

As delivered by State Secretary Ms. Tone Skogen,
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway,
at the Informal Ministerial Meeting
of OSCE Foreign Ministers
Mauerbach, 11 July 2017

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Minister Kurz,
Norway fully supports your Chairmanship and your dedicated objectives.

Colleagues,
in times of crisis, changing security landscapes and an uncertain future, international cooperation based on common principles and norms is more important than ever.

The OSCE commitments are our common heritage, carefully elaborated through consensus. We need to recommit to these standards and to this spirit of cooperation.

It is time to remind ourselves where we come from, and to reflect on what are the alternatives to living together as states and as individuals in the OSCE area.

The extreme alternative is well known to us: It is conflict and strife, and oppression of individuals and minorities.

Today, unfortunately, we witness that some participating states fail to comply with their OSCE commitments.

This is the reason for the deadlock we are in right now. This is the reason for the lack of trust and compromise in our organisation.

Threats to and violations of Participating States' sovereignty and territorial integrity persist, be it in Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova or Azerbaijan. These are threats to international order and

to our common security.

Colleagues,

In a changing Europe, we must adjust our policies, not our values. Unity can only be built on compliance with and full respect for OSCE commitments and international law.

I can assure you, Norway will continue to stay principled – true to international law and our OSCE commitments.

Norway will continue to exercise its right to voice concern and convey constructive criticism.

At the same time, Norway stands ready to take onboard any criticism that comes its way and react adequately to improve whatever may have caused concern.

The OSCE is and must remain a key platform for dialogue. We must use the OSCE to rebuild trust. The Structured Dialogue agreed in Hamburg may be a possible contribution to this end.

Finally, Mr. Chair,

I look forward to stimulating exchanges at this meeting which hopefully will lead to constructive approaches to the challenges our region is facing.