



**PERMANENT DELEGATION  
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY NORWAY ON THE TREATMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY  
IN CERTAIN OSCE PARTICIPATING STATES**  
As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
13th December, 2012

Mr. Chairman,

I aligned myself with the European Union statement on Tajikistan and Kazakhstan, but would like to use this opportunity to make an additional remark related to the issue brought up by the EU.

Mr. Chairman,

We witness quite often that the authorities of some participating States use allegations of «administrative irregularities» as a pretext for putting pressure on civil society organizations.

This seems to be the case now in Tajikistan and it seems to be the case with the Human Rights House in Baku, an issue I on two occasions have raised in this room during 2012. It also seems to be the case with Raipon, an umbrella organization of indigenous peoples in the Russian North. – These are only a few examples among many.

Mr. Chairman,

I represent a country with a very well developed civil society. Also *we* have seen examples of administrative irregularities in NGOs. Some of these irregularities have ended up in the courts and sentences have been passed.

But no organization has been closed by the courts. An organization consists of more than a chairman, a secretary or a fund manager. Closing – or banning – would not only hit those responsible of the “irregularity”, but also innocent members, as well as supporters. It would also unduly limit the possibility of the organization and its members to promote the objectives of the organization. Closing would, in other words, in my country be regarded as a disproportionate legal action and probably also as being in contradiction with our OSCE commitments, as well as in contradiction with our obligations under for example the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, since using “administrative irregularities” as a pretext for closing, discontinuation or banning of civil society organizations would be in contradiction with *my* country’s commitments and obligations, it would also be in contradiction with the commitments and obligations of *all* OSCE participating States.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.