



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY MR. JONAS GAHR STØRE, MINISTER OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF NORWAY, AT THE FOURTEENTH MEETING OF THE
OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

OSCE Ministerial Council, Brussels
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Thank you, Mr Chairman,

First of all I would like to thank you for the excellent work you have done as Chairman-in-Office.

I would like to thank both the Permanent Council and the ODIHR for their comprehensive efforts regarding reform of the OSCE. I hope we can now put the discussions on our internal structures behind us - and redirect our energy to the OSCE's core purpose.

The Panel report stresses the need for the OSCE to set priorities in its work. I fully agree. The OSCE cannot deal with all issues.

We need to focus on core tasks if we are to have an impact. Norway believes that the OSCE should concentrate on *four* priority areas:

Firstly, conflict prevention and resolution.

In Kosovo, we are entering a critical period in the process of deciding its future status. The OSCE will have a key role to play in implementing a status settlement. I see two main areas where the OSCE can give a unique contribution. First of all; building good governance: The OSCE should continue its work to create stronger and more competent institutions able to deliver services to the entire population. And second; to monitor and improve respect for human rights and in particular in relations between ethnic communities in Kosovo.

The OSCE has a unique field experience and expertise in the western Balkans. It must now make full use of its ears and eyes on the ground in Kosovo to insure a peaceful implementation of the future status settlement.

Fragile status quo which impedes on the territorial integrity and sovereignty of member states cannot be permitted to last. In particular, Moldova has the right to develop without foreign troops on its territory – against its will. And Georgia has the right to choose orientation in Europe without interference from abroad. Other and frozen conflicts still remain unsolved in the OSCE area. They prevent social and economic development, and they represent threats to regional security. Proposals for solutions are on the table.

Looking to our next door region in Asia, we need a stronger and better coordinated engagement to bring peace and stability to Afghanistan. Several of the countries present here to day are neighbours to Afghanistan and are particularly vulnerable to instability and terrorism in Afghanistan, as well as to the trafficking of drugs.

The OSCE has a role to play in bringing its members together in combating these destructive and illegal activities thereby also contributing to a more stable Afghanistan.

Mr Chairman,

Let me underline another issue of importance: *the integration of women* into conflict prevention and conflict management in the political-military dimension in the OSCE.

Women's role in confidence building and conflict resolution must be recognised and built upon. And we must step up our efforts to implement UNSCR 1325.

Secondly, institution building and the rule of law - prerequisites for stability and democracy. We need to maintain our focus on the respect for human rights – freedom of press and freedom of association. When these rights are neglected, our common values suffer and we need to react and speak out when it happens.

The OSCE needs to take an integrated approach that encompasses the civilian police, the public prosecutor's office, the courts, the prison system, and border control.

A well functioning criminal justice system is key in the fight against organised crime, including drug trafficking and human trafficking.

We must continue our comprehensive and proactive strategy for combating human trafficking. Up to now, human trafficking has mainly been linked with sexual exploitation and forced prostitution, but the focus must also be directed at trafficking for forced labour.

Forced and bonded labour is also a growing phenomenon in our part of the world. The OSCE must take the lead in this respect as well.

Thirdly, our common commitment to building democracy - it is one of the core OSCE values.

Our common principles and commitment in *the human dimension* have to be fully implemented.

I have full confidence in the way the ODIHR monitors elections. It must be allowed to continue to do so in an independent, impartial and effective way.

Fourthly – and finally – Mr Chairman, we must, as a security organization, be able to grasp new threats to security. Thus, we need to focus on the *environmental aspects of security*.

Threats to security come both from climatic change and other environmental challenges. Energy is a key word and an aspect of security that is very much on all our minds. This is an issue where we have much to gain from sharing experience and perspectives - whether we are situated in the High North, by the Black Sea or by the Caspian Sea.

Mr Chairman,

Norway welcomes Kazakhstan's candidacy for the OSCE 2009 Chairmanship. We consider this candidacy as a sign of Kazakhstan's dedication to the OSCE and its commitment to full compliance with OSCE standards and values. We encourage Kazakhstan to vigorously implement its programme for democratic reforms.

Mr Chairman,

Let me finally assure our Spanish colleague – Mr Miguel Moratinos - that he has Norway's full support as he now assumes the important role as OSCE Chairman-in-Office for 2007. Your programme is inspiring us to lend you all our efforts in the year to come.

Thank you.