



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS BY THE CHAIRPERSON-
IN-OFFICE OF THE OSCE, H.E. DIDIER BURKHALTER, PRESIDENT OF
THE SWISS CONFEDERATION AND HEAD OF THE SWISS FEDERAL
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 16 January 2014

Thank you Mr Chairman,

It is a pleasure to join previous speakers in welcoming you, President Burkhalter, to the Permanent Council on the occasion of the first meeting under your chairmanship. We look forward to cooperating closely with you and your team, and we stand ready to support you in addressing the many challenges lying ahead. Allow me also to use this opportunity to pay tribute to the outgoing Ukrainian chairmanship for their untiring efforts over the past year.

Mr Chairman,

Norway welcomes and fully subscribes to the priorities presented by the Swiss chairmanship. First and foremost, we agree that a positive outcome of the Helsinki +40 process is crucial for the future of the OSCE. The process offers a unique opportunity to reinvigorate our organization. We therefore strongly feel that the Helsinki +40 process must remain an overarching concern in our work.

Let me however stress that progress is dependent on political will. More involvement by our capitals – in particular by our foreign ministers – will be needed. In the same vein, genuine progress requires that we use the OSCE as a forum for open, meaningful and constructive dialogue. Not least in questions where our positions differ.

Mr Chairman,

We support your aim to further operationalize recent decisions on the conflict cycle. The updating of our toolbox on early warning, conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation is important. We therefore welcome your intention to strengthen both the reconciliation processes and the mediation support capabilities in the field missions. Moreover, we agree that we have a collective responsibility to resolve the protracted conflicts. However, no settlement will be possible unless the parties are truly committed to it.

We also support your intention to further the work in the area of transnational threats.

Mr Chairman,

Norway agrees with you that the human dimension must remain a key priority. Without democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights, there can be no lasting security and stability. The OSCE institutions and the field missions remain our single most important tools in assisting the participating states in the implementation of OSCE commitments. Consequently, we must ensure that both the institutions and the field missions are endowed with the independence – and resources – they need to fulfill their mandates.

In this regard, I would like to stress that we should re-launch a discussion on an OSCE presence in Georgia. We also hope that we during your chairmanship will agree to establish an OSCE presence in Mongolia.

We are pleased to note your intention to enhance the involvement of civil society in the organization's work. Their participation is crucial to the further development of our organization's acquis. Furthermore, civil society plays a vital role in overseeing that we adhere to our commitments. We especially commend you for engaging young people in developing future priorities for the OSCE.

Mention should also be made of the importance of a continued strong focus on cross-dimensional issues, in particular on gender issues and trafficking in human beings.

Mr Chairman,

Through our chairmanship of the Human Dimension Committee, Norway has a particular responsibility – and opportunity – to contribute to the fulfillment of your priorities in the third dimension. The Ministerial Council in Kyiv demonstrated that it is possible to reach agreement on important issues also in this dimension. We encourage all participating states to retain the spirit of cooperation from Kyiv into the New Year.

Mr Chairman,

Allow me finally to stress that if we want the OSCE to remain relevant, we must give the organization sufficient resources. We must ensure that we have a budget that allows the Secretariat, the institutions and the field missions to maintain an operational capability. We must also make sure that the OSCE is able to attract competent and dedicated staff.

In conclusion President Burkhalter, allow me to congratulate you and wish you and your team every success. You can count on Norway's support and cooperation.

Thank you.