



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE
HEAD OF THE PROGRAMME OFFICE IN BISHKEK

Delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 7 June 2018

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chair,

Like others, I welcome the Head of the Programme Office in Bishkek, Ambassador Pierre von Arx, and Director of the OSCE Academy, Dr. Alexander Wolters, to the Permanent Council and thank them for their reports.

According to the report of Ambassador von Arx, the new mandate of the Programme Office highlights the importance given by the host authorities to economic, social and cultural rights. Approaching the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration, we do well to remember that in 1948 States agreed on *one* set of rights, and made no distinction between them. According to the Vienna Declaration of 1993, all human rights are indivisible, interdependent, and interrelated. As such, there is no room for States to pick and choose: the economic, social and cultural rights cannot be enjoyed in the absence of civil and political rights, and *vice versa*.

The report covers many aspects of the Programme Office's efforts on programmatic activities in support of Kirgizstan's implementation of OSCE commitments. Security Sector Governance and Reform has been a priority for the Programme Office in the reporting period. Activities have centred on capacity building for officials and sharing best practices both nationally and internationally. Norway particularly welcomes the efforts toward gender mainstreaming and capacity building in support of gender equality. We appreciate that the Programme Office reports to be mainstreaming gender in all its programmatic work.

As with our efforts to prevent violent extremism and radicalisation that lead to terrorism, efforts to reform the security sector must appreciate the imperative to be fully compliant with human rights and OSCE commitments. The primary objective of the security sector is to safeguard our rights. Loyal adherence to commitments is necessary to achieve this objective.

The activities of the field missions, assisting the host country in its implementation of OSCE principles and commitments, remain one of the clearest examples of the added value of this organisation.

The OSCE Academy in Bishkek is one particularly successful activity. The number of applications has more than doubled year over year, and now a record 2 114 applications were received for the approximately 50 coveted spots. The Norwegian Institute of International Affairs is a long-standing partner of the Academy. In addition, voluntary contributions from Austria, Finland, Germany, Switzerland, and the United States, has made the continuing success of the Academy possible.

The Academy has delivered relevant, accredited, academic graduate and professional educational offerings to the region. With more than 400 graduates, it has built tangible capacity in the region. With its responsibility for an important institution of higher learning in Central Asia, the OSCE shows both relevance and commitment to the region. Norway is proud to contribute to the Academy, and calls on other participating States to contribute to the further and continuing success of the Academy.

Thank you.