



PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO H.E. KANAT SAUDABAYEV, MINISTER
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF KAZAKHSTAN

As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik
to the Permanent Council, Vienna January 14, 2010

Mr. Chairman,

It is a pleasure for Norway to warmly welcome the new Chairman-in-Office, His Excellency Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev, to the Permanent Council on the occasion of this first meeting under the Kazakh chairmanship. Wishing you every success, we look forward to taking on this year's challenges with renewed vigour, in full co-operation with you and your team. Let me also take this opportunity to pay another well-deserved tribute to the outgoing Greek chairmanship, for all their dedicated efforts over the past year.

Mr. Chairman,

A new page in the history of the OSCE is being turned when a non-European country now takes on the chairmanship responsibility for the first time. It shows that the OSCE principles of security and cooperation are indeed common values and cornerstones of our societies and the basis for developing good relations throughout the entire area. We believe that Kazakhstan's chairmanship gives the OSCE a unique opportunity to use its long and vast experience to solidify cooperation and confidence building with and in Central Asia, and to extend it even further. We are impressed with the thorough preparations undertaken by our colleagues here in Vienna, and with the ambitious plans and programmes presented by the Chair. President Nazarbayev's video address is another expression of the Chairmanship's full commitment to the important tasks ahead.

Norway welcomes the priorities presented by our new Chairman-in-Office, Foreign Minister Saudabayev. We highly appreciate the intention to continue to build on the efforts made by previous chairmanships to strengthen confidence and mutual understanding, in order to foster genuine political dialogue among participating States. We share the priority assigned to continuing and developing the Corfu process, which has already given momentum to a broader, more inclusive debate on European security. Norway shares the view just reiterated by the EU that our aim must be to achieve an “OSCE Plus”, not an “OSCE à la carte”.

We agree with the C-i-O that it is now time to get on with the task of introducing some necessary updates to the Vienna Document, and we share his hope of bringing us a step closer to the entry into force of the adapted CFE treaty. Norway also welcomes the C-i-O’s intention to keep resolution of the protracted conflicts as one of the top priorities, and we look forward to his active engagement in finding lasting solutions to these difficult problems. We have also noted the ambitious plans for a large number of meetings and conferences, including at high level, and assure you of our readiness to cooperate in order to bring about tangible and substantial results. Altogether, the programme you have presented, Mr. Minister, as well as the broad support you have enlisted, give us the image of a chairmanship both willing and ready to make every effort to achieve good results.

Mr. Chairman,

Norway agrees with the C-i-O that the human dimension remains a key theme on the agenda of the OSCE and is pleased to note that the chairmanship will support actively the work of our valued institutions; the ODIHR, the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Representative on Freedom of the Media. We now look eagerly forward to the timely appointment of a new RFoM, to carry forward the proud legacy left by the outgoing Representative, Miklos Haraszti.

Without democracy, full respect for human rights, including fundamental freedoms and rule of law, there will be no lasting security and stability. We welcome the Kazakh intention to make tolerance and intercultural dialogue a major priority, as an underlining also of the importance of the good work of the HCNM. Norway is pleased to see the Chairmanship’s focus on free and fair elections, as they are fundamental to democracy. In this context, I recall with satisfaction that the comprehensive, impartial and professional method for election observation developed by the ODIHR is held in high regard internationally and is regularly referred to as “the gold standard” for election observation.

Like some previous speakers, I would like to stress the important roles that a vibrant civil society and NGOs, including human right defenders and independent institutions, play for prosperity, stability and security.

Mr. Chairman,

We fully agree that the concept of European security goes far beyond the borders of the European continent and encompasses the vast expanse of Eurasia. Thus, we support the intention to focus particular attention on Afghanistan, in order to assist the Afghan people in transforming their world of armed confrontation into a productive society.

We also urge the Kazakh chairmanship to make full use of all the OSCE field missions, both for fact-finding information and for conflict prevention, and we are ready to stand by the chairmanship in case of situations that either call for new field missions, or for the reopening of a much needed field mission in Georgia.

In concluding, Mr. Chairman, allow me again to congratulate Foreign Minister Saudabayev on assuming this important responsibility and wish him and his teams in Astana and Vienna all possible success. Mr. Minister, you can be assured of Norway's constructive cooperation.

Thank you.