



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE
HIGH COMMISSIONER ON NATIONAL MINORITIES

Delivered by First Secretary William Ekås Sæter to the Permanent Council
Vienna, 23 May 2019

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chair,

Norway joins others in welcoming the High Commissioner on National Minorities, Ambassador Lamberto Zannier, back to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his report.

The High Commissioner is an instrument of conflict prevention at the earliest possible stage. In establishing his mandate in 1992, the participating States set out the powers and responsibilities of his office. The core of the mandate is to provide early warning and early action, as appropriate, on tensions involving national minorities. The primary objective is conflict prevention.

The mandate and autonomy of the High Commissioner must be respected and protected. States must allow him to act, travel and communicate according to his mandate without interference, including in occupied and disputed territory. States must offer support and cooperation. As an autonomous institution of the OSCE, the High Commissioner decides on the implementation of his mandate and sets his own priorities, thematic as well as geographic.

Confidentiality, both of process and of substance, is important to the High Commissioner and required by his mandate. We do not, and should not, expect every activity of the High Commissioner to be made public. That is the nature of quiet diplomacy.

Still, we expect all activities of the High Commissioner to be compliant with the applicable OSCE commitments. When he reports on activities to the Permanent Council, we will hold him to those commitments. Therefore, we are pleased to see the High Commissioner report on his specific commitments under the Gender Action Plan to address issues relating to the participation in public and private life of women belonging to national minorities. Systematically addressing gender-specific considerations, as well as gender mainstreaming the thematic work, help ensure that measures are enjoyed by all members of the minorities in question. This allows the High Commissioner more effectively to fulfil his mandate.

The ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming is gender equality. However, in the first instance, the mainstreaming of a gender perspective is not about equality. It is about assessing the implications for women and men of our planned actions and policies. It is about making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of what we do.

As the High Commissioner states, gender mainstreaming is about hearing and reflecting the needs and views of all members of society and about achieving the full ownership of political decisions, processes and negotiations. It is merely about being better at achieving our mission objectives. We appreciate the High Commissioner's growing realisation to this end.

Thank you