



**PERMANENT DELEGATION  
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT BY THE HEAD OF THE  
OSCE OFFICE IN TAJIKISTAN, AMBASSADOR MARKUS MÜLLER**

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile  
to the Permanent Council,  
Vienna, 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2013

Mr. Chairman,

Norway warmly welcomes Ambassador Müller to the Permanent Council and we thank him for his comprehensive report. It provides us with an excellent overview of main developments in Tajikistan and the impressive range of activities undertaken by the OSCE office during the past year.

Mr. Chairman,

We note that co-operation between Tajik authorities and the OSCE office works well in all three dimensions. We also note that significant legislative and policy achievements have been made in several important areas, such as media law and the prevention of torture and of domestic violence. We are pleased to see that work is being done on a reform strategy aimed at introducing democratic policing.

It is important that new measures translate into practice. We are confident that the OSCE office can contribute substantially to that effect.

We look forward to the presidential elections in November. Norway expects that a level playing field is ensured in the election campaign and we urge Tajik authorities to implement recommendations of previous observation missions.

We are concerned that undue pressure is put on certain opposition parties, and we regret the imprisonment of former candidate Zaid Saidov. We are pleased to see that a broad coalition of opposition forces has endorsed the candidacy of Ms. Oinihol Bobonazarova.

Mr. Chairman,

Tajikistan is an important partner in the OSCE. The country is a first line defender against challenges stemming from Afghanistan. We therefore have a common interest in supporting Tajik authorities. Norway commends Tajikistan for their contingency planning to prepare for the reduced international security presence in neighboring Afghanistan. We encourage all relevant ministries and international institutions to work together in an efficient manner.

Border management activities and police reform will continue to be important. Norway is a proud sponsor of the OSCE Border Management Staff College, because it plays a crucial role in our joint efforts to strengthen border control. Norway is in favor of including the College in the OSCE Unified budget.

Norway will continue to support projects in Tajikistan, and we will increase our contributions to confidence building measures across the Tajikistan-Afghanistan border.

Mr. Chairman,

We share the concerns expressed by the previous speakers on what appears to be increasing restrictions on freedom of media, of religion and of assembly. Respect for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms are crucial elements in any strategy for strengthened security.

In conclusion, let me wish Ambassador Müller and his competent and dedicated staff every success in their future work. In our view, the OSCE Office in Dushanbe has proved that progress in a wide array of areas can be achieved, even with limited resources. We fully support their work and a continued robust mandate for the OSCE presence in Dushanbe.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.