



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE CHAIRS OF THE THREE COMMITTEES

As delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad
to the Permanent Council
Vienna, 24 November 2016

Thank you, Mr Chair,

I join others in thanking the chairs of the three committees for presenting their work this year.

Mr Chair,

We thank ambassador Istrate for his able stewardship of the Security Committee. The committee's focus has reflected key priorities for the OSCE, such as countering terrorism, radicalisation and violent extremism, and cyber security.

We especially appreciated the meeting on Security Sector Governance and Reform, and believe this to be an issue that deserves the committee's continued attention. We also look forward to continuing the discussions on irregular migration.

We continue to strongly support voluntary reporting in the Security Committee. We believe this sharing of experiences and good practices will benefit the future counter terrorism efforts of both participating States and the OSCE executive structures.

The Transnational Threats Department's efforts to support and inform the committee is much appreciated. We also very much welcomed ambassador Istrate's close involvement of the OSCE's field missions and autonomous institutions.

Mr Chair,

The Human Dimension Committee under the leadership of Ambassador Pehrman has discussed topics which are at the core of the human dimension and among the priorities of my government. Freedom of expression and freedom of the media, prevention of torture, gender equality, freedom of assembly and association and freedom of religion or belief are fundamental to strengthening comprehensive security. We are pleased to note that economic, social and cultural rights have been included in the committee's work. Finland, in cooperation with other participating States, has worked over time to raise awareness of the rights of people with disabilities and has succeeded in making it an issue of priority also in preparations for the Ministerial Council.

Protecting human rights while countering terrorism is a challenge faced by all participating States, and we believe this is relevant for both the Security Committee and the Human Dimension Committee. We have had some experience with joint committee meetings on issues which cut across dimensions and we think this idea is worth exploring further.

We are impressed by the large number of voluntary reports, well coordinated with the main topics. Also the briefings by the executive structures reflect the same thematic coherence, which makes the work of the committee even more effective.

Mr Chair,

All three committees have made a point of inviting representatives from field missions to contribute with their practiced experience. This increases our understanding of the challenges of implementation and provides opportunities for direct interaction with experts in the field. Engagement with external actors, including other international organisations, civil society and academia, has greatly enriched discussions also this year. We commend the committee chairs' efforts to include outside perspectives, and believe we should further strengthen our cooperation with civil society actors in all three committees.

The three committees have discussed constructively the topics that reflect the priorities of the Chairmanship facilitated by three competent and dedicated chairs. This should be an excellent basis for our negotiations on possible decisions for Hamburg. We hope it will be possible to reach consensus on several of the draft decisions and believe this would strengthen our organization and take our work forward.

Thank you, Mr Chair.