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Parliamentary question to the Chairperson-in-Office of the Committee of Ministers

Parliamentary questions

1. Question from Mr Rafael HUSEYNOV, Azerbaijan, ALDE

Since the liberation of the territories of Azerbaijan occupied by Armenia for almost 30 years at the end of 2020, one issue remains unresolved. It constitutes a danger that could lead to a large-scale humanitarian disaster as well as a serious obstacle to the establishment of future bilateral co-operation. Armenia refuses to hand over the maps of the territories completely mined in violation of international law, which prevents about 1 million internally displaced persons from returning to their places of permanent residence, as well as from starting the restoration of the ruined territories.

Mr Huseynov, to ask the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers:

What effective mechanisms of influence can the Committee of Ministers use to achieve the speediest possible resolution of the issue of handing over the maps of the totally mined territories, which directly raises a problem of respect for human rights and strengthening of mutual understanding between the member States of the Council of Europe?

Reply by the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers

The Committee of Ministers provides a forum for the representatives of the 47 member States to raise issues which fall within the mandate of the Council of Europe and, where possible, to find satisfactory solutions in accordance with the Organisation's standards and values.

However, I would like to recall that, as repeatedly stressed by the Committee of Ministers, mediation for the settlement of the conflict is the responsibility of the OSCE Minsk Group. The ongoing efforts under the aegis of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs, in particular to address the multiple dramatic consequences of the conflict, have my full support.

In this regard, I note that the Co-Chairs have recently reminded the parties that additional efforts are required to resolve remaining areas of concern and to create an atmosphere of mutual trust conducive to long-lasting peace. “These include issues related to, *inter alia*: the return of all POWs and other detainees in accordance with the provisions of international humanitarian law, the exchange of all data necessary to conduct effective demining of conflict regions; the lifting of restrictions on access to Nagorno-Karabakh, including for representatives of international humanitarian organisations; the preservation and protection of religious and cultural heritage; and the fostering of direct contacts and co-operation between communities affected by the conflict as well as other people-to-people confidence building measures.”