



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

OPENING STATEMENT TO THE ANNUAL HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile,
Warsaw, 21 September 2015

Mr Chairman,

HDIM is important because it gives civil society an opportunity to tell us what they see as the most pressing concerns and human rights violations. This is essential to tackle the gaps in implementation that we all have.

HDIM is also an arena to learn from leading experts in human rights. My delegation has invited several experts for side events. Some are from a group not so often represented at HDIM, namely the practicing lawyers. Their experience is important for us.

Mr Chairman,

We are concerned by the increasing pressure on civil society, including human rights defenders, lawyers and the media, in several participating States. Weakening independent civil society deprives citizens of the possibility to voice their concerns and interact with their governments in resolving them.

Mr Chairman,

Attacks on journalists are a threat to democratic development. The attacks are often intended to stop criticism of the authorities and exposure of corruption and abuse of power. Independent investigative journalism is vital for sound democracies.

Mr Chairman,

In Ukraine, we have seen serious violations of fundamental commitments. This has led to a breakdown of justice and grave human rights violations, in particular in Donbass and Crimea.

The OSCE must continue to support the reform process in Ukraine. Respect for human rights, an independent judiciary and fighting corruption must be priorities. All elections must be held in accordance with Ukrainian law, OSCE commitments and the professional standards of ODIHR to have legitimacy.

Mr Chairman,

The OSCE should have ambitious and updated commitments in all dimensions, not least in the human dimension. We support the Chairmanship's intention to negotiate new decisions for Belgrade, in particular on Prevention of Torture, Enhancing Safety of Journalists, Fundamental Freedoms in the Digital Age, tolerance and non-discrimination, and the addendum to the Gender Action Plan.

Mr Chairman,

The many side events are an important part of the HDIM. We are ourselves organisers, co-organisers or sponsors to side events on protection of journalistic sources, on combatting enforced disappearances, on the role of media in the integration of society, on the fight against torture as well as on propaganda. We hope to see many of you at these events.

Mr Chairman,

Many speakers before me have emphasized the serious challenge migration represents to all of us. I do agree that we need to discuss migration also in the OSCE and I look forward to the joint meeting of the three Committees on 6 October, when we will have an opportunity to discuss migration from a security, economical as well as a human rights point of view.

Let me conclude by commending ODIHR for its professional work and for the independent and impartial way it exercises its mandate. We will continue our support for their efforts.

Thank you