



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE OSCE
PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR IN UKRAINE

Delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad to the Permanent Council
Vienna, 20 June 2019

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr Chair,

I join others in welcoming the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, Ambassador Henrik Villadsen, back to the Permanent Council and thank him for the informative and well-structured report he has presented this morning.

Norway strongly supports the ongoing reform process in Ukraine and welcomes the progress made in the reporting period. We hope that the PCU is able to continue its important work in co-operation with the new administration. While we acknowledge that much remains to be done to implement Ukraine's commitments, we remain confident of the capable assistance provided by the PCU and the OSCE institutions.

We appreciate the support provided by the PCU, in close co-operation with the ODIHR, in preparing for elections and following up on the subsequent recommendations. The training provided to election commissioners has contributed to enhancing the transparency and cybersecurity of the election process in Ukraine. Following the election this spring, we encourage the Project Co-ordinator to take note of the shortcomings mentioned by the International Election Observations Mission and to continue supporting the host government in addressing these important issues.

The recent election showed a lack of public trust in both media outlets and governmental institutions. We therefore value the efforts undertaken by the PCU to improving the media landscape in Ukraine, as this may have a positive and long-lasting effect on public trust. We also commend the PCU for providing support to conflict-

sensitive journalism and for strengthening the self-regulatory mechanisms of the media. Additionally, when it comes to reaching a higher level of institutional trust, we believe that a sustained effort to combat all forms of corruption is necessary. We therefore encourage the Project Co-ordinator to assist the host government in working towards this important end.

A prerequisite for strengthening security and upholding democracy is the courts' ability to deliver fair justice and to protect the rights of citizens. As the comprehensive reforms in the Ukrainian judicial branch continues, the support from the PCU is crucial. We commend the recently held orientation course for newly appointed Supreme Court judges, which the PCU helped the School of Judges to design and conduct. We noted that the training programme also included a session on gender-neutral language in court decisions.

Norway highly appreciates the efforts made to promote gender mainstreaming in all programmatic areas, as described in your report today, including through the recently completed draft on the mission-level gender action plan. We look forward to learning about the achievements and progress made when the plan has been finalised and the implementation has begun.

We will continue our support for the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine and his team and their important work.

Thank you