



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT BY NORWAY

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile to the 2012 Human Dimension implementation meeting, Warsaw 24 September 2012 - Opening Session

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

Let me first join previous speakers in expressing our gratitude to the Polish host government for its hospitality and to the Irish Chair and to Director Lenarcic and his ODIHR team for all the hard work laid down in the preparations for this important meeting.

I would also like to thank Cyprus, speaking on behalf of the EU, for presenting views and positions which are representative also for the positions of my Government. This allows me to concentrate my remarks on a few issues that we deem to be particularly pertinent on this occasion.

Mr. Chairman,

At last year's HDIM we were all inspired by the Astana Summit and the boost the Summit declaration gave to our co-operation on human dimension issues. A year later the spirit of Astana seems to have faded away. Thus, we must ensure that this year's HDIM reconfirms our will to co-operate and to regain a common belief that the human dimension is truly important to us. Only full implementation of our common commitments will increase the common security from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

In doing so, we have to agree on some basic principles on organisation, themes and topics for the Human Dimension. The chairmanship has provided us with useful suggestions on ways forward. For my government there are two equally important aspects in this process. 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.

Mr. Chairman,

A standing agenda for the HDIM may be useful to prevent the annual tug of wars that have proven so unfortunate for us all. Any proposals from the NGOs themselves to foster efficiency will also be welcome, though that is their prerogative, not ours. That is also why we will use this HDIM to listen and to learn.

HDIM is one of the fundamental pillars of our co-operation. We are not against reforming the HDIM. But any reforms must improve the review of commitments and strengthen our cooperation with the NGOs. And we will see for ourselves how it functions before I can advise my government which proposals may be useful, and which may be counterproductive.

Mr. Chairman,

In the days to come I and my delegation will contribute to the debate on all of our key priorities. To us that is

1. Freedom of expression and the protection of a free media, including freedom on the internet.
2. Freedom of assembly and association, where we see certain negative developments in some participating states.
3. Refugees and displaced persons, where Norway and Switzerland have pledged their commitments and where we will cohost a side event tomorrow.
4. The abolition of capital punishment, where we deem the OSCE commitments to be bleak and where we will call for further steps to be taken to stop this barbaric practice.
5. Trafficking of human beings is another barbaric practice against which we will seek a strengthened co-operation in the OSCE.
6. Gender equality has always been a Norwegian priority and will continue to be so.
7. National minorities, being vulnerable groups that easily become targets for hate speech and other sources to conflict, and where the Bolsano/Bozen recommendations create a basis for further co-operation.
8. Hate crime, which seems to be a growing problem many places and for which my own country has been a victim recently.
9. Democratic elections, which we deem to be one of the great success stories not only for ODIHR, but for the entire OSCE community.

And finally, Mr. Chairman, I am here to listen to the NGOs and to engage in debate whenever Norwegian positions are being questioned.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for your attention.