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|  | **République Française**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Paris, le 7 novembre 2020 |
| **Commission des****affaires européennes***EUR 2020\_302* |  |

**Projet d’intervention
de M. Pascal ALLIZARD**

**Vice-Président de l'Assemblée parlementaire de l'OSCE
*AP-OSCE Commission permanente – 12 octobre 2020***

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Mr President, Dear colleagues and friends,

Today I would like to talk about three issues particularly worrying: Belarus, Nagorno Karabakh and the Oriental part of the Mediterranean Sea.

**BELARUS**

The Belarus issue is very embarrassing for us. On the one hand, we want to remain true to our principles of promoting democracy and the Rule of Law. This is why we are putting pressure on the regime of Alexander Lukashenko. Yet, on the other hand, we want Belarus to retain its sovereignty and independence.

 We know that if the European Union applies too severe sanctions, these sanctions will be misinterpreted and Belarus will drift away from Europe.

In fact, Belarus stands between two worlds : Europe and Russia. Don’t let us make the same mistake again and try to force Belarus to make a choice between the two. What Belarus needs is game-changing reforms, openness and democratisation, all the way taking into account the legitimate longings of its population.

During several years, we have been thinking the president was popular. We were mistaken.

And President Lukashenko was wise enough to keep a perfect balance between West and East and to play off the West and Russia against each other.

It is now clear that Belarus is not stable at all and discontent is growing in the country.

Considering the political situation, the European Union has launched a procedure to sanction President Lukashenko, his son Viktor and other high-ranking officials. The European Union has rejected the result of the presidential election.

Our role at the moment, as members of the Assembly, is to recall the principles and insist on fair elections and the full respect of the Rule of Law and let the behind-the-door negotiations lead to a positive ending : a peaceful handover of power to a regularly elected successor. If we want to remain a pole of attraction to our friends of Belarus, we must stand by our values. In the end, the people of Belarus will change the country for the better.

**NAGORNO KARABAKH**

The war in Nagorno Karabakh ended in a ceasefire in 1994, that left Azerbaijan with a loss of territory and pride, and Nagorno Karabakh has been referred to as a “frozen conflict” ever since, though there are dozens of casualties every year along the “dividing line”, with repeated flare-ups.

Today the question is : why was tension increasing in the region ?

On the one hand, Azerbaijan has developed a stronger economy and its recent wealth enabled the country to build up a military arsenal while, on the other hand, Armenia has remained a fragile country with a poor economy. We also know that mercenaries are waging this war and that non-Caucasian countries are stoking tensions there.

Armenia and Azerbaijan signed recently a ceasefire agreement to end the war for control of Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenia’s prime minister, said the terms of the truce were unbelievably painful for his people but were necessary, causing resentment and fury among the Armenian population. News of the agreement was followed by demonstrations in Yerevan, with protesters forcing their way into the main government building and parliament.

Russia will deploy 2,000 troops and 100 armoured personnel carriers to the front line between the combatants.

Our Assembly must go on supporting the steadfast endeavours of the Minsk Group and follow up the respect of the ceasefire by both parties along with the current monitoring of the humanitarian situation of the civilian population.

**THE ORIENTAL PART of THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA**

The situation in the Eastern part of the Mediterranean deserves our attention for two main reasons : migration issues and territorial disputes due to the recent discovery of gas reserves .

Concerning the migration issue, we all know that the degraded global situation encourages people to leave their countries and migrate to Europe. The dangers surrounding the migratory routes lead to numerous human tragedies. Countries of departure also face difficulties. Yet our populations consider that they have done quite a lot already to help and recent facts now show that among those migrants are hidden terrorists.

I think it is necessary to do more in order to help the people eager to leave their countries to stay in their home countries where they will be more useful there for economic development and political stability. We must also do our best to help the countries receiving migrants to sort out more quickly their exact legal status and take care of them as decently as possible.

As to the energy issue, competition over the rights to tap gas reserves is enhancing existing tensions over sovereignty and maritime borders. Without more active engagement by outside actors and among them the OSCE, these disagreements will be difficult to resolve and could lead to war.

 As members of the OSCE-PA our duty is to recall our principle of non-violent solutions for the settlement of disputes but first and foremost it is our duty to stress that international law must be respected.

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So as a conclusion I will repeat that our world is now more volatile and more dangerous than ever and this is why the mission of the OSCE and the OSCE-PA is so necessary. We are sentinels. We are giving a serious warning to those who have the power to act in time to prevent the worst.