



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY  
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE  
ACTING MINISTER FOR EUROPE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF ALBANIA

Delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad to the Permanent Council  
Vienna, 11 July 2019

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

I join others in welcoming the Acting Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, Mr. Gent Cakaj to the Permanent Council, and thank him for his outline of priorities for the Albanian chairmanship in 2020.

The OSCE is an arrangement for the preservation of our common security. As recognised in the Minister's statement, the OSCE is founded on the core values of democracy, the rule of law, indivisible security, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The full enjoyment of these rights for all, whether woman or man, majority or minority, is a prerequisite for effective conflict prevention and resolution. In fact, they are necessary for achieving sustainable security, stability and progress.

In particular, the integration of a gender perspective in all activities is an important tool for reaching our objectives more effectively. Understanding and recognising the role of women in conflict is not a mere question of equality, but a question of effective conflict prevention. To this end, we welcome the particular attention the Albanian chairmanship will give to women in conflict prevention and resolution, as well as to countering violence against women. A gender perspective is relevant for the implementation of all OSCE commitments.

We welcome the high priority given to implementation of commitments. When commitments remain unimplemented, they have no instrumental value, they have no use. Our commitments gain value when their implementation benefits the inhabitants of the participating States, and can be enjoyed by all.

As our discussions often demonstrate, the OSCE has a long way to go to achieve full and effective implementation of what has been adopted by all of us. Support to our institutions, the ODIHR, the HCNM, and the RFoM, as well as to our field operations, is as essential as ever. The secretariat plays an important supporting role.

While deserving of our support, we must recognise that our OSCE institutions and structures can only assist us in our efforts. The primary responsibility for ensuring implementation of commitments remains with the participating States. Implementation requires both capability and the necessary political will. Without the will of states, nothing of consequence can happen. Without the will of states, our organisation will remain chronically starved of resources; its efforts in our support will be frustrated at every turn.

Our primary objectives are to contribute to common security and human rights for all throughout the region. We remain particularly interested in the cross-dimensional topics of gender equality, media freedom, security sector reform and governance, and countering violent extremism. The Western Balkans deserve special attention as a part of our region where good progress is being made, even as the situation remains complicated.

We look forward to working with the Albanian chairmanship in 2020 and stand ready to offer our support and cooperation.

Thank you