



**PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY  
TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE CO-ORDINATOR OF OSCE ECONOMIC  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES**

As delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council  
Vienna, 21 March 2024

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Norway joins others in warmly welcoming Ambassador Dzhusupov to the Permanent Council, and congratulates him on his appointment as Co-Ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities. We look forward to continuing our good cooperation with your office, and wish you success in your new role.

As noted by the Co-Ordinator, the OSCE has seen an exceptionally challenging year. We have witnessed the devastating effects of conflicts in our region, with widespread repercussions for all aspects of security. Each conflict brings its own destruction, and, more often than not, reverses progress made in the fields of economic development, environmental protection, climate change mitigation, and gender equality. We see the cost of war particularly clearly in Ukraine, where Russia's illegal and unjustified war of aggression has had devastating economic and environmental consequences, the effects of which will be felt for years to come.

Our region also continues to be affected by the lingering economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic undermined women's opportunities for paid employment in many parts of the world, and has caused irreparable damage to progress on gender equality. These sobering realities demonstrate the long road we have ahead of us in reducing social and economic disparities, and reinforce the paramount importance of economic and environmental issues for the stability and security of the OSCE area.

They prove – beyond any doubt – that we need the OSCE as an organization. Both as a platform for cooperation and dialogue, but also as a driver of progress on economic and environmental issues. Yet, in order to capitalize on the OSCE's potential, we need all participating States to adopt a constructive approach to these issues. We were pleased that last year's conference in Prague did not set a precedent, and that the decision on the theme, agenda, and modalities of the 31<sup>st</sup> Economic and Environmental Forum (EEF) was adopted.

At the same time, we must stress that the OSCE cannot become an organization solely dedicated to work in the second dimension. We *must* find common ground in the first and third dimensions. We *must* ensure that all mandated conferences take place this year, and that the platforms for progress, and the implementation of our shared commitments, are maintained.

Madam Chair,

Climate change is the most pressing issue of our time. We have already begun to see its catastrophic consequences in countries around the world, including in our own. This is a challenge that no country can solve alone. The Office of the Co-Ordinator's work on strengthening the response to climate change is an important step in advancing regional efforts to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. The OSCE's high-level conference on climate change was another vital step in consolidating the link between climate change and security, and in increasing our efforts curb its effects.

In addressing this common challenge, it is crucial that we apply a gender lens, as well as an intersectional approach. The impact of climate change is neither fair, nor uniform, and affects people around the world differently. We welcome, in this regard, the efforts of the Co-Ordinator's Office to mainstream gender across its activities.

In closing, we thank you, Ambassador Dzhusupov, and your Office for the important work you have and continue to do for the OSCE.

Thank you.