



**Joint Statement by  
the Heads of Delegation of the Minsk Group Co-Chair Countries  
and the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia  
Athens, December 1, 2009**

The Heads of Delegation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries, Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation Sergei Lavrov, Foreign Minister of France Bernard Kouchner, and Deputy Secretary of State of the United States James Steinberg met in Athens on December 1 with the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Elmar Mammadyarov and Foreign Minister of Armenia Edward Nalbandian.

The five Heads of Delegation recalled the commitments in the November 2008 Moscow Declaration and the December 2008 Helsinki OSCE Ministerial Statement. They noted the positive dynamic in the talks, demonstrated through six meetings this year between the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan. They agreed that the increasing frequency of these meetings has significantly contributed to an enhanced dialogue between the parties and forward movement toward finalizing the Basic Principles for the Peaceful Settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, proposed in Madrid on November 29, 2007.

Foreign Ministers Lavrov and Kouchner and Deputy Secretary Steinberg reiterated the commitment of their countries, as expressed in the Joint Statement on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict at the L'Aquila Summit of the Eight on July 10, issued by their three Presidents, to support the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan as they complete work on the Basic Principles and urged that the parties complete this work as soon as possible. They stressed that agreement on the Basic Principles would provide the framework for a comprehensive settlement to promote a future of peace, stability, and prosperity for the entire region.

The Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan reported on progress during the course of this year in achieving common understandings on points of the Basic Principles. They stated the willingness of their countries to complete work on the Basic Principles, as stipulated by the Presidents of the Co-Chair countries at L'Aquila. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to work intensively to resolve the remaining issues, to reach an agreement based, in particular, upon the principles of the Helsinki Final Act of Non-Use of Force or Threat of Force, Territorial Integrity, and the Equal Rights and Self-Determination of Peoples.