



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT BY ODIHR ON THE HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 29 October 2015

Mr Chairman,

We have today heard some delegations attack ODIHR and express their negative attitude to the Warsaw meeting. They argue that that others use the HDIM to criticize them in a biased and unfair manner. Nobody likes to be criticized. It is however easy to avoid criticism, namely by loyally implementing the OSCE commitments.

Mr Chairman,

I join others in thanking Director Link for his report.

Mr Chairman,

The high number of participants at HDIM this year shows its importance as a venue to assess implementation of commitments, exchange best practices and engage in dialogue with civil society. For some NGOs it is in fact one of the few opportunities they have to interact with their own governments. We value this contact with civil society. As government representatives, we need their insight and experience to improve our policies. We must learn to appreciate the dissenting voice.

We regret that we also this year have heard that some participants at HDIM have been harassed when they returned from the meeting. This is in contradiction to the very idea of HDIM. All participants must be able to voice their concerns without fear of retribution.

Regrettably, a number of organizations who speak on behalf of governments were represented in Warsaw also this year. These organizations are an embarrassment to their governments.

We welcome that Turkmenistan was present this year. Engagement of all participating States enriches our discussions.

Mr Chairman,

The many side events at HDIM represent a valuable supplement to the sessions in the plenary hall. They allow us to discuss issues more in depth and interact with experts and people with

first-hand experience. We have ourselves been organizers, co-organizers or sponsors of side events on a variety of issues, including on enforced disappearances and on protection of journalistic sources. We also co-organized with Latvia and Sweden a side event on the role of media in the integration of society. The side events will hopefully contribute to enhancing our implementation of OSCE commitments and our preparations for the Belgrade Ministerial Council.

Mr Chairman,

Problematic areas or room for improvement identified at HDIM must be followed up in our work throughout the year. Participating States can raise such issues here in the Permanent Council. They can report to the Human Dimension Committee. They can actively participate in supplementary Human Dimension meetings and other events. Or they can even invite colleagues to a separate meeting, as the US Delegation did recently to report on how they are working to improve policing practises. This commendable initiative is a sign of taking ones commitments seriously. It is an example for others to follow.

Mr Chairman,

ODIHR is a central institution for the OSCE's work. They assist us in implementing our commitments by producing practical guidelines and recommendations, and by providing advice to individual participating States. My government is among those who have profited from ODIHR's assistance.

We as participating States must respect ODIHR's expertise, professionalism and impartiality. This applies to all their work, not least to their election observation. Attempts to politicize election observation are contrary to our own interests as participating States, and contrary to the interests of our voters. The only way to avoid politicizing election observation is to respect the autonomy of ODIHR.

Mr Chairman,

It is clear that for ODIHR to be able to give us the assistance we expect, they must be given the resources to do so.

Mr Chairman,

Let me conclude by thanking Director Link and his competent staff for the excellent organizing of HDIM, and for their important work throughout the year. They have our full support for the professional and impartial way they implement their mandate.

Thank you, Mr Chairman