



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY  
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE  
CO-ORDINATOR OF OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES

Delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad to the Permanent Council,  
Vienna, 31 October 2019

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Chair,

We thank the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, Ambassador Vuk Žugić, for his second report to the Permanent Council this year.

The Co-ordinator began his report with two key observations. First, that the activities of his office are largely aligned to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Second, the old words of wisdom, that “prevention is better than the cure”.

The 2030 agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals belong on the agenda of the OSCE. Viewed within the context of the OSCE’s three-dimensional, comprehensive approach to security, the Sustainable Development Goals reveal themselves as goals for sustainable security. As members of the UN, 56 OSCE participating States have adopted the 2030 Agenda and are committed to implementing the 17 SDGs. We did so because we recognised this to be in our national interest.

Sometimes, we hear claims that the commitments of the United Nations do not apply within the OSCE. This is a misunderstanding. It is not the organisational structures used to adopt commitments that bear those commitments. We, the States, do.

The commitment to implement the SDGs is primarily a national obligation. Nonetheless, states are also committed to supporting each other in their implementation. Here, the

OSCE, as a regional arrangement under chapter VIII of the UN Charter, has a mandate to support states in their implementation.

More importantly, the OSCE has the thematic, as well as the regional, capacity and skill set for this task. Therefore, we look forward to seeing even further alignment of the OSCE's economic and environmental activities with Sustainable Development Agenda.

Gender equality is a central commitment for the OSCE through both the Gender Action Plan and the commitments under the Sustainable Development Agenda. The inclusion and participation of women, and the integration of a gender perspective in all activities, remain a necessity for the effective fulfilment of OSCE objectives.

In the OSCE, the co-ordinator's second point about the importance of prevention is evident and indisputable. While the OSCE, as everyone else, struggles with efforts to resolve existing conflict, our organisation has contributed significantly to stalling conflict before it takes hold. Through activity in the field, the OSCE builds peace through inclusive co-operation that addresses the root causes of conflict.

In a way, the adoption of the Sustainable Development Agenda was a recognition of the importance of conflict prevention. Indirectly, it recognises the value of the OSCE as a regional security arrangement. Not only does the 2030 Agenda explicitly link peace to sustainable development. Peace is a central topic across the agenda; Goal 16 is specifically about peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

Among many things, the agenda envisages strong, democratic institutions, effective anti-corruption, and prevention of violence. It also advances security sector reform and governance as a tool to this end. These are relevant targets within the second as well as the first and third dimensions of security. Comprehensive security requires a cross-dimensional approach.

It is almost as if the 2030 Agenda was created with the OSCE's approach to comprehensive security in mind. We do well to seize the opportunity to make our region a front-runner in the efforts for peaceful, just, and inclusive societies. The OSCE is a highly relevant tool to this end.

Thank you