



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT ON THE 2019 PROGRAMME OUTLINE

Delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 17 May 2018

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chair,

The Secretary General reports that in 2019 the “OSCE’s overall operational capacity will be noticeably altered due to the cumulative impact of the last five years of zero-nominal or zero-real growth budgets for most of the executive structures.” At the same time, the organisation experiences both increase and growing complexity of the workload.

Norway regrets the real decrease of the purchasing power of the OSCE over the last years and stands ready to carry its share of the burden to avoid further erosion of the OSCE’s operational capacity. We call on other participating States also to bear their part of the burden to address the increasingly difficult financial situation for the parts of the OSCE funded through the Unified Budget.

The institutions, the field missions, and the Secretariat work on our behalf, implementing the decisions formed by our consensus. As such, it rests with us, the participating States, to ensure that the organization has the required resources to perform adequately the functions that we want and expect it to. We should not stay on our current path, which leads to an organization increasingly dependent on secondments and voluntary contributions in order to function in accordance with its purpose.

Norway sees value in the activities in all three dimensions, throughout the OSCE. Nonetheless, the work of the independent institutions and field operations remains particularly important. It is through the assistance to participating States towards the implementation of our commitments that the OSCE adds the most value.

Progress towards gender equality is a high priority for Norway. To that extent, it is welcome that almost all executive structures indicate gender mainstreaming among their strategic priorities. The OSCE’s gender action plan was adopted 14 years ago, and is still waiting to be fully implemented. All parts of the OSCE bear a responsibility for its implementation, and we look forward to seeing *how* all executive structures will contribute.

The institutions, in particular ODIHR, and its electoral observation, and the RFoM, and its monitoring functions, have proven themselves as relevant as ever. For the field operations, in our continued support to their activities, we will place a particular emphasis on efforts towards security sector governance and reform, gender equality, and preventing violent extremism. Support to the core activities and operations of the OSCE must remain the essential purpose and function of the Secretariat.

Norway supports efficiency measures; a strong OSCE is an efficient OSCE. However, not all cuts facilitate efficiency. True efficiency requires an approach that allows the organisation to do the same for less or do more for the same. We must recognise the difference between true efficiency and cuts that have negative operational impact. In planning for 2019 we must avoid reaching for quick savings that can have unintended consequences. To that extent, we welcome the initiative of the Italian chair of the ACMF to facilitate discussion on long-standing issues, including reform towards a multi-year budget cycle.

It lies with us, the participating States, to ensure a sustainable future for the OSCE and its operations. Now, more than ever, it is imperative that we take it upon us to bear this responsibility both to plan and fund the activity that we want and expect the OSCE to undertake.

Thank you