

**NORWEGIAN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS BY THE SECRETARY
GENERAL OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE,
MR. WALTER SCHWIMMER
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL, 22 JULY 2004**

The Norwegian delegation is very pleased to welcome Secretary General Walter Scwimmer to Council this morning and thank him for his forward-looking statement.

Mr. Chairman,

During Norway's chairmanship in the Council of Europe, from mid May until mid November this year - we will do our utmost to put the Council in an even better position to carry out its important tasks. In a rapidly changing Europe, we believe that the Council needs to be open to reform and change, and should focus clearly on its main objectives.

As you may know Norway's chairmanship will focus on three main areas of activities:

- First, reinforcing human rights and legal co-operation. In this regard it is of vital importance to guarantee the effectiveness of the European Court of Human Rights, so that it can continue to play its pre-eminent role in protecting human rights in Europe. Norway will invite Council of Europe member states to a seminar to discuss the reform process of the European Court of Human Rights in Oslo on the 18th October. As part of the Council's efforts to support human rights, Norway will also give priority to further measures in the fight against terrorism and organised crime. This includes the preparation of a Convention against trafficking in human beings and steps to secure broad international support to the Convention on cybercrime.

-Second, to further develop the role of the Council of Europe in preventing conflicts, through measures aimed at promoting good governance and through strengthening intercultural contact and dialogue.

- And finally, strengthening the co-operation between European institutions in the fields of human rights, democracy and good governance.

Regarding the last priority we would like to contribute, as was mentioned by Secretary General Schwimmer in his statement, to a closer relationship in particular between the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

The aim should be for these organisations to complement each other, not compete. The Council and the OSCE are to a large extent working in the same areas but with different approaches. We should stick to what we do best.

Norway is cooperating closely with our Bulgarian chair regarding enhancing the cooperation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe. As you have seen from the documents distributed by the Chair yesterday, a meeting in Vienna last week (on the 14th of July) focused on possible future modalities for cooperation. A Norwegian Food For Thought Paper was the basis for the discussions.

We hope that a temporary Working Group can be set up to elaborate on the ideas in the paper regarding both thematic cooperation and cooperation at the country level. Furthermore, we believe that biannual meetings between the OSCE Troika and the most involved ambassadors from Strasbourg will ensure better coordination from the participating states/member states, and over time can create enhanced cooperation and coordination between the two organisations.

Our aim is not to create new structures but strengthen the pragmatic and results oriented cooperation. Regarding thematic cooperation we believe that there is scope for better cooperation i.a. in the fight against trafficking in human beings and in fighting international terrorism. The cooperation regarding elections can probably also be improved.

In closing Mr. Chairman, we would like to like to subscribe to what Secretary General Schwimmer said about the European dream, and that building Europe and spreading Europe's message implies developing partnerships, dialogue and complementarity between international actors. Norway believes strongly in effective multilateralism and the mentioned cooperation between international organisations.

Since this is Secretary General Schwimmer's last appearance in the Council I take this opportunity to thank him for his dedication and excellent work over the last five years, and wish him all the best for the future.