting priorities of the incoming North Macedonian Chairmanship of the OSCE.

North Macedonia will assume the Chairmanship of our Organization amidst the continued deterioration of the overall security environment in the OSCE region, further erosion of trust and confidence and deepening rivalry among politico-military blocks.

Unconditional respect for fundamental norms, principles and commitments enshrined in the core OSCE documents, starting from the Helsinki Final Act, in particular respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of internationally recognized borders of States must remain the bedrock of security and stability, as well as the basis for cooperation within the OSCE. Building security and restoring trust and confidence among the OSCE participating States is possible only through ensuring unconditional respect for these principles. They cannot be subject to any re-interpretation or negotiation and must be strictly observed and implemented equally and unreservedly without any exception, double standards, geographic or any other preferences. We expect that the incoming Chairmanship in fulfilment of its Chairmanship task will invariably uphold and promote compliance with these principles. It is with this understanding that we extend our support to your goal of safeguarding fundamental principles and values that lie at the heart of our Organization.

We welcome your intention to focus on such topics as border security and management, cyber security, women, peace and security agenda, climate change, energy and food security, connectivity and people-to-people contacts, refugees and IDPs, combating corruption and promoting good governance, social and economic resilience in regard with COVID-19, active engagement of the youth, gender equality and women empowerment, as well as digitalization as a cross-dimensional issue. Strict adherence to the OSCE's fundamental principles and commitments should guide the activities of the incoming North Macedonian Chairmanship in all three dimensions.

We welcome that incremental progress towards peace will be on top of your Chairmanship agenda. Indeed, despite gloomy security environment, in some parts of the OSCE region, namely in the South Caucasus, there are positive developments. Notwithstanding persisting challenges, the process of post-conflict normalization between Azerbaijan and Armenia is underway. The trilateral statement of 10 November 2020, following the 44-day Patriotic War, put an end to the three-decade long armed conflict. Azerbaijan restored its previously infringed sovereignty and territorial integrity. The trilateral statement provides a clear guidance for attaining sustainable peace, security and stability in our region through implementation of concrete measures specified in this document.

Return of the city of Lachin, and Zabukh and Sus villages in the Lachin district to Azerbaijan on 26 August is another significant milestone in implementation of the provisions of the trilateral statement.

This represents triumph of international law and justice, and fulfilment of fundamental OSCE principles and commitments, quite rare in contemporary history, when internationally wrongful conduct by a State, namely occupation and illegal implantation of settlers was put an end to through politico-military means. We will provide more detailed account of this and other related events under the agenda item 'current issues' later today.

On 30 August, under the chairmanship of Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan Shahin Mustafayev and Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Mher Grigoryan, respectively, the second meeting of the State Commission on the Delimitation of the state border between Azerbaijan and Armenia and the State Commission on the issues of border security and delimitation of the state border between the two countries was held in Moscow.

Yesterday, on 31 August, the fourth trilateral meeting of the leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia with the President of the European Council took place in Brussels. We highly value the personal role of the President of the European Council, Mr. Charles Michel and his team for taking the post-conflict normalization agenda further to the benefit of peace, security, stability and sustainable development in the region.

The fourth Brussels meeting, like previous meetings in this format, had pre-determined agenda to discuss issues that fall within the scope of bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia, pertaining to signing of a treaty on establishment of inter-State relations, delimitation of the state border between the two countries and unblocking of regional transport communications. These are three tracks that Azerbaijan has been continuously promoting since the end of the armed conflict. We are of the strong view that soonest progress along these tracks will provide an impetus to post-conflict normalization and durable peace and stability in the region.

As a result of tense negotiations in Brussels, it was agreed to establish joint working group and step up the work to advance on the treaty on establishment of inter-State relations. It was also agreed that the next meeting of the State Commission on the delimitation of the state border between Azerbaijan and Armenia will be held in Brussels in November. We cannot report to the Permanent Council on progress in unblocking the regional transport and communications routes between the two countries, including railways and highways, which is envisaged by the Article 9 of the 10 November 2020 trilateral statement and another trilateral statement of 11 January 2021. On this track, Armenia refuses to implement the relevant provisions. Constant delays by the Armenian side in implementing the provisions of the trilateral statements related to opening communications using various lame excuses clearly demonstrate Armenia's non-constructive and disruptive attitude towards its obligations stipulated in these statements and other agreements. The upcoming months will demonstrate if Armenia is sincerely interested in post-conflict normalization of relations.

All other issues pertaining to the domestic jurisdiction of Azerbaijan, including re-integration of its citizens of Armenian origin into its political, social, and economic space, shall be dealt with in accordance with the legislation and Constitution of Azerbaijan, guaranteeing equal rights to all of its citizens regardless of their national or ethnic origin.

Now that the war is over and the conflict has been resolved, the absolute priorities of Azerbaijan at the current post-conflict stage are the soonest and effective post-conflict rehabilitation, reconstruction and reintegration, as well as normalization of inter-State relations with Armenia on the basis of mutual recognition of and respect for each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of internationally recognized borders, including through signing a peace treaty based on these principles. There is no alternative to this.

In this regard, references to obsolete and totally dysfunctional format, such as the Minsk Group, that failed to produce any result, to say the least, is counter-productive and harmful. Azerbaijan has expressed clearly its view, including at the highest political level, on the Minsk Group. The armed

conflict has been resolved and its consequences, including occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan, which the Minsk Group has been called to eliminate, ultimately have been eliminated by politico-military means without the role of the Minsk Group whatsoever. Attempts to revive the Minsk Group and replicating old narratives may only feed into false expectations or illusions, sustain revanchist attitudes still prevailing in Armenia and raise tensions, thus, deviating attention from the positive agenda for post-conflict normalization. This will be in no one's interest. At the end of the day, the genuine willingness of States to support peace in the region will be measured not by their words, but deeds, including by providing, for instance, assistance to the Government of Azerbaijan for humanitarian demining of its heavily mine-contaminated territories, that still take heavy toll on civilians and slow down the rehabilitation efforts. So far, Azerbaijan has been reconstructing its territories with its own resources.

At this critical juncture, all efforts must be directed towards the goal of making peace in the region irreversible. Participating States who are genuinely interested in supporting ongoing dialogue between Armenia and Azerbaijan on post-conflict normalization agenda should bring their positions in line with the current agenda of negotiations, if they want to be helpful in the current context. We expect the incoming Chairmanship of North Macedonia to act based on this understanding and render its support to the vision of peace, stability and cooperation in our region.

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

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.