



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO DIRECTOR RYABKOV OF
THE OSCE ACADEMY IN BISHKEK**

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 12 November 2015

Mr Chairman,

I aligned myself with the statement made by Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union. In addition, I would like to add a few remarks about the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, to which Norway is a substantial contributor.

Mr Chairman,

As we have heard from Director Ryabkov, the Academy's popularity is increasing steadily. In 2015, 1028 applicants from 40 countries competed for only 54 places at the Academy.

The OSCE Academy's competitiveness stems from its good reputation, its high quality education, as well as from the unique network it creates of promising young people from Central Asia and beyond, including Afghanistan. Future leaders from different countries in the region are brought together. This can in itself be a conflict prevention mechanism.

Exceptionally for Central Asia, all education at the Academy is in English. This enables graduates to communicate and cooperate on the global scene.

It is nevertheless vitally important that the Academy is located in Central Asia. The possibility of receiving education of high international standard without leaving the region limits brain drain, helps build educational capacity, and creates, as Director Ryabkov pointed out in his report, a forum for public and academic debate. The Academy's location also gives the OSCE more visibility in Central Asia. Increased knowledge of and support for our organization throughout the OSCE area is positive for us all.

Mr Chairman,

We commend and thank Director Ryabkov for the excellent job he is doing. The Academy has in recent years continuously improved its academic quality and status, and has served as a constructive platform for cooperation across traditional dividing lines.

Let me also express appreciation for Kyrgyzstan's constructive cooperation with the Academy, and for its in-kind contributions. This has been vital for the Academy's success. It is now crucial that the Memorandum of Understanding between the Academy and Kyrgyzstan is finalized as soon as possible, and that the lease agreement is extended. We also expect swift conclusion of the re-licensing process, to ensure that all students are granted national diplomas. These are important issues for us as a donor.

Mr Chairman,

Norway is the largest extra-budgetary contributor to the Academy, through the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. We are however worried about the financial sustainability of the Academy. We therefore call on all participating States to support the Academy in every way they can, to ensure that this flagship OSCE institution retains its high quality and status.

Thank you, Mr Chairman