



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE TERRY DAVIS,
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

As delivered to the Permanent Council, Vienna

April, 24 2008

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

Norway joins others in welcoming The Right Honourable Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe to the Permanent Council, and thanks him for his thoughtful and positive remarks on the cooperation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

Mr. Chairman,

Referring to his very pertinent observations on the importance of coordination in capitals, I am happy to report that in the case of Norway, the distance between the OSCE desk and the CoE desk in our MFA is negligible, and both report to the same Heads of Section and Department. This results in coherent and well coordinated instructions to us and to our colleagues and good friends in Strasbourg, with whom we routinely share relevant information. Based on the insights thus gained, I am also happy to share with possible sceptics around this table our impression that the division of responsibilities and the complementary roles of our two organisations are now generally well recognised, and that we have made good progress in avoiding duplication and achieving synergies in our pursuit of widely shared goals. It is our impression that the same applies to the strengthened cooperation between the Council of Europe and the EU, which also has evolved since the Warsaw Council of Europe Summit in 2005. Norway very much welcomes this development.

This job is not done once and for all, however. As we also stated when the current Chair of the Council of Europe, Foreign Minister of Slovakia, Mr. Jan Kubiš visited the Permanent Council in February, we must continue our efforts to pool resources and avoid duplication if we are to succeed in effectively protecting human rights and promoting democracy and the rule of law. We welcome the progress achieved in enhancing practical co-operation, both between headquarters and in the field, in the four priority areas outlined in the

Joint Declaration of 2005: Fight against terrorism, protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, combating trafficking in human beings, and promoting tolerance and non-discrimination. In particular, we welcome the close co-operation on national minorities and in combating trafficking in human beings.

Mr. Chairman,

Election observation is a very important task for the OSCE, as it is for the Council of Europe. We welcome the close cooperation that has developed over the years with the ODIHR in this regard, based on ODIHR's unique method of observing not only the conduct of the elections, but also the electoral campaign and the follow-up to the elections, in short; the whole electoral process. ODIHR's election observation, which also covers the periods before and after the elections, is thus a necessary supplement and input to parliamentary observation missions, which usually concentrate on the actual conduct of the elections. We also hope that the cooperation and coordination between various categories of international observers can be further refined and perfected, so that divergent and sometimes precipitated assessments can be avoided, which are equally unfortunate whether they turn out to be overly euphoric or overly critical. We therefore encourage the ODIHR, the Parliamentary Assemblies of the OSCE and the Council of Europe and the European Parliament to continue to work closely together on election observation missions, in order to strengthen the credibility and usefulness of this important instrument.

We also encourage the ODIHR and the relevant Council of Europe institutions to continue their efforts to work closer together in all other relevant fields, as promotion of tolerance, non-discrimination and mutual understanding. We believe that even more could be done to coordinate initiatives, in order to avoid overlap and duplication.

Finally, Mr Chairman, I would like to wish our distinguished guest and his organisation every success in their further important work, in pursuit of goals that we fully share.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.