



**PERMANENT DELEGATION  
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS BY THE  
CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE, TÁNAISTE AND MINISTER FOR FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS AND TRADE OF IRELAND, H.E. EAMON GILMORE**

As delivered by Minister Counsellor Margaret Slettevold  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
January 12, 2011

Mr. Chairperson,

It is a pleasure for Norway to warmly welcome the new Chairperson-in-Office, His Excellency Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Eamon Gilmore, to the Permanent Council on the occasion of this first meeting under the Irish chairmanship. We look forward to a close cooperation with you and your team, and stand ready to support the Chairmanship in addressing the many challenges lying ahead. Let me also use this opportunity to pay another well-deserved tribute to the outgoing Lithuanian Chairmanship for their untiring efforts over the past year.

Norway welcomes the priorities presented by the new Chairperson-in-Office. We share your emphasis on the OSCE's continuing role in contributing to resolve the protracted conflicts, and we agree with previous speakers that this is a joint responsibility of all participating states. We believe that the OSCE's capacity to tackle existing and emerging conflicts needs to be improved considerably, and we assure the incoming Chairmanship of our full support for initiatives that will bring us closer to this goal. The same goes for the follow-up of results achieved by Lithuania's 2011 chairmanship and decisions from the Vilnius Ministerial.

Mr. Chairperson,

Norway agrees with the C-i-O that the human dimension remains a key priority on the OSCE's agenda. Without democracy and full respect for human rights,

including fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, there can be no lasting security and stability. The OSCE institutions, including the ODIHR, the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Representative on Freedom of the Media, are our most important tools in assisting participating States to achieve this goal. We highly appreciate your commitment to support the work and the autonomy of these institutions.

Norway is a strong believer in gender equality. Thus, we support the strong emphasis given to this in the Chairmanship's priorities and we stand ready to cooperate with the Chairmanship and their Special Representative on Gender Issues.

We have taken particular positive note of the Chairperson-in-Office's intention to devote special attention to freedom of the media in the digital age, and to freedom of association, assembly and expression. As was strongly emphasized by the Representative of the Freedom of the Media in her report to the Permanent Council in December, the need for vigilance in this field is as strong as ever. Numerous reports and statements show that fundamental principles are in jeopardy and that entire regions, also in the OSCE area, are actually slipping when it comes to safeguarding freedom of expression and media freedom.

Mr. Chairperson,

We also welcome the Chairperson-in-Office's intention to follow up on the important work of the Lithuanian and previous chairmanships in addressing transnational threats, with particular emphasis on organised crime, cyber threats, drugs, terrorism and human trafficking. We also look forward to a continued OSCE engagement with Afghanistan, in particular with regard to border management. Problems originating from this region still remain among the most serious threats to security and stability in the OSCE region.

In concluding, allow me again to congratulate Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, H.E. Mr. Gilmore and wish his capable teams in Dublin and Vienna all possible success. Mr. Minister, you can be assured of Norway's support and constructive cooperation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.