

ADDRESS

ENGLISH only

**by H.E. Mr. Elmar Mammadyarov,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan,
at the 19th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council
Dublin, 6-7 December, 2012**

Mr. Chairman,
Dear colleagues,

I would like to express my appreciation to H.E. Mr. Eamon Gilmore and his entire team for excellent organization of the Dublin Ministerial Council meeting and for kind hospitality extended to our Delegation.

I am also glad to welcome our distinguished colleague from Ukraine, H.E. Mr. Kostyantyn Gryschenko, as the incoming Chairperson-in-Office and wish him every success in his future endeavors.

I wish to join the previous speakers in congratulating Foreign Minister of Mongolia with joining the OSCE family as a full-fledged participating State and express our confidence that your accession will further contribute to the promotion of the values and ideas this Organization stands for.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Since Azerbaijan's accession to the OSCE we have witnessed an unprecedented pace of change in the political landscape of Europe and its neighborhood. I wish to stress that OSCE has played an indispensable role in stabilizing this changing political environment as the only all-inclusive pan-European platform promoting dialogue and cooperation.

In the meantime, we are not optimistic when it comes to the current state of affairs in the OSCE and its efficiency in coping with complex challenges of security. Regrettably, over the recent years there have been a number of serious deficiencies both in substance and methods of work within the Organization. As a result, the OSCE's role in pan-European security architecture is diminishing.

Azerbaijan is not a member of any military block or alliance. We are concerned with transformation of the OSCE into a platform used for a coordination of activities of military blocks at the expense of the Organization's role of a security provider. Therefore, until adequate political and security guarantees for a non-member to remedy impact of inter-block cooperation on its security are considered, Azerbaijan, in principle, is reluctant to agree with the attempts to adjust the role of OSCE depending on the dynamic of such cooperation and its

repercussions. We expect this issue to be comprehensively addressed within the “Helsinki +40” process.

Azerbaijan is interested in further strengthening the OSCE’s crisis management capabilities. Based on OSCE commitments and tasking and considering accumulated expertise of OSCE field missions in Western Balkans, more concerted efforts should be invested in exploring the police component of OSCE multinational peacekeeping operations. In this regard we encourage participating States and relevant OSCE structures and institutions to fully utilize the existing potential and role of the OSCE High Level Planning Group for rendering operational support in peacekeeping operations.

Dear Colleagues,

As everyone in this hall is well aware the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan continues to represent a serious challenge to international and regional security. Despite the OSCE mediation efforts, Armenia consolidates day by day the *status quo* in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

In flagrant violation of the UN Charter and OSCE commitments, Armenia continues to use force in order to sustain the occupation of the Nagorno-Karabakh region and other seven districts of Azerbaijan as well as prevent Azerbaijani internally displaced persons from returning to their homes. It undertakes efforts to alter the demographic balance in the occupied territories by organizing an illegal settlement of Armenians and removing any signs of Azerbaijani cultural and historical roots. It would be enough to state that no single Azerbaijani historic and cultural monument was left undamaged and no sacred site escaped desecration in the occupied territories. Armenia continues to unlawfully exploit rich natural resources in the occupied territories. Official Yerevan rejects initiatives aimed at restoring inter-communal dialogue between Azerbaijani and Armenian communities of the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

Armenian authorities even try to blackmail ongoing economic cooperation of the region with the outside world. Let alone the recent statements voiced by some Armenian high-ranking military officials clearly seeking to threaten the energy infrastructure and energy network in the region, including in Azerbaijan. Such activities clearly illustrate the extent of the potential threat represented by Armenia as they are targeting not only Azerbaijan but also the whole South Caucasus region as well as the EU energy security.

The other concern is Armenia’s attempts to illegally use of the Khojaly airport in the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan. It is an outrageous, provocative and dangerous step that contravenes international law, leads to

consolidation of the occupation, undermines conflict settlement process and aggravates regional security concerns.

The fact that the conflict has remained unresolved so long does not speak for strength and efficiency of the OSCE. It is self-understood that the primary role in the resolution of the conflict rests with the States involved in it. At the same time, when it comes to the basis of settlement, it is the duty of all of us to ensure that we spare no efforts to achieve a lasting solution of this conflict based on the norms and principles of international law, Helsinki Final Act and relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

We sincerely believe that there is no alternative to peace, stability and mutually beneficial cooperation in our region. Azerbaijan is the most interested party in the soonest negotiated settlement of the conflict. For these purposes we suggested: 1) to revive the activity of the whole OSCE Minsk Group in support of the work of its Co-chairs; and 2) to start substantial talks on drafting of comprehensive peace agreement within a fixed time frame. We are confident that this agreement would address all practical concerns mentioned in my statement and elaborate a comprehensive stage-by-stage peace plan for settlement of the conflict. In this regard we count on support of the OSCE participating States.

Thank you.