



**PERMANENT DELEGATION  
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE DIRECTOR OF ODIHR

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile  
to the Permanent Council  
Vienna, 14 April 2016

Mr Chairman,

I welcome Director Link back to the Permanent Council and thank him for his report.

Mr Chairman,

ODIHR continues to prove its relevance and usefulness in the challenges we are facing. Their assistance to the reform process in Ukraine is a case in point. My government is committed to supporting Ukraine in its reform efforts and we appreciate the valuable contribution of ODIHR. We are therefore pleased to support ODIHR's work with civil society organisations in Ukraine.

The joint report by ODIHR and the High Commissioner on National Minorities on the human rights situation in Crimea sheds light on serious human rights violations. It is vital that these facts are brought to our attention as we discuss the crisis in and around Ukraine and possible ways forward. We thank ODIHR and HCNM for their thorough and well-researched report, which should be followed up by all relevant parties.

Mr Chairman,

We commend ODIHR for issuing a report on the situation of detainees at the US detention facility at Guantanamo Bay. The report identifies violations of OSCE commitments and offers recommendations to address them. US officials contributed in the preparation of the report, and we consider this to be an example for other governments to follow.

Mr Chairman,

These examples again show the willingness and ability of ODIHR to tackle difficult issues wherever they arise by employing expertise, impartiality and professionalism.

All participating States must be open to advice from ODIHR and cooperate on strengthening implementation of commitments.

Mr Chairman,

We welcome the recent publication of the compendium on good practices for advancing women's political participation. We can all learn from the experience of others.

Mr Chairman,

ODIHR's election observation missions are fundamental in our efforts to strengthen democracy in our region. Their reports are based on a comprehensive, consistent and systematic election observation methodology, which ensures credibility. Some participating States who receive critical assessments blame the methodology. However, a methodology that produces only praise and no criticism is worthless. There will always be room for improvement. Participating States should acknowledge this and use recommendations from ODIHR to strengthen their democratic governance.

Mr Chairman,

A major accomplishment for ODIHR every year is organising HDIM. This largest human rights conference in Europe requires a lot of hard work and co-ordination, and we applaud ODIHR's handling of this task. We as participating States should facilitate their work by agreeing on the agenda well in advance. We are looking forward to this year's HDIM - in Warsaw.

HDIM is a cornerstone in our work to review the implementation of third dimension commitments. Bearing in mind the problems many participating States face in this regard, we should seriously consider expanding the duration of HDIM, or to add an additional week-long meeting to our annual programme, devoted to implementation issues.

Mr Chairman,

Let me also add a point on the need to ensure the independence, integrity and quality of the judiciary, which has been proposed as the topic of the upcoming Human Dimension Seminar in Warsaw. An independent judiciary is a fundamental pillar of a democratic system. It is also a condition for the enjoyment of all human rights. As such, it is a very appropriate topic for our seminar.

Mr Chairman,

Through 25 years, ODIHR has consistently offered recommendations, advice and assistance to all participating States in an impartial and professional way. Their expertise is a source of strength for our organisation and our governments. We must respect the autonomy of the institutions and allocate sufficient resources for them to continue to meet our expectations.

Let me once again thank director Link for the assistance from his staff and from him personally during my two years as chair of the Human Dimension Committee.

In conclusion, Mr Chairman, we reiterate our full support for ODIHR and for their dedication and impartiality in fulfilling their mandate.

Thank you, Mr Chairman