



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT ON THE 2020 PROGRAMME OUTLINE

Delivered by Minister Counsellor Henning Hj. Johansen at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 2 May 2019

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chair,

As noted by the Secretary General, the OSCE has endured the impact of six years of no-growth budgets, leading to a steady decline of the purchasing power of the OSCE. Norway is willing, and able, to contribute to a strengthened and better funded OSCE to complement our efforts toward security in our region. To strengthen the OSCE, joint effort is needed.

Absent the required will, or ability, for joint effort, the importance of the priorities and objectives of the Programme Outline continue to increase. The OSCE cannot do everything. Today, it can hardly do all that we have tasked it to do. We need to direct the efforts of the OSCE to where it can contribute the best to achieving our most important objectives.

We will return to the priorities of specific executive structures over the course of the coming discussions. Today is the time for overarching priorities.

Gender equality is a high priority for Norway. To that end, it is welcome that all executive structures include gender mainstreaming among their strategic priorities. Still, some structures could stand further to raise its priority. The OSCE must strive to recognise the full importance of gender mainstreaming to achieving its objectives.

A strong OSCE must be efficient. Still, in the current situation, true efficiency measures have not been enough to offset the loss of purchasing power in real terms. We face the unfortunate situation that next year, too, cuts will probably have to be made. In that case, we care deeply about what these cuts will be.

Our primary objective is to preserve and strengthen the programmatic and operational capacity of the OSCE. The field operations and institutions are the spearheads of OSCE activity in support of participating States. While parts of the secretariat also engage

directly with states, much of its value stems from its support to other executive structures, in particular the field operations.

The preservation of operational capacity requires appropriate, transparent and accountable administrative support. Support to the core activities and operations of the OSCE must remain the essential purpose and function of the Secretariat.

The Common Regulatory Management Framework belongs to the entire OSCE. Any revisions to this system must be sensitive to the requirements of all affected executive structures and to the needs of the participating States. As Chief Administrative Officer, the Secretary General's duty to the organisation requires such sensitivity.

Over time, the OSCE has grown into a large, decentralised structure. This can sometimes be a complicating factor, sometimes a frustration, but it is no weakness. The proximity of each executive structure to the decision-makers is by design. The accountability of the heads of structures, within their mandates, only to the Permanent Council is a strength.

As such, scrutiny must be given to the proposals in the outline that the Office of the Secretary General will endeavour to translate "strategic priorities into more focused programmes", build on "a more systematic approach to extra-budgetary resource mobilisation", identify "resource partnerships", and more. Any of these, and similar efforts, must recognise the central role of each individual structure and the limited role of the Secretary General in setting policy for the OSCE.

It continues to rest upon us, the participating States, to ensure a sustainable future for the OSCE. In difficult budgetary circumstances, this is a responsibility we must bear with the best interest of the organisation at heart. We shall do our part.

Thank you