



**PERMANENT DELEGATION  
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO H.E. THORBJØRN JAGLAND,  
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
29<sup>th</sup> of March, 2012

**Mr. Chairman,**

Norway warmly welcomes the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, H.E. Thorbjørn Jagland, back to the Permanent Council. We thank him for his interesting and informative presentation of current discussions and ongoing efforts in the Council of Europe. We also thank him for the information on the far-reaching reforms that the Council of Europe has embarked upon.

The Council of Europe has become a more relevant institution thanks to Secretary General Jagland's efforts.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The OSCE and the Council of Europe are committed to the same values and work towards the same objectives concerning democracy, human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law.

Our memberships overlap to a large extent.

The Council of Europe's normative work underpins OSCE's comprehensive concept of security, without which there can be no lasting peace and no real stability. The Council of Europe is and must be a fully integrated part of the European security architecture.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Norway shares Secretary General Jagland's points regarding the need for closer co-operation between our two organisations and proposals in this regard. The establishment of the Council of Europe Office in Vienna is an important step.

There are many reasons why close relations between our organisations are crucial. I would in particular like to mention the following: When two organisations such as ours work on the same or related issues, we must make sure that we do not develop differing norms and standards. That would be in nobody's interest. This does not mean, however, that one organisation cannot be the standards setter. As already pointed out by the European Union,

the work of the Council of Europe to protect of the rights of LGBT persons is an example of this.

We welcome the study that Secretary General Jagland has commissioned in order to enhance cooperation and complementarity between the Council of Europe and the OSCE. We look forward to the discussions that will follow on the basis of Professor Geir Ulfstein's study.

**Mr. Chairman,**

I would like to mention the valuable co-operation that has developed between the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Council of Europe on the important issues related to the situation for minorities. Discrimination against national minorities can be a source of friction between and within states, and has been among the root causes of many of the protracted conflicts in the OSCE region.

Election observation is another important area of co-operation between our two organisations. We believe that an even closer cooperation between the Council of Europe and OSCE institutions in this field would benefit us all.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to pay tribute to the reform work that Secretary General Jagland has undertaken in the Council of Europe and his efforts towards closer cooperation between our organisations. We wish him every success in his important work.

**Thank you, Mr. Chairman**