



PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

CLOSING STATEMENT BY NORWAY

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile,
at the 20th meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council,
Kyiv, 6-7 December 2013

Mr Chairman,

I have carefully listened to the statements made during this Ministerial Council. I have noticed common concerns as well as differences in opinions. I would like to comment on a few of the issues raised during these two days.

We have heard statements on the current situation here in Ukraine, including from representatives of the Government. I want to underline the importance of respecting freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly.

Handled according to OSCE commitments, the manifestations of political engagement in the streets of Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities can be transformed into a constructive dialogue between Government, opposition and civil society.

I understand that all sides have accepted a proposal from Council of Europe Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland to form an expert advisory group. This will help ensure a transparent investigation of the instances of police violence and thus contribute to restoring confidence.

Mr Chairman,

We have heard ministers voice their concern over growing divides and lack of political will. The message is clear. Political will is the only tool that can reinvigorate the OSCE.

We must overcome what divides us on fundamental issues. Transnational threats, Afghanistan, media freedom online and safety of journalists are but a few of the issues where we must find consensus. In addition, we must consider issues like arms control, including a discussion on a new treaty on conventional arms control.

Yesterday one foreign minister pointed out that we need to discuss how the field missions function, a new mandate for ODIHR, the conduct of election observation and ways to control extraordinary budgeted projects.

To remove dividing lines, we need to build trust and confidence. We don't do that by tightening control of our own institutions, the field missions or extrabudgetary projects. If we are to trust each other, we must also learn to trust and to respect our own institutions.

In order to build trust we must also ensure the full implementation of our common commitments.

Some ministers have criticized ODIHR, naming it a technical branch that should not be allowed to speak on behalf of the entire organisation. I disagree. ODIHR serves the participating States and it serves us well. The expertise of our institutions is remarkable. They provide standards and give advice that add to our common security.

Yesterday the Norwegian delegation met with representatives of the Civic Solidarity Platform who have gathered here in Kyiv this week. Their recommendations confirmed the importance of involving civil society in our work.

Today we have adopted important decisions in all three dimensions as well as on cross dimensional issues. We note with satisfaction that the standstill in the human dimension has been broken.

We are disappointed that we failed to agree on a declaration on Afghanistan. Norway will also in the future channel its extrabudgetary contributions to

projects in participating States that engage in and respect common concerns.

We need to continue the work related to safety of journalists, freedom of expression online as well as offline, gender equality and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

We know that these discussions will not be easy. But I do sense a stronger will for constructive engagement. Let us bring this spirit back to Vienna. Norway will contribute substantially in this respect, in close cooperation with the incoming chairmanship, the troika and with all other participating States.

Thank you, Mr Chairman, for your attention, for your good work during 2013 and for your hospitality.