



PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT BY NORWAY on the murder of Natalia Estemirova

As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik
to the Permanent Council,
16 July 2009

Thank you, Madam Chairperson,

I have asked for the floor to echo the grave concerns expressed by previous speakers about the brutal murder of Natalia Estemirova yesterday. She was a prominent and well respected Human Rights Defender working for the Memorial Human Rights Organisation in Russia and was the winner of the inaugural Anna Politkovskaya Prize in 2007, and also received awards from the Swedish and the European Parliaments.

Such heinous crimes are not only attacks on individuals; they are attacks on society itself and on some of the most basic values, to which we all have subscribed.

We have noted with satisfaction that President Medvedev has urged the relevant authorities to make extraordinary efforts to bring the perpetrators to justice. We vividly hope that the investigations will be conducted in a swift, transparent and effective manner and will bring about the desired results.

In the meantime, my delegation expresses its deepest and most sincere condolences to Natalia Estemirova's family, and to her friends and colleagues at Memorial.

Finally, Madam Chairperson, let me also underline the once again demonstrated necessity of protecting Human Rights Defenders in Russia, in accordance with the universally recognised UN declaration on Human Rights Defenders.