



**NORWEGIAN MINISTRY  
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

STATEMENT BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF NORWAY,

H.E. Børge Brende,

at the 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council,

Kyiv, 6-7 December 2013

Thank you, Mr Chairman,

For decades the OSCE has been important for stability, security and democracy in our region. Let this inspire us also in the future.

The OSCE is a unique tool. But let us be honest: In recent years there has not been enough progress. There is a lack of political will and not enough cooperation and compromise.

On arms control and security we need to move forward -- on conventional arms control as well as on confidence and security building measures.

Democracy, human rights and the rule of law are under pressure.

There are people who live in fear because of their political conviction or religious beliefs. Protection of the rights of the individuals is a core responsibility that we all share.

The OSCE is the most important force for democratisation and respect for human rights throughout the region.

We must use our organisation to achieve real results. We must continue to invest in the institutions and field missions. And we must live up to our commitments in all dimensions.

In Astana we agreed to value the importance of civil society and free media. They help us to ensure full respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and democracy, including free and fair elections, and the rule of law.

Mr Chairman,

Yesterday evening I visited Maidan Independence Square.

What I saw was politically engaged people fighting for the future of their country.

Their political engagement must be protected and encouraged. This is a core OSCE commitment, as you yourself, Mr.Chairman, Foreign Minister Kozjara of Ukraine, underlined in your statement yesterday.

We need to refrain from attempts to put pressure on individual countries who are seeking integration in one direction or another.

Mr Chairman,

We are facing new transnational threats that must be countered in other ways than by military means. In response to the changing threats to our common security, we must also strengthen the way we cooperate. Terrorism, narcotics trade, human trafficking and cyber security threats continue to grow.

If we do not address new and pressing issues, we will undermine the credibility of our organisation. We must develop new commitments and new ways of responding to emerging security threats and make the OSCE relevant to the current challenges we are facing.

Mr Chairman,

In conclusion, I would like to express our support for the incoming Swiss chairmanship and for the priorities they have set. We support the focus on implementation of our commitments and the enhanced involvement of civil society in the work of the OSCE. We wish the Swiss chairmanship every success.

It is important, it is about the future of the OSCE, that can have a positive impact on our region if we get it right.

Thank you Mr Chairman.