
HIGH TIME FOR REVISING OSCE MINSK GROUP'S COMPOSITION

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The OSCE Minsk Group, created back in 1994 to find a peaceful resolution for the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, has failed to make a considerable progress in the peace process, while the conflict continues to threaten regional stability and security.

Despite more than two decades of negotiations, the OSCE mediation appears to be a failure amid the daily ceasefire breaches and murders of Azerbaijani civilians lining on the frontline areas. Of course the OSCE is making certain efforts towards reaching a peaceful settlement, but shortcomings and double standards prevent the peace process.

Experts, even political scientists say the time has come for changes in the OSCE Minsk Group composition for making effective steps to end the conflict.

Kristian Vigenin, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Special Representative on the South Caucasus, has also touched upon this issue. During his visit to Baku, Vigenin noted that the composition of the OSCE Minsk Group may be reconsidered.

We understand the dissatisfaction of the Azerbaijani side with the activities of the OSCE Minsk Group, since no actual progress in resolving the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict has been achieved, he said at the meeting. Next year the OSCE Minsk Group marks its 25-year anniversary, and its composition may be revised in this connection.

Political analyst Ilgar Velizade, talking to Echo.az, noted that Azerbaijan has repeatedly expressed its dissatisfaction with the Minsk Groups activities.

However, Velizade believes, the revision of the MGs format will remain in name only, and no action will follow.

The expert reminded that the Minsk Group consists not only of the co-chairing countries, which include the U.S., Russia and France, but also of other states.

Therefore, if we assume that the format will be changed, there are many options. For example, all member states of the OSCE Minsk Group can alternately play the role of the co-chairs, Velizade said. Maybe, these countries will have the opportunity to become moderators of the negotiation process.

The OSCE Minsk Group has a co-chairmanship institution, comprised of Russian, the US and French

co-chairs, which began operating in 1996. The Groups members include Azerbaijan, Armenia, Russia, the United States, France, Italy, Germany, Turkey, Belarus, Finland and Sweden.

Velizade stressed that the issue of changing the Minsk Groups composition as a whole can also be raised. Azerbaijan is the country most interested in the issue of the MGs format changing, and other countries agree on what there is today, he added.

Speaking about the possibility of Turkey's joining the MG co-chairs, Velizade said that Azerbaijan wouldnt mind Turkey's involvement in the ranks of the OSCE Minsk Groups co-chairs.

However, the Armenian side considers this country to be biased. A similar bias has also been demonstrated by France, which is considered pro-Armenian, but it remains among the co-chairs, said the analyst.

Velizade noted that it would be also good to involve Spain in the new format of the OSCE MG, as the country knows the specifics of the work, it experienced problems with separatism in practice, so it will be able to provide due support Azerbaijan.

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