

**Statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan  
HE Mr E.Mammadyarov at the commemoration of the 20 Anniversary of the  
European Commission for Democracy through Law  
(Venice Commission)  
5 June 2010**

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear friends and colleagues,

It is my pleasure to be with you today in this beautiful hall to commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Venice Commission. Established in 1990, the Commission has played a crucial role in the adoption and harmonisation of national constitutions and laws in line with the standards of the Council of Europe. Azerbaijan has always attached great importance to the co-operation with the Venice Commission and we are thankful for its valuable work in helping us to improve our legislation.

It is an encouraging fact that having crossed the European legal space, the Venice Commission with its rich expertise, openness, high reputation and very professional staff has been able to reach the countries as far as the Latin America and Japan. Nowadays, as an internationally recognised institution, it continues to successfully contribute to the dissemination of the European constitutional heritage within and far beyond Europe and plays a unique role in legal aspects of crisis management and conflict prevention.

Indeed, conflicts threaten the stability and security of our continent and undermine the main principles and objectives of the Council of Europe. They endanger human security, sustainable development and normal relations between the countries of the affected regions. It is therefore crucially important to commit ourselves to achieving lasting solutions to these conflicts. The Republic of Azerbaijan remains strongly adhered to the norms and principles of international law, and exactly on this basis we are eager to continue the negotiations carried out within the OSCE Minsk Group framework for peaceful settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Devoted to the European values, Azerbaijan envisages the settlement process through the withdrawal of all Armenian troops from all occupied Azerbaijani territories, return of the displaced population to their places of origin, including the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, as it was before the outbreak of the conflict, and reestablishment of favourable environment based on democratic standards for peaceful co-existence of Armenian and Azerbaijani communities of Nagorno-Karabakh. All these can create favourable condition for the definition of a legal status of self-rule in the Nagorno-Karabakh region within the Republic of Azerbaijan to be worked out with the direct and equal participation

of both Armenian and Azerbaijani communities and in the framework of lawful and democratic process.

Azerbaijan is a country that makes significant steps towards democratisation of its society and protection and promotion of human rights. It is especially successful in making progress in judicial and legal reforms. More judges, especially from the young generation, new court buildings, regular trainings and seminars, modern penitentiary facilities, better communication and more transparency are only some of those elements. It is worth mentioning that there are a number of programmes carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, Prosecutor's General Office and judicial bodies of Azerbaijan with the support of the CoE and other international partners, such as the EU and OSCE. This all contributes to the promotion of human rights and freedoms in Azerbaijan.

Thank you for your attention and congratulations.