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## **SPEECH ACTIONS OR DECLARATIVES OF THE OSCE MINSK GROUP STATEMENTS: WHY DIDN'T THEY HELP TO RESOLVE THE CONFLICT OF NAGORNO-KARABAGH**

This research paper delves into the effectiveness of declarative statements made by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group in facilitating the resolution of the longstanding Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The study seeks to assess the extent to which these speech actions have contributed to tangible progress. The primary objective of this research is to examine the declaratives employed by the OSCE Minsk Group within their statements and to determine why these statements have not led to significant advancements in resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. By assessing the declaratives in the statements, this study offers insights into one of the factors that have hindered the peaceful regulation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

**Key words:** the language of diplomacy, speech acts, declaratives, OSCE Minsk Group, statements, discourse of official documents.

### **Introduction**

The persistent Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, a complex and protracted issue deeply rooted in historical tensions and geopolitical complexities, has defied nu-

merous international efforts to reach a peaceful resolution. Among the organizations dedicated to mediating this conflict, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group has played a central role through its declarative statements. The OSCE Minsk Group was created in 1992 by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (now the OSCE) to provide a platform for peaceful negotiations over a complex conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh region. It is co-chaired by three major international powers: France, Russia, and the United States. The Minsk Group operates under the framework of the OSCE, a regional organization focused on security and cooperation among European and Eurasian countries. The primary function of the Minsk Group is to act as a mediator between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The co-chairs were supposed to facilitate direct negotiations between the two parties and work to promote dialogue and compromise (Official webpage of OSCE Minsk Group).

These pronouncements, often laden with diplomatic rhetoric and strategic language, represent the voice of the international community in addressing this conflict. However, a number of declarations and diplomatic overtures did not lead to the peaceful regulation of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The inadequacy of diplomatic endeavors, as evidenced by the OSCE Minsk Group's inability to facilitate a lasting peace accord and the outbreak of the 44-day conflict in 2020, highlights the significant role played by diplomatic rhetoric. The purpose of diplomatic wording is to avoid direct, brutal primary and unproductive confrontation (D'Acquisto, 2017, p. 42). Thus, we are going to analyze the utilization of declaratives in the statements of the OSCE Minsk Group Group to found out whether these statements intended to peacefully solve the conflict or not.

## Methods

The research methodology involved a literature review to provide theoretical foundations and contextual background for the study. This step was crucial in understanding the historical and geopolitical intricacies of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, as well as the role of international organizations like the OSCE Minsk Group in mediating such disputes. In essence, this study leveraged a combination of theoretical information and in-depth analysis of declarative statements to assess why these statements have not led to substantial advancements in resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The research methodology was designed to provide a nuanced understanding of the complexities involved in diplomatic efforts to address protracted conflict, emphasizing the need to move beyond rhetoric to concrete actions in the pursuit of peace.

## Results

The analysis of the OSCE Minsk Group's declarative statements paints a bleak

picture of the Nagorno–Karabakh conflict. Despite the international community’s collective commitment to finding a resolution, these statements reveal a stark reality: diplomatic actions and rhetoric, as articulated in these pronouncements, have not translated into meaningful, positive change on the ground. The conflict continued to persist up to, unabated by the diplomatic efforts made by the OSCE Minsk Group.

The statements discussed in this paper signify a gap between diplomatic expressions and the actual resolution of a deeply rooted and complex conflict. The conspicuous absence of explicit evidence of substantial changes or resolutions in the Nagorno–Karabakh situation is indicative of the inadequacy of diplomatic discourse to bring about a genuine transformation in the region.

This paper’s analysis underscores the insufficiency of words and declarations in the face of a protracted conflict. The fact that these statements continuously underscore the necessity for further measures and negotiations implies that prior efforts have been insufficient and ineffective. This is a disheartening reminder of the enduring nature of the Nagorno–Karabakh conflict and the inability of diplomatic expressions to drive it towards resolution.

The failure of declarative statements to produce significant outcomes underscores the complexities and difficulties inherent in mediating deeply rooted conflicts through diplomatic means. The statement’s continual repetition of the need for additional measures and negotiations ultimately points to a lack of substantive progress, making it abundantly clear that, for about 30 years the Nagorno–Karabakh conflict persisted without resolution.

## Discussion

The language of diplomacy is characterized by specific conventions and terminology used in international relations, negotiations, and communication between countries. It aims to maintain diplomacy, decorum, and mutual understanding in the often-sensitive realm of international politics. Here are a few definitions of the language of diplomacy from notable authors and experts in the field. Geoffrey Berridge defines the language of diplomacy as “the codified language of negotiation, which seeks to minimize miscommunication, misunderstanding, and ambiguity. Berridge 2005)”. Feltham describes diplomatic language as “a tool of the trade, designed to be helpful in promoting cooperation among nations (Feltham 1996)”. Harold George Nicolson explains, “The language of diplomacy is intended to be objective, unemotional, and to communicate as clearly as possible the views and intentions of the sender (Nicolson, 1954)”.

From our perspective, the above-mentioned definitions highlight the key attributes of diplomatic language, including its clarity, objectivity, role in negotiation, and its function as a tool for advancing international cooperation and resolving conflicts. They emphasize the need for precision and mutual understanding in the complex field of diplomacy. Diplomats use language as a tool for negotiation, communication, and consensus building in the international arena.

This aligns with the notion of speech acts in diplomatic documents, where specific language choices are made to achieve diplomatic objectives

Speech acts, as introduced by J.L. Austin and expanded upon by John Searle and others refer to the actions we perform when saying something in other words is a part of pragmatics that studies utterances as actions performed via utterances (Yule, 1996 p. 47).

Speech acts can be divided into three main categories

1. The locutionary act is the basic act of utterance or producing a meaningful linguistic expression (Rismayanti, Manalu, Anggraeni, 2021, p.141). In the context of international diplomacy, locutionary acts can be used to express agreement or disagreement with proposed solutions; to signal acceptance or rejection of certain proposals; to emphasize points made by other parties; and to set out conditions for further negotiations.
2. An utterance with a function without intending it to have an effect. This is the third dimension, the perlocutionary act. Depending on the circumstances, a perlocutionary act is a speech act that produces an effect, intended or not, achieved in an addressee by a speaker's utterance (for example, to account for a wonderful meal or to get the hearer to drink some coffee). This is also generally known as the perlocutionary effect (Yule, 1996, 48).
3. The performance of the illocutionary act occurs through the communicative impact of a spoken expression. We may articulate to convey a statement, extend an offer, provide an explanation, or fulfill some other communicative intent (Fitriani, Masriza, and Chairina 2020). This is also generally known as the illocutionary force of the utterance. They convey the speaker's intended meaning or communicative purpose. According to Searle, illocutionary acts can be categorized into several types, including:
  - a. **Assertives:** These speech acts convey information, make statements, and express beliefs, such as stating, claiming, describing, or announcing.
  - b. **Directives:** Directives are used to elicit specific actions or responses from the listener, such as requesting, commanding, advising, or suggesting.
  - c. **Commissives:** Commissives involve the speaker committing to a course of action, making promises, offering, or vowing
  - d. **Expressives:** Expressives convey the speaker's emotions, feelings, or psychological states, such as apologizing, thanking, congratulating, or commiserating.
  - e. **Declarations:** Declarations change the external world by the very act of uttering them, such as baptizing, resigning, christening, or firing (Searle, 1969).

Speech acts in diplomatic discourse can range from making requests, offering guarantees, issuing warnings, expressing regrets, and many others. The choice of a particular speech act can carry specific intentions and possible repercussions in

international relations. In the realm of linguistic philosophy and pragmatics, speech acts and declaratives critical roles, especially in high-stakes communication like diplomatic discourse.

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Thus, let us analyze several functions of the declaratives to understand why they didn't contribute to the peaceful regulation of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Declaratives (or “declaratory speech acts”) are a specific type of illocutionary speech act where the very act of saying something brings about a change in the external world.

A declarative is an utterance used by a speaker with the purpose of changing a situation in some way once the speech act has been uttered.

The execution of declarations does not require any specific attitudes from the speaker, except for the speaker's readiness to establish the relevant institutional fact. Consequently, verbs denoting declarations, known as declaratives, set themselves apart from other speech act verbs by not expressing any attitudes of the speaker beyond the intention to establish a specific institutional fact. Examples of declaratives include to absolve, baptize, bequeath, condemn, excommunicate, fire, nominate, and resign (Allan, Keith, 2009).

Declaratives don't just describe the world or express an internal state; they actively change the state of affairs in some way. Examples: “I hereby resign” or “We declare war” or “I pronounce you husband and wife.” By saying these statements in the right context, the reality changes — the person resigns, a state of war exists, or a couple is married.

In the framework of diplomatic discourse, declaratives are of paramount importance. When a country declares war, recognizes another state's sovereignty, or formally breaks diplomatic ties, the act of making the declaration creates a new reality on the international stage. Such statements aren't just about conveying information but are about changing the status quo.

While all declaratives are speech acts (specifically, a subset of illocutionary acts), not all speech acts are declaratives. In diplomatic communication, declaratives have the power to change realities, like establishing relations or severing ties. Other speech acts, like making requests or expressing condolences, have different functions and might not change the state of affairs in the same direct way as declaratives. Understanding the distinction between these is essential in diplomatic communication since the choice of speech act, especially the use of a declarative, can have significant political and legal implication.

The aim of communication within the discourse of official documents is to bind the addressee (the reader) to a certain kind of behavior. This principle of guiding behavior through communication is particularly relevant when we examine the analyses of declaratives within the OSCE Minsk Group statements, where

the choice of language and diplomatic strategies plays a pivotal role in influencing the course of action and decision-making in the framework of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Therefore, according to our terminology, these texts are artifacts with a high degree of authority and binding force. They are intended to change behavior of people and, therefore, to change the reality. The label of declaratives as a subset of performatives (i.e. texts that “work” in the real world or rather “change reality”) may also be applied to these texts (Austin, 1962).

In the framework of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the OSCE Minsk Group’s statements and reports are integral components of diplomatic discourse. These official documents serve as essential tools for the international community and involved parties to gauge the progress and dynamics of the conflict resolution process.

In our analyses we will provide examples how declaratives were utilized in the statements of the OSCE Minsk Group.

## Analyses

Let us undertake an examination of two statements disseminated by the OSCE Minsk Group, one from the year 2007 and the other from 2019, representing distinct temporal periods, in order to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the declaratives.

The first statement that we are going to analyze was issued on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January, 2007.

*“After four days of meetings, the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs are encouraged by the constructive approach of the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan as they seek to finalize a set of basic principles for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Russian Federation Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov hosted Armenian Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian and Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov for talks facilitated by the Co-Chairs in Moscow on Tuesday, January 23. The Co-Chairs met with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Baku on Wednesday, January 24. On Thursday, January 25, they traveled to Nagorno-Karabakh to meet with NK leader Arkady Ghukasian. They met with Armenian President Robert Kocharian in Yerevan on Friday, January 26. The Co-Chairs appreciate the efforts of all the interlocutors they met during the week. It is the responsibility of the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, with the assistance of the Co-Chairs, to find a lasting, peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The presidents are defending their national interests vigorously, and they are doing so in a way that allows the peace process to continue moving forward. The Co-Chairs urge all parties to sustain this momentum in the negotiations and to prepare their publics for the necessary compromises. At the same time, the Co-Chairs urge continued pursuit of confidence-building measures and maintenance of the ceasefire to increase the level of trust and understanding between the sides (Statement of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group).”*

The above mentioned statement contains several declaratives which are used

to convey information or assert facts. Here is an analysis of the passage from the point of view of declaratives: Let us analyze some of them:

- “After four days of meetings, the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs are encouraged by the constructive approach of the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan as they seek to finalize a set of basic principles for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.” – While the Co-Chairs are encouraged, it is not clear if this encouragement has translated into tangible progress or a resolution.
- “Russian Federation Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov hosted Armenian Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian and Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov for talks facilitated by the Co-Chairs in Moscow on Tuesday, January 23.” – This statement reports the meeting, but it does not detail the outcomes or concrete changes achieved.
- “The Co-Chairs met with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Baku on Wednesday, January 24.” – The meeting is described, but it doesn’t provide information on any substantial changes as a result of the meeting.
- “They met with Armenian President Robert Kocharian in Yerevan on Friday, January 26.” – Similar to the previous statement, this describes a meeting, but it doesn’t specify the outcomes or changes.
- “The Co-Chairs appreciate the efforts of all the interlocutors they met during the week.” – While appreciation is expressed, it doesn’t clarify if these efforts have led to significant progress or changes.
- “It is the responsibility of the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, with the assistance of the Co-Chairs, to find a lasting, peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.” – This statement underscores the shared responsibility, but it doesn’t indicate whether this responsibility has resulted in substantial change.
- “The presidents are defending their national interests vigorously, and they are doing so in a way that allows the peace process to continue moving forward.” – While the assertion is made that the presidents are defending their interests, it doesn’t elaborate on whether this defense has brought about a resolution or change in the conflict.
- “The Co-Chairs urge all parties to sustain this momentum in the negotiations and to prepare their publics for the necessary compromises.” – The Co-Chairs urge action, but the statement doesn’t confirm if the momentum has led to concrete changes.
- “At the same time, the Co-Chairs urge continued pursuit of confidence-building measures and maintenance of the ceasefire to increase the level of trust and understanding between the sides.” – The Co-Chairs recommend further actions, but it remains unclear if these actions have resulted in a significant change in the conflict.

As we can see the passage is structured with a series of declarative statements that provide information about meetings, assessments, responsibilities, and

recommendations related to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The declarative statements in the passage describe diplomatic activities and efforts, but they do not provide explicit evidence of substantial changes or resolutions in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The passage emphasizes various actions and responsibilities, but it does not delve into specific outcomes or their impact.

The next statement that was analyzed was issued in Bratislava on second of December 2019: “*The Co-Chair Heads of Delegation take positive note of the relatively low level of violence along the Line of Contact and international border and credit the sides for utilizing fully the direct communication links between them to reduce the risk of escalation, as the Foreign Ministers agreed during consultations in Washington in June. The Co-Chair Heads of Delegation take positive note of the relatively low level of violence along the Line of Contact and international border and credit the sides for utilizing fully the direct communication links between them to reduce the risk of escalation, as the Foreign Ministers agreed during consultations in Washington in June. We welcome the concrete steps undertaken in the past year to reduce tensions and prepare the populations for peace, as the Co-Chair countries called for in the Milan statement in December 2018 and as the Ministers agreed to do in Paris in January 2019..... Noting that such efforts play an important role in fostering an atmosphere conducive to substantive negotiations to reach a peaceful settlement, the three Heads of Delegation call for additional concrete humanitarian and security measures..... It should also embrace additional elements proposed by the Presidents of the Co-Chair countries in 2009–2012. The Co-Chair Heads of Delegation stress once again that the status quo is unacceptable and there can be no military solution to the conflict. We therefore call on the sides to engage in good faith substantive negotiations without artificial delays or conditions (statement of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group)*”.

The above-mentioned statement appears to express commitment to mediating a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and acknowledges some developments at the same time highlighting the absence of significant change in the status quo.

First, let us mention that the statement acknowledges a “*relatively low level of violence*” but does not indicate that this has led to substantial progress toward resolving the conflict. It falls short of demonstrating a substantial change. Meanwhile, while it mentions “*concrete steps*” to reduce tensions and prepare for peace, it does not provide evidence of any major breakthroughs or tangible outcomes. It implies that actions are lagging behind rhetoric. Additionally, the statement calls for “*additional concrete humanitarian and security measures,*” indicating that the previously taken actions may not have been sufficient or effective in bringing about significant change. The call for efforts to assist the International Committee for the Red Cross with exchanging data on missing persons highlights ongoing humanitarian concerns, suggesting that previous efforts in this regard may have fallen short. Finally, the statement firmly states that “*the status*



*quo is unacceptable,*” but the fact that it continues to exist implies that the previous statements and actions have not been successful in changing it.

Thus, statements in this text do not indicate that they have led to significant positive changes in the Nagorno–Karabakh conflict. They emphasize the need for additional measures and negotiations, suggesting that previous efforts have not produced substantial results.

### Conclusion

The OSCE Minsk Group, tasked with mediating The Nagorno–Karabakh conflict, has issued a series of declarative statements over the years, expressing unwavering commitment to finding a peaceful resolution.

Throughout this research, we scrutinized the declarative statements of the OSCE Minsk Group, dissecting their contents, diplomatic strategies, and recurring themes. Our analysis revealed that, despite the profusion of diplomatic discourse, these declaratives did not translate into tangible progress in resolving the Nagorno–Karabakh conflict.

The findings of this study shed light on the discord between diplomatic expressions and substantive change. It underscores the imperative of moving beyond rhetoric to concrete actions in the pursuit of peace. The declarative statements, often laden with diplomatic language, held the potential to influence the destiny of nations and the well-being of countless individuals. However, their limitations became evident in the face of this protracted conflict.

As we conclude, the failure of these declaratives to bring about substantial change underscores the complexities and challenges of international mediation, particularly in the framework of enduring conflicts. It is an urgent reminder of the need for the upcoming diplomatic endeavors to be complemented by substantive actions if they are to yield a positive impact.

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**Անի Թամազյան**

*Եվրասիա միջազգային համալսարանի լեզուների,  
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**ԽՈՍՔԱՅԻՆ ԱԿՏԵՐԸ ԿԱՄ ԴԵՎԼԱՐԱՏԻՎՆԵՐԸ ԵԱՀԿ ՄԻՆՍԿԻ  
ԽՄԲԻ ՀԱՅՏԱՐԱՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐՈՒՄ. ԻՆՉՈՒՆՆԵՐՈՒՄ  
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ԽԱՂԱՂ ԿԱՐԳԱՎՈՐՄԱՆԸ**

Սույն հետազոտությունն ուսումնասիրում է ԵԱՀԿ Մինսկի խմբի հայտարարություններում Լեռնային Ղարաբաղի երկարամյա հակամարտության կարգավորման վերաբերյալ առկա դեկլարատիվների արդյունավետությունը: Մեր ուսումնասիրությունը փորձում է գնահատել, թե որքանով են դեկլարատիվները նպաստում հակամարտության կարգավորմանը: Այս հետազոտության հիմնական նպատակն է ուսումնասիրել ԵԱՀԿ Մինսկի խմբի կողմից կիրառվող դեկլարատիվները և պարզել, թե ինչու այդ հայտարարությունները չեն հանգեցրել էական առաջընթացի Լեռնային Ղարաբաղի հակամարտության կարգավորման գործում: Գնահատելով հայտարարությունների դեկլարատիվները՝ այս ուսումնասիրությունը հնարավորություն է տալիս պատկերացում կազմել այն գործոններից մեկի մասին, որը խոչընդոտել է Լեռնային Ղարաբաղի հակամարտության խաղաղ կարգավորմանը:

**Հիմնաբառեր.** դիվանագիտության լեզու, խոսքային ակտեր, դեկլարատիվներ, ԵԱՀԿ Մինսկի խումբ, հայտարարություններ, պաշտոնական փաստաթղթերի խոսույթ:

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## **РЕЧЕВЫЕ ДЕЙСТВИЯ ИЛИ ДЕКЛАРАТИВЫ ЗАЯВЛЕНИЙ МИНСКОЙ ГРУППЫ ОБСЕ: ПОЧЕМУ ОНИ НЕ ПОМОГЛИ РАЗРЕШИТЬ НАГОРНО-КАРАБАХСКИЙ КОНФЛИКТ**

В данной исследовательской работе рассматривается эффективность декларативных заявлений Минской группы Организации по безопасности и сотрудничеству в Европе (ОБСЕ) в содействии разрешению давнего нагорнокарабахского конфликта. Исследование направлено на оценку того, в какой степени эти речевые действия способствовали ощутимому прогрессу в разрешении конфликтов и усилиях по построению мира. Основная цель данного исследования – изучить декларативы, использованные Минской группой ОБСЕ в своих заявлениях, и определить, почему эти заявления не привели к существенному продвижению в разрешении нагорнокарабахского конфликта. Оценивая декларативность заявлений, данное исследование дает представление об одном из факторов, которые препятствовали мирному урегулированию нагорнокарабахского конфликта.

**Ключевые слова:** язык дипломатии, речевые акты, декларативы, Минская группа ОБСЕ, дискурс заявлений официальных документов.

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