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PERMANENT MISSION OF
THE REPUBLIC OF
ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT

**“Helsinki Decalogue”
as delivered by Ambassador Andranik Hovhannisyan
at the 93rd Joint Meeting of
the Forum for Security Co-operation and the Permanent Council**

27 November 2024

Distinguished Chairs,

Armenia welcomes the FSC-PC meeting on the Helsinki Final Act and thanks the OSCE Chairpersonship of Malta and the FSC Chairpersonship of Denmark for convening this meeting. We would also like to thank the panelists for their enlightening presentations.

As we approach the fiftieth anniversary of this historic document, we believe that at this point our exchange of views are less about celebration and more about reflection on how the multilateralism worked in the most challenging environment to give birth to what has been hailed as “Ten Commandments” and the “Magna Carta of *Détente*”. Few international accords achieve such enduring recognition, a testament to its profound impact.

The Final Act was forged in a climate of deep uncertainty: during the Cold War, marked by sharp ideological divides and the looming threat of military confrontation unlike any other. Yet, amidst this turbulence, nations negotiated a framework for coexistence, setting the stage for years of relative stability and security. As the Final Act itself proclaims, it was “*in the interest of peoples, to improve and intensify their relations and to contribute in Europe to peace, security, justice, and cooperation.*”

Today, as parts of Europe once again grapple with war and multifaceted security challenges, it is worth to examine what went wrong and what can be fixed, but also to draw inspiration for renewing the spirit of the Decalogue in peace efforts.

While all principles of the Final Act are of “*primary significance and must be equally and unreservedly applied*”, we must emphasize the significance of the peaceful resolution of disputes. This cornerstone principle has been continuously violated, often without adequate international reaction. Armenia has consistently advocated addressing conflicts in the spirit of

Decalogue, which stipulates that all nations must be treated equally “*irrespective of their size and geographical location*”, because neglecting even smaller disputes can lead to broader destabilization. No principle—whether in the Helsinki Final Act or the UN Charter—permits the use of force to settle disputes. On the contrary, the Decalogue explicitly calls for refraining from the threat or use of force.

The OSCE’s and participating States’ responses to the use of force and conflicts have often fallen short. However, this does not preclude meaningful future engagement. The windows for opportunity must remain open, and faith in multilateralism must not be lost. Our collective responsibility is to preserve and nurture the legacy of the Decalogue and the mechanisms and tools developed by the OSCE in this framework, including at the Summit and MC levels.

The Hippocratic oath “*to help, or at least to do no harm*” can be also the guiding principle in this regard.

Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the former Foreign Minister of Germany, who played a key role in the Helsinki Accords, once remarked: “*It is true of the OSCE that it cannot be better than its members want it to be.*”

We must therefore ask ourselves: What kind of organization do we aspire to have? One that builds upon past achievements and strives for progress, or one that passively accepts setbacks, abandoning the promise of the Decalogue and strikes out the former achievement only because it cannot make proper use of them now? Letting go of these legacy risks losing it forever. Letting go of an agreed format, mechanism or a tool can gradually question their very premises – the Decalogue itself. This should never happen.

Distinguished Chairs,

The Helsinki Final Act has left an indelible mark across its entire area of application, including Armenia. One of its most enduring legacies is its commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms. This principle catalyzed transformative change that resonates to this day. Armenia continues to build a democratic society founded on the rule of law and good governance. According to several reputable international rankings, Armenia leads the region in civil liberties and political rights—a journey we are determined to continue.

However, we are deeply concerned by the unprecedented challenges to human rights and fundamental freedoms in many parts of the OSCE region. A correlation usually exists between states that abuse the human rights domestically and those who violate the human rights and the international humanitarian law in the context of armed conflicts. These challenges undermine the Decalogue’s legacy and represent one of the most pressing threats to its promise. Hence, this should be a matter of concern for the whole OSCE community. There is also another correlation. States that consistently violate the Decalogue and the OSCE principles often seek to undermine or discard the tools and mechanisms adopted in this framework. This is a critical reality we must keep in mind.

Finally, we note with satisfaction that Finland will chair the OSCE in the fiftieth anniversary year of the Helsinki Final Act. Finnish diplomacy was instrumental in crafting the Decalogue, and we trust that the Helsinki spirit will guide our joint efforts ahead.

Thank you, Distinguished Chairs.