



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY  
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT BY THE HIGH  
COMMISSIONER ON NATIONAL MINORITIES

Delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council  
Vienna, 7 December 2023

Mr. Chair,

I join others in welcoming the High Commissioner on National Minorities, Ambassador Abdrakhmanov, back to the Permanent Council and thank him for his report. I am probably not the only one to be relieved that it was possible to extend the mandate of the High Commissioner, alongside other leading positions in the OSCE.

Norway supports the mandate of the High Commissioner and recognizes the usefulness of tools and recommendations developed by the office of the High Commissioner to assist States in improving sustainable integration of diverse societies. The country visits are important in identifying best practices and a service all participating States should make use of.

Just a month ago, the High Commissioner and his office visited Norway for an extensive programme, comprising meetings with all our national minorities as well as one indigenous people. He also met with government officials from several ministries, as well as with representatives of the Storting, our national parliament. We particularly appreciated that the High Commissioner and his delegation paid a visit to the Norwegian High North, where he, among other things, visited the Sami Parliament, other Sami institutions and representatives of other national minorities in the north of our country.

One of the issues of the visit, was to shed light on how climate change affects national minorities. The delegation was informed about how climate change, particularly in the north, affects national minorities and indigenous peoples to a very high degree. This also leads to an increased level of conflict between national minorities and other parts of the population, particularly in questions related to the access to energy and development of new energy sources.

We appreciated the visit and look forward to the report and a set of recommendations.

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Mr. Chair,

Norway appreciates the clear focus on gender mainstreaming in the work of the High Commissioner, and we welcome the efforts to increase knowledge about the intersecting root causes for inequality and discrimination.

The role of the HCNM in identifying, de-politicizing and addressing causes of ethnic tensions involving national minority issues is of utmost importance. We need the High Commissioner to use the tools at his disposal to the best for war-affected populations in Ukraine and elsewhere. At the same time, we respect the value of silent diplomacy and confidentiality. This work method has proven both wise and efficient over the years.

Mr. Chair

Norway continues to be concerned about the negative impact the non-approval of Unified Budget has had on all activities in the organization. We again urge all delegations to do their utmost and be willing to compromise to join consensus on a Unified Budget for 2023, and as soon as possible also for 2024.

We congratulate the Office of the High Commissioner on the 30th anniversary this autumn. We wish you good luck with your efforts, also in the year to come. Please also give our best regards to your staff, without which the results would be few and far between.

Thank you.