



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS BY THE SECRETARY
GENERAL OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE, H.E. THORBJØRN JAGLAND**

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 24 October 2013

Mr Chairman,

Norway welcomes Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland back to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his informative presentation.

First of all, we would like to commend Mr Jagland for his vigorous efforts to reform the Council of Europe. Norway is pleased to see that the work has been successful, and is yielding tangible results. A reinvigorated Council of Europe can only benefit democracy, peace and prosperity in the OSCE region.

The OSCE and the Council of Europe are founded on the same values and objectives. Both organizations work towards the promotion of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. In 2005 we committed ourselves to enhance cooperation in four key areas. These remain important. We are however in agreement with the European Union that cooperation should be further pursued in other areas high on the agenda of our two organizations, including Freedom of Media.

We would like to echo Secretary General Jagland when it comes to the nature of this cooperation. It is important to avoid a bureaucratization of the relationship.

Rather our two organizations should come together when there are concrete issues to discuss, that would benefit from a cooperative approach. In other words, cooperation should be pragmatic and results-oriented.

In more practical terms, Norway believes that the Council of Europe Vienna liaison should be given formalized access to relevant OSCE meetings.

Mr Chairman,

Over the last decades, tremendous progress has been made in the field of human rights within the OSCE area. However, today we see that these achievements have come under increasing pressure in a number of participating states, many of whom are also members of the Council of Europe. Some participating states are retreating on their human rights commitments, a trend that will have negative repercussions for all of us.

In addition, we see how economic crisis yet again translates into alarming political tendencies in Europe. Right-wing extremism is on the rise. National minorities are being stigmatized as freeloaders and discriminated against. The cooperation that has developed between the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Council of Europe related to the situation of minorities is therefore of immense importance.

Mr Chairman,

In a time when human rights increasingly are being challenged, election observation becomes an ever more important tool for upholding our joint principles and commitments. The cooperation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe, and their respective parliamentary assemblies is very valuable in this regard. It is crucial that we demonstrate a unified approach against those who fail to live up to their commitments.

Mr Chairman,

When two organizations work on the same or related issues, we must ensure that they do not develop differing norms and standards. This can too easily be exploited.

In this respect we must ensure that the Council of Europe legal instruments and the OSCE's politically binding commitments complement and reinforce each other.

Consequently, we are not so much concerned about the prospect of overlap and duplication in the tasks of our two organizations. We prefer to view it as a case of two organizations working towards the same objectives.

Finally, I would once again like to thank Secretary General Jagland for his address, and I wish him every success in his future work.

Thank you Mr Chairman.