



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR JOHN MACGREGOR,
PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR IN UZBEKISTAN

Delivered by Minister Counsellor Henning Hj. Johansen at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 16 May 2019

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chair,

We join others in welcoming the Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan, Ambassador MacGregor, back to the Permanent Council and thank him for his report.

The report refers to gender mainstreaming as a common thread in your successful projects. The report indicates thorough gender mainstreaming for the efforts in the second dimension. We would appreciate more information on gender mainstreaming in the activities in the first and third dimensions.

The cooperation with the Uzbekistan Business Women's Association is one example of how efforts can both have gender equality as a goal and have the proper integration of a gender perspective contribute to the achievement of mission objectives. The Business Women's Association has engaged a large number of women entrepreneurs and other members of the private sector. In 2018, we understand that companies connected to this association created 18 500 new jobs in Uzbekistan. Though this is a result not only of the Project Coordinator's assistance, the co-operation appears clearly to have contributed successfully to the economy as a whole by furthering gender equality.

In February, the Oliy Majlis approved a new Election Code well ahead of the anticipated parliamentary elections scheduled for December. As the report indicates, the speedy success of this process is due also to the support from the Project Co-ordinator and its co-operation with the Uzbek authorities and parliament.

The field missions, and the autonomous institutions, are OSCE's most valuable assets. The number of requests for engagement coming from key stakeholders show the enhanced relevance of the Mission. We highly appreciate your efforts to share best practices with neighbouring field operations. Strengthened cooperation between the OSCE's Central-Asian presences, within the existing mandates, could enhance and strengthen the OSCE's support to the participating States in Central Asia as a whole.

We welcome Uzbekistan's increasing engagement in both regional and international contexts. We support Uzbekistan's initiative to set up a Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea Region within the UN. This draws attention to the precarious situation surrounding the drying lake and contribute to measures to raising the water level in the Aral Sea. Hopefully, it will stimulate the cooperation both regionally and internationally on alleviating and repairing the damage done.

We also recognise the improved relations between the OSCE and the Uzbek national authorities, and also welcome our dialogue with Uzbekistan here in Vienna, both in the Permanent Council and elsewhere. Further dialogue between Uzbekistan and other participating States, but, more importantly, ongoing dialogue with OSCE institutions will contribute to further OSCE engagement in Uzbekistan. The Project Co-ordinator will remain the OSCE's and our primary interface in support of Uzbekistan. We thank you for your and your office efforts to contribute to improved relations.

Thank you.