
OSCE MINSK GROUP HOLDS TALKS WITH AZERBAIJANI AND ARMENIAN FMS

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On February 16, the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs (Ambassadors Igor Popov of Russia, Stephane Visconti of France and Richard Hoagland of the US) met with the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov and the Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian.

The Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk, also participated in the meetings.

The Co-Chairs discussed with the Ministers the current situation along the Line of Contact and the Armenia border. The Co-Chairs reiterated that there is no alternative to a peaceful solution to the conflict and that war is not an option, and called upon the sides to exercise restraint on the terrain as well as in their public communications and to prepare their population for peace and not for war, the OSCE statement says.

The Co-Chairs also urged the Sides to adhere strictly to the 1994/95 ceasefire agreements that constitute the foundation of the cessation of hostilities. The Co-Chairs recalled the May 2011 joint statements of their Presidents in Deauville emphasizing that the use of force would only bring more suffering and devastation and would be condemned by the international community. The Co-Chairs shared their views with the Sides on the steps which should be taken toward implementing decisions from the 2016 Summits in Vienna and St. Petersburg aimed at stabilizing the situation in the conflict zone.

The Co-Chairs stressed to the Ministers the need to demonstrate greater flexibility and to resume comprehensive negotiations on reaching a lasting settlement as soon as possible.

The Co-Chairs recognized that the Armenian authorities recent decision to return the body of an Azerbaijani serviceman was a helpful humanitarian gesture. The two Ministers reiterated their commitment to strictly observe their international humanitarian obligations including those of the Astrakhan Declaration of October 2010 issued by the Presidents of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and the Russian Federation.