



**PERMANENT DELEGATION  
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

Statement to the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting, Session II,  
as jointly delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile  
and Ms. Tamseela Afzal, Head of the Inclusion Project in Vålerenga Football,  
Vienna, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012

**Introduction by Ambassador Robert Kvile:**

We take this opportunity to supplement this morning's introductions by presenting an example of best practice from Norway.

**Mr. Moderator,**

Vålerenga Football was founded in 1913, as a civil society initiative in order to give young kids healthy hobbies as an alternative to drugs abuse and idleness. The club has for decades been among the very best football clubs in Norway, but has maintained its links to civil society in its home city Oslo.

Vålerenga Football is known for having the most devoted fan club of all Norwegian sport clubs. In the early 1990's this fan club was dominated by troublemakers, causing the civil society to associate Vålerenga with racism. Since then, the club has worked intensively to change this image. To tell you more about this, I am happy to pass on to Ms Tamseela Afzal, head of the integration project of Vålerenga Football.

**Statement by Ms. Tamseela Afzal, Head of the Inclusion Project in  
Vålerenga Football:**

I have listened with great interest to the presentations made by the two introducers as well as yesterday's statements. To follow up on the points already made, I would like to present to you the steps taken by our club Vålerenga

Football to fight racism and intolerance as part of our corporate social responsibility activities.

Vålerenga Football is the only sports club in Norway that has taken a responsibility for the local community. It is also true that in the 1990's many people started to associate Vålerenga to racism.

The main incident was when the fan club started to throw bananas at players from abroad. Vålerenga Football decided to take action against this mentality and established "Vålerenga against racism". All the players carried the logo "Vålerenga against racism" on their football shirts. Vålerenga Football adopted the slogan "Give racism the red card".

Today the club has 74 different nationalities.

Vålerenga Football has become a lighthouse in Norway when it comes to corporate social responsibility. Since the 1990's Vålerenga has attacked the social challenges in our capital in a systematic way. Today the club has its own department working with social projects in a wide perspective.

We work along four programme areas: *Integration, Work, Community and Inclusion*.

**Integration** includes a football tournament for 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> grade pupils with a strong focus on fair play, good attitudes and inclusion. In order to achieve our objectives in this programme area, we have launched a number of projects, including with particular focus on girls.

The programme area **Work** includes work training for unemployed young people. As we all know, successful integration depends on integration also in the labour market. Based upon the successes of the youth work training programme, we have also launched a new employment training project for minority women. Let me mention that as part of this we also have projects directed towards drug-addicts.

The programme area **Community** includes Football Leisure Activities and Soccer Schools for children aged six to twelve. And we produce a *fair-play and anti-racist calendar*, which has been a great success. We organize football teams for disabled children and adults. The team for the blind ones is called the *Blind Stars*.

The programme area **Inclusion** involves a project where players visit hospitalized children and invite them and their family members to home games. Our Poverty Project helps integrate disabled children from poor families. We run a Network Café for minority women where we organize lectures about health issues, including family planning and the importance of being physically active. This platform is also being used to build women's confidence, to stimulate those who want to get a job and to contribute to the society.

Our sponsors have helped us establish an **Inclusion Fund**. The fund enables children of poorer families to participate fully in Vålerenga Football.

In short, we contribute to making Oslo a better place to live.

Vålerenga has received several awards for our anti-racist work. In 2011 our work training programme was nominated for the best social project initiated by a European football club.

These recognitions are to us important feedback on the work we do against racism and for tolerance and integration. But the best feedback is the smiling faces at our events and support from the community around us.

**Thank you, Mr. Moderator.**