



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

STATEMENT BY NORWAY ON PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN KYRGYZSTAN

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

Madam Chairperson,

Norway joins the European Union in expressing concern over the way in which the Kyrgyz presidential elections on 23 July were conducted. We share the evaluations of the OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission that, despite some positive elements, including distinct choices of presidential candidates and an active civil society, the election process was disappointing and did not show the progress we all hoped for. We regret that it again fell short of key standards Kyrgyzstan has committed to as a participating state of the OSCE, including the commitment to maintain a clear separation between the ruling party and the state.

As noted by the OSCE/ODIHR observers the incumbent candidate gained an unfair advantage over his opponents through the misuse of administrative resources and bias in the media coverage of the campaign. We would also like to express our concern regarding several instances of obstruction of opposition campaign events as well as pressure and intimidation of opposition supporters, as observed by the international monitors. Furthermore, we are also worried by the fact that Election Day was marred by several problems and irregularities, including ballot box stuffing, inaccuracies in the voter lists, multiple voting, and serious irregularities during the counting and tabulation. Norway also regrets that a representative of the well-reputed Norwegian Helsinki Committee was refused accreditation as an international observer by the Kyrgyz Central Elections Commission.

Finally, Madam Chairperson,

Norway would like to encourage Kyrgyz authorities to make full use of the expertise and support offered by the ODIHR in the follow-up of the elections, in order to bring future elections in line with OSCE commitments and other international standards.