



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

STATEMENT BY NORWAY

As delivered by Counsellor Lars Løberg to the 2012 Human Dimension implementation meeting, Warsaw 24 September 2012 – Working Session 2

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

Let me first join previous speakers in expressing our gratitude to the Introducer, Mr. Yevgeniy Zhovtis for his thoughtful inputs on Fundamental Freedoms. To us, these freedoms are unquestionable. They are the basis for any true democratic development. And in that respect, it is truly saddening for us to hear reports about violations of freedoms in participating states, lack of progress in implementation of OSCE commitments and in some cases even deteriorating rights for citizens.

Mr. Chairman,

We all remember the wording of the Astana Summit Declaration, “that the commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned”. Allow me, therefor, to honour the Summit Declaration by pointing out three examples of commitments that has not yet been fully implemented by all participating states.

During last winter and spring we observed a political awakening of the middle class in Russia and we were impressed by the authorities’ constructive reaction to the demonstrations, as well as by the professional handling by the police.

We were then disappointed to see the violent outcome of the 6 May demonstrations and by the following amendments to the law on demonstrations and public assembly. We are concerned that the introduction of steep fines for participation in unsanctioned rallies will create fear and curb civil and political engagement. We see this step as an infringement on the right to assembly, and not in accordance with Russia’s OSCE commitments. The same goes for recent restrictions on organizations receiving funding from abroad and for the rights of LGBT people to demonstrate in public.

We are equally concerned about the closure of the Azerbaijan Human Rights House in 2011 and the subsequent restrictions on the freedom of association in Azerbaijan. We urge the Azerbaijani authorities to allow for the Human Rights House to reopen without further delay.

And when it comes to the National human rights institutions, we are still concerned about the fact that a national human rights institution in compliance with the Paris Principles still has not been established in Belarus.

We urge the relevant authorities to fulfill their obligations in these as well as in all other relevant cases.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for your attention.