



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

STATEMENT BY NORWAY

As delivered by Counsellor Lars Løberg to the 2012 Human Dimension implementation meeting, Warsaw 5 October 2012 - Closing Session

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

This, being the final day of my final HDIM, is indeed a session for reflections over lessons learned and for the exchange of views on the way forward and on how we will organize Human Dimension events in the years to come.

A few facts are rather obvious. Sessions with up to or even more than 70 speakers tells us at least five things. Those sessions cover pressing themes. Themes where the civil society is in urgent need for a meeting place with representatives of the authorities. It tells us that even basic, fundamental freedoms are being violated by governments in some –or more – participating States. It tells us that the civil society often cannot communicate satisfactory with their own government. And it certainly tells us that we have not set aside sufficient time during the HDIM for those sessions.

At the same time, we've seen other sessions where the list of speakers is far from being that impressive in number. This, to me, says that we still haven't found the right agenda for the HDIM. Or, to be more blunt, we are still not courageous enough to decide to dedicate sufficient time to discuss those areas that we all know will hurt and where participating States really struggle to implement all their commitments.

Mr. Chairman,

I've listened carefully to the debates. A few things are striking. There has been a huge call for reforms of the ODIHR electoral observations. And we've heard both from the Russian Federation and from several NGOs concerns about statelessness and a warning about neonazism and even a glorification of Nazism in the Baltic States. Some of those NGO statements have been so uniform that those NGOs would probably have been named foreign agents according to Russian law. Still, statelessness is a concern also for my government, and there is reason to look into this complex minority problem.

We have been informed about grave violations when it comes to freedom of the media. This is an issue we all must give top priority. This is also a matter for our ministers to debate in Dublin. My delegation has voiced concern over the Death Penalty still being practiced in Belarus and in the USA. The Death Penalty has no place neither in the OSCE-area nor in the 21st century. Abolish it. We have also spoken up for the LGBT-communities. They are as entitled to organize themselves as all other constructive members of society.

Mr. Chairman,

Some participating States have received more criticism from the civil society than others. Not all of the criticisms have been constructive. Then again, there is no smoke without a fire. Those participating States should listen to the criticism, engage in a debate and do their best to improve on those areas where criticisms have been voiced.

Mr. Chairman,

As the delegations go back to Vienna, time has come for us to sit down and discuss strategic goals for our organization. Those strategic goals must be based upon a common understanding of what we do the best, and on what can just as well be done by others. I have during working sessions mentioned the ODIHR methodology for election observations. A gold standard that no other organization is even close to. We must stand firmly together united to defend this gold standard against any attempt to weaken or reduce this methodology.

Our institutions are unique. Their ability to act within their mandates must be developed, and the participating States must make sure that the institutions have sufficient funding to act in times of crisis as well as upon request.

Our field missions are probably what really make the OSCE so unique. We are present, we are visible and we have experts all over who gather the information we need to conduct proper analyzes. A few of the field missions have been closed recently; others may have so limited mandates that the mandate by itself becomes a challenge. Still, they are priceless. And I certainly do hope that we can reestablish field missions in Belarus and Georgia with meaningful mandates. Those three elements, the election observation methodology, the institutions and the field missions must be at the core of the OSCE also for the years to come.

Mr. Chairman,

My Ambassador stated in his opening remarks that there are two equally important aspects for a reform of the human dimension. First, and foremost, the idea behind the HDIM is to review commitments and their implementation. In that respect we must pay more attention to the reports from the institutions, and we must show a willingness to spend more time on controversial themes than on the less controversial ones. The other priority is to preserve the HDIM as by far the most important stage for debates between NGOs and authorities in the OSCE area. To shorten

the HDIM simply to reduce or curb possible criticism is not an alternative. The NGOs are here to assist us, and we are here to listen to their advices.

My experiences from this HDIM has made me even more convinced that he was right in his remarks.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for your attention.