



**Annual Security Review Conference – Statement by Norway,
Vienna, 23 June 2009**

Madam Chairperson,

Let me first welcome Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, HE Sergey Lavrov to this 7th Security Review Conference and thank him for his presentation of the views of the Russian Federation on the future of European security.

This year's ASRC is unusually well timed, only a few days before the Informal Ministerial Meeting in Corfu. It gives an opportunity to thoroughly *review* the OSCE activities in the first dimension, while preparing for a broader discussion at ministerial level in a couple of days. We should make good use of this occasion to examine our extensive toolkit on conflict prevention and resolution, crisis management, post-conflict rehabilitation and confidence building measures. We should look at our tools in light of our experience over the last year, and draw some conclusions as to their strengths and weaknesses.

Madam Chairperson,

Looking back at the inception of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, we have reason to be proud of the impressive set of mutually reinforcing commitments, institutional arrangements and mechanisms we have created. Through this network, we have tied ourselves to each other. That is a good basis for further cooperation. We have also been able to adapt and transform our set of commitments and arrangements in order to confront new threats to security. The CSCE and later OSCE have thus proven to be remarkably flexible instruments.

In Norway's view, we have the necessary toolkit. The question is whether we – each and every participating state – are willing to make full use of the tools at hand.

Madam Chairperson,

Since the 2008 ASRC, two participating states entered into military conflict. This shook not only the work of the OSCE, but destabilised the region and had a negative impact on the security climate in Europe.

Norway reiterates her unwavering support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia, and recalls her previously expressed regret over Russia's unilateral decision to recognize the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Furthermore, we are concerned with the signing of agreements on joint protection of borders and deployment of Russian border forces, as well as the so-called "parliamentary elections" held in South Ossetia on 31 May.

Norway is deeply disappointed that the Russian Federation could not agree to an extended OSCE presence in Georgia and extension of the mandate of the OSCE Military Observers. This is particularly disturbing when taking into account that these missions have contributed to the protection of civilians, reduction of tensions and the provision of reliable information.

Furthermore, we again call for full implementation of the 12 August and 8 September 2008 cease fire agreements, and strongly encourage relevant parties to allow unhindered access for humanitarian actors and create conditions under which the IDPs may return to their homes.

Norway is also very disappointed by the veto against extension of the UNOMIG mandate. This results in a drastic reduction in much-needed international presence in Georgia. We agree with the EU presidency that the termination of UNOMIG "further complicates the already volatile situation in the region and is clearly not in the interest of the civilians in this conflict zone".

These steps represent serious setbacks in the search for a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict. The stalemate on Georgia makes it difficult to instil confidence and create a suitable atmosphere for our upcoming discussion on European Security. We appeal to all parties concerned, and in particular the Russian Federation, to play a constructive role in the Geneva process, and to reconsider its position on a continued OSCE and UN presence in Georgia. Norway believes that the only way forward is one where we look for pragmatic solutions, and where a status-neutral approach is followed.

Madam Chairperson,

While I do not want to anticipate the outcome of the discussion ministers will have in Corfu, let me nevertheless offer a few general remarks on the basic principles we believe should be the foundation for the way ahead. Norway remains convinced that security and stability can only be achieved through a comprehensive security concept, where democracy, rule of law and human rights, economic and environmental development and politico-military factors are integrated parts. Experience tells us that so-called “hard” security alone cannot safeguard security and stability. Security challenges are multidimensional by nature, and we have a framework in the OSCE that allows all stakeholders in the Euro-Atlantic space to take part on an equal footing. Norway is of the view that a discussion on European security should build on existing security structures and arrangements. These have served us well in the past and have successfully adapted to new challenges. They should accordingly be preserved and further developed.

Our discussion on the future of European security must not in any way detract from the full and timely implementation of existing commitments. We are faced with several pressing, unresolved issues: Protracted conflicts, and resumption and revitalisation of the work on arms control and Confidence and Security Building Measures, first and foremost the CFE regime. We must end the current impasse and find a solution. We must at the same time continue to make good use of the Open Skies Treaty and the Vienna Document. These instruments are vital in order to restore confidence.

Finally, Madam Chairperson, it is not possible in such a severely time-limited statement to do full justice to the position of Norway on the wide range of issues that are up for our scrutiny and review at the ASCR. Let me therefore add that my Delegation also fully subscribes to the slightly more comprehensive positions that were just presented by the Czech Delegation on behalf of the EU.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.