



**STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NORWAY,  
AMBASSADOR METTE KONGSHEM, IN RESPONSE TO H.E. DIMITRIJ  
RUPEL, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
SLOVENIA**

**OSCE Permanent Council, Vienna  
13 January 2005**

Mr. Chairman,

It is an honour for me, on behalf of Norway, to warmly welcome our new Chairman-in-Office, H.E. Foreign Minister Rupel, to the Permanent Council for the first time. We are looking forward to working with the Slovenian Chairmanship and pledge our full support.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to the outgoing Bulgarian chairmanship, and in particular to Ambassador Petrov, for his dedication and personal efforts to promote the work of the OSCE.

Mr. Chairman,

At the Sofia Ministerial, Minister Rupel emphasised that his biggest concern at the moment was averting a potential stalemate in the OSCE. Slovenia has taken over the baton at a difficult time for this organisation. Dedicated efforts by the Chairmanship will be needed in order to reengage all OSCE participating States. Needless to say, Norway is deeply disappointed by the fact that the OSCE has entered the New Year without an agreement on the budget and on the scales of contribution. If the current situation continues, the organization will lose its credibility. The only way we can make this organisation work is by compromise and flexibility. No participating State can expect always to obtain what it sees as the ideal solution, as there are after all 55 of us around this table. In practice, this is very often a question of being able to live with a compromise. We subscribe fully to what Minister Rupel said in his statement, that if we believe in this organization we must fund it. Norway, Mr. Chairman, believes in the OSCE.

Mr. Chairman,

The OSCE is in need of reinforcing the sense of its own identity and mission. Statements of discontent and concerns about the work and output of this Organisation must be addressed. But the way to deal with frustrations can only be through dialogue. We have all made commitments. Let us put them into practice in a cooperative way in which we all engage ourselves with good will. We have all a responsibility to make this organization flourish. No one participating State owns the OSCE. All 55 countries are equal owners.

For Norway reform of the OSCE is an important issue, and we are encouraged by the decision to establish a panel of eminent persons on strengthening the effectiveness of the Organisation. We are looking forward to lively discussions on the recommendations of the panel. The follow-up of the report of the panel will be a major task towards the Ministerial meeting in Ljubljana.

Mr. Chairman,

In deploying international observers to more than a hundred elections over the past decade, the ODIHR has become a well established and highly respected body for election observation. Election monitoring is an area where OSCE has proven to have an added value, and it is the only area in which the OSCE is known to the broader public. Norway has high regard for the work done by ODIHR, as well as the election observation methodology. We have again experienced its importance in Ukraine and we welcome that the Ukrainian people used the opportunity to determine the future of their country in the rerun of the second round of the presidential elections.

The bottom line, Mr. Chairman, is to provide for a free, fair and democratic process. But in order to respond to new challenges and developments, we are also ready to consider the need for supplementing existing commitments and to cooperate with ODIHR to improve the effectiveness of its assistance.

Mr. Chairman,

On the issue of rebalancing the OSCE we should also remind ourselves of the Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality which was adopted in Sofia. We have, through common efforts tried to devise a document setting out clear goals and responsibilities and offering participating States assistance in implementing their commitments. The aim is to achieve gender mainstreaming across the whole Organization and focus on management in the organization.

Mr. Chairman,

We are deeply committed to preventing and combating trafficking in human beings. Trafficking in children is the worst of crimes. We must give particular attention to the needs and rights of trafficked children when we now set out to elaborate an addendum to the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings.

Mr. Chairman,

Atrocious terrorist acts also in 2004, reconfirm that terrorism must be fought through a sustained and comprehensive approach. Besides pursuing terrorists within the rule of law and with respect for human rights, it is equally important to address the underlying causes for terrorism and implement proper protective measures. Efficient policing through police training and education is making a difference also in the fight against organized crime and for effective border control. The well recognized expertise that OSCE possesses in this field is another added value for our organization.

Mr. Chairman,

Norway believes strongly in effective multilateralism and cooperation between international organisations. The Permanent Council decided last December to establish a Co-ordination group for closer cooperation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe, and we express our hope that this will lead to concrete results. Indeed, cooperation also with other regional and international organisations would benefit us all.