



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT BY NORWAY IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT BY THE HIGH COMMISSIONER ON NATIONAL MINORITIES

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council 20 November 2014

Mr Chairman,

I fully subscribe to the points made by Italy on behalf of the European Union. In my statement, I will therefore limit myself to the following four remarks:

First, High Commissioner Astrid Thors underlined in her written presentation that “the respect for minority rights is a prerequisite to securing lasting peace and security in multi-ethnic states”. We fully agree. Her mandate for containing and de-escalating tensions involving national minorities has never been more relevant than today.

Second, we reiterate a point we have made on several occasions before, namely the value of the different guidelines developed by the High Commissioner over the years. We are convinced that more active use of them by the participating States would help reduce tensions between both states and ethnic groups.

Third, the High Commissioner’s presentation today also illustrates her priorities. We support these priorities, and we appreciate her continued attention to the situation in Ukraine. We share her concerns about the situation in Crimea, in particular violations of the rights of the Crimean Tartar and the Ukrainian speaking communities. It is imperative that the international community, including the High Commissioner, is allowed free and unfettered access to the peninsula. We encourage High Commissioner Thors to continue the dialogue

with relevant authorities in Kyiv to help ensure a balanced approach to the issue of language and identity.

Forth and finally, we applaud the way the High Commissioner executes her mandate. The way she does it, underlines the importance of respecting the autonomy of her institution. I urge my colleagues around this table to ensure a good correlation between the importance of her work – for us and for the stability in the OSCE area – and the resources we allocate to her institution.

Thank you.