



PERMANENT DELEGATION  
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT BY NORWAY ON THE ODIHR ELECTION SUPPORT TEAM TO  
AFGHANISTAN

**As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik  
to the Permanent Council,  
18 June 2009**

Madam Chairperson,

Let me first thank the Secretary-General for his update on the preparations for the OSCE election support mission, and for the information on contribution pledges so far received. I note with some concern that the aggregate amount still seems to fall short of the amount required for even the most minimalistic alternative proposed by ODIHR.

Like other delegations, Norway was pleased with the decision of Permanent Council on 2 April to send an election support team to assist governmental and international efforts in the context of the forthcoming Presidential and Provincial Council Elections in Afghanistan.

Today, I am pleased to confirm to the Permanent Council that Norway has pledged a contribution of 150.000 euros to the ODIHR Election Support Team to Afghanistan. The ODIHR Election Support Team could, by sharing its expertise, and in providing follow-up recommendations after the elections, make a valuable contribution to promote sustainable democratic elections in Afghanistan.

Norway has also made substantial contributions to the work on the Voters Registration and to the UNDP/ELECT efforts to provide support to the election process. We also plan to participate with observers in the EU election observation mission to Afghanistan. Our total support for the Afghan elections will amount to nearly 10 million euros.

In our view, it is imperative that the upcoming elections strengthen democratic institutions in Afghanistan. The legitimacy of the elections is essential for the future strength of the Afghan political system.

Norway supports a strong and robust OSCE/ODIHR election presence in Afghanistan. More experts for a longer duration and a broader scope of activities, including field visits, the security situation permitting, would allow the ODIHR Election Support Team to make a more thorough and comprehensive job. We strongly encourage all participating States to make available the necessary contributions in order for the ODIHR to provide a really robust

Election Support Team, and we are looking forward to a final decision by the ODIHR to this effect.

Finally, let me add that it would be embarrassing for this organization if it should turn out that lack of funding will not allow for a meaningful OSCE contribution to promote democratic elections in a partner country, in an area where our organization has internationally recognized competence, which would constitute a very useful complement to the efforts of other institutions and actors.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.