



PERMANENT DELEGATION  
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT BY NORWAY IN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR  
ALEXANDRE KELTCHEWSKY, HEAD OF THE OSCE CENTRE IN  
ASTANA

**As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik to the Permanent Council,  
Vienna, 4 June 2009**

Madam Chairperson,

The Norwegian Delegation warmly welcomes Ambassador Alexandre Keltchewsky back to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his report, which provides us with a comprehensive overview of developments in Kazakhstan as well of the Centre's activities since November 2008. Norway is pleased to note that the Centre continues to enjoy excellent relations with both Kazakh Authorities and with civil society.

Norway continues to support the Centre's activities in all three dimensions. We appreciate the Centre's focus on further enhancing confidence- and security-building measures in the politico-military dimension, with special emphasis on regional measures, as well as its work on police issues and border security. We are pleased with the Centre's work in promoting good governance, including the many valuable activities devoted to combating corruption. We welcome the work related to environmental activities, including and in particular the Centre's continued promotion of the Aarhus Convention, as well as its support to the transboundary water management cooperation between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. In the human dimension, we highly value the Centre's assistance in further promoting the rule of law and legal reforms and with regard to gender issues. We have also positively noted the Centre's engagement in various cross-cutting activities related to the media, election observation issues and the broad area of democratization. In more general terms, we positively acknowledge the attention that has been given by the Centre to strengthening regional cooperation in Central Asia.

Madam Chairperson,

Norway has duly noted the final adoption of the legislation in the four areas highlighted by Foreign Minister Tazhin at the Madrid Ministerial Council. We welcome the improvements made with regard to the media and election laws, on the registration of political parties and on local administration and self-government. At the same time we encourage Kazakhstan to take additional steps in these and other areas and continue its dedicated work to adopt and implement new legislation in order to implement its programme for democratic reforms and its OSCE commitments. In this regard we have noted with interest the mention of the State Programme for Legal Policy and the Concept on Legal Policy, as well as the National Action Plan prepared by the Presidential Human Rights Commission. We are looking forward to additional information and proposals related to further liberalization and legal reforms.

Like other delegations we are, however, concerned about the possible approval of the draft law on information and communication networks, which in its present form would limit the media freedom in Kazakhstan. We encourage Kazakhstan to amend the draft, on the basis of the suggestions offered by the Representative on the Freedom of the Media.

Kazakhstan's "Path to Europe" programme also contains a number of priorities for the 2010 Chairmanship of the OSCE. Recently, we have listened with particular interest to Kazakhstan's interventions in the Permanent Council, which also have revealed additional information on plans and priorities for its Chairmanship. We commend Kazakhstan for its thorough and dedicated preparations. We remain confident that Kazakhstan, when taking on the Chairmanship of the OSCE as the first Central Asian participating State, will exemplify the values and standards of the Organization.

In conclusion, Madam Chairperson, let me commend Ambassador Keltchewsky and his team for their dedicated work and assure them of our continued support in their future endeavours.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.