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PC.DEL/1290/23
28 September 2023

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

Delegation of France

**STATEMENT BY
AMBASSADOR FATÈNE BENHABYLÈS-FOETH, PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE TO THE OSCE, AT THE 1444th MEETING OF
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

28 September 2023

On the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh

Mr. Chairperson,

France aligns itself with the statement by the European Union and wishes to make the following comments in a national capacity.

France is resolutely committed to standing by Armenia and the Armenian people, and to supporting the Nagorno-Karabakh refugees who have been forced to flee in their tens of thousands from their land and homes following the military offensive launched by Azerbaijan and after a nine-month-long illegal blockade.

Azerbaijan must restore unhindered humanitarian access – in particular, from Armenia – for United Nations agencies and ensure, without delay, that the populations affected have full and unimpeded access to humanitarian relief.

Following a decision by Ms. Catherine Colonna, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, France will make an additional 7 million euros of financial aid available to non-governmental organizations, United Nations agencies and the Armenian Red Cross Society for the provision of shelter, social and medical care, and financial support to these people.

This financial aid package comes on top of the 5.5 million euros already allocated by France through the International Committee of the Red Cross since the beginning of 2023, bringing the total support provided to refugees and displaced persons in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh since the start of the year to 12.5 million euros.

It is supplemented by an emergency relief shipment intended to help care for refugees and the victims of an explosion that occurred at a fuel depot in Nagorno-Karabakh on the evening of 25 September.

The Crisis and Support Centre of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs will ship to Armenia:

- A consignment of medical supplies and emergency medicines for the treatment of 250 seriously injured persons;
- 40 boxes of general and emergency medicines for adults and children, 1,500 suture kits and 9,000 sterile dressings donated by the Tulipe association and healthcare companies affiliated with it.

These aid goods will be handed over by the French Embassy in Yerevan to the Armenian Health Minister so that they can be distributed in the field and tailored to specific needs.

A team from the Crisis and Support Centre will also travel to the region to assess needs and ensure that our humanitarian response is delivered as close as possible to the most vulnerable.

Thank you.