



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

PC.DEL/1241/17
2 October 2017

ENGLISH only

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR KONGSTAD

**On the Annual progress report on the implementation of the
OSCE 2004 Action Plan on the Promotion of Gender Equality
to the Permanent Council**

Vienna, 28 September 2017

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**Mr Chair,
Your Excellencies,**

I would like to start by welcoming the report on the implementation of the OSCE 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality. It gives us a good basis to discuss the status quo and the way forward for promoting gender equality in the OSCE. We all know why this is important, and recognise that it is key to safeguarding our security, democracy and prosperity.

The report describes progress in all three dimensions of the OSCE's work. We are pleased to note that in the political-military dimension, progress has been made in implementing the women, peace and security agenda and in incorporating the gender perspective in police reforms. Likewise, in the economic and environmental dimension, our understanding of why and how we can promote women's economic empowerment has improved. In the human dimension, too, the report gives several examples of projects that have successfully tackled violence against women and promoted women's leadership.

All this is well and good. But much remains to be done: we have big plans, and so far have only taken small steps. We can and must do better. What is clear from the report is that the gender dimension, women's rights and participation are still not fully included as a core element in OSCE activities and that we continue to lack a clear, coherent approach.

I believe that there are three key points we need to discuss to bring the issue of gender equality forward:

Firstly: we need to challenge the belief that gender mainstreaming is a magic wand that can solve all problems. This is not the case. In practice, gender mainstreaming is all too often not properly implemented. Often the focus is on ticking the right boxes, appointing gender focal

points with little influence and providing training for those who already have extensive experience of promoting gender equality. More gender mainstreaming of this kind will not produce results.

Secondly: we must question the assumption that the relatively small number of women in the organisation is the reason we are not doing better. We should do all we can to recruit more women, but we cannot wait until we have a gender balance at all levels of the OSCE. Promoting gender equality is the responsibility of all staff and representatives, and the fact is that currently most of them are men.

This leads me to my third point: gender equality is a management responsibility. It is we – the permanent representatives, and the managers in the organisation – who must take on the task of promoting gender equality. We must make sure that the gender dimension is included in budgets, projects and activities, policies and declarations, delegations, initiatives as well as in reporting, evaluations and follow-up.

I think many of the recommendations in the report point in the right direction, but we should be clearer about what really creates change and we must ensure a coherent approach across all our areas of activity.

As we look ahead, I would like to mention some of Norway's priorities:

Preventing violent extremism is a top priority for us, and here too, the gender dimension should not be overlooked. Violence against women and restrictions on women's rights are used as intentional strategies by extremist groups. These groups are actively recruiting women because of their ability to recruit others to extremism. But women have also been shown to act as powerful agents for peace, and we should be doing all we can to ensure that they are given the opportunity to do so.

Furthermore, we strongly believe that women's economic and political empowerment is essential for promoting inclusive growth and sustainable peace, and we want this to be clearly reflected in future efforts in this area.

Let me assure you that Norway will continue to be champion for gender equality and women's rights in the OSCE.

Thank you