



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE PRESENTATION OF
THE UNIFIED BUDGET PROPOSAL 2020

Delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad to the Permanent Council
Vienna, 3 October 2019

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Chair,

In his recommendation to the Permanent Council, in the budget proposal, the Secretary General has emphasised his role as Chief Administrative Officer of the OSCE. In a situation of waning resources over time, this role has grown to be, the most important role of the Secretary General. The OSCE needs a top manager devoted to the efficient use of the organisation's resources and for the effective management of the secretariat.

That being said, efficiency can only take us so far. We have now reached a point where the Unified Budget does not supply enough resources for the executive structures to perform all the tasks that we expect them to. Nor does it offer much, if any, flexibility to react to the circumstances changing throughout the year. This year, two executive structures required supplementary budgets in order properly to fulfil their mandates. Infrastructure investments required drawing from the cash surplus. This year, we should aim to ensure that the Unified Budget is adequate from the beginning.

For the 2020 budget, we should avoid any additional loss of purchasing power for the OSCE. Zero-nominal growth is not a viable option for the long term. No growth leads to increasing dependence on secondments and voluntary contributions. As part of a joint effort, Norway is willing to significantly contribute so that the OSCE can do more and better.

Our main priority is to ensure adequate funding of the OSCE's programmatic activity in the autonomous institutions and the field operations. Secondly, we recognise the

important, supporting role of the secretariat, and may consider a modest increase to ensure its adequate support of the rest of the organisation.

The Secretariat Management Review has been ongoing for some time. We assume that a number of the administrative and organisational changes proposed for 2020 are results of this review. We welcome further information and discussion on the administrative and financial implications stemming from the implementation of recommendations from this review.

We are willing to consider many such changes. We look forward to discussing them in the ACMF. Still, organisational changes warrant a deeper discussion on their merits, while keeping in mind the complex, decentralised structure of the OSCE. While decentralisation can sometimes be a complicating factor, sometimes a frustration, it is no weakness. We must ensure that we act in support of the structures that we have, and do our best to maintain their ability to fulfil their mandates.

The participating States of the OSCE have both common and particular goals and interests. We know that the 2020 budget eventually adopted by this Council, will be a compromise. We recognize and accept this.

However, we do regret that some participating States try to use the budget negotiations to slow or halt the implementation of already agreed commitments. Such practice is irresponsible and against the interests and commitments of the OSCE and the participating States.

It is our collective responsibility as participating states to ensure that the OSCE has the resources required to fulfil the tasks that we give it. To that end, we stand ready to fully support the Albanian chair of the ACMF throughout the budget process.