



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY NORWAY IN RESPONSE TO THE HEAD OF THE OSCE
CENTRE IN BISHKEK, AMBASSADOR ANDREW TESORIERE**

As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
25 September 2008

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

Norway warmly welcomes Ambassador Andrew Tesoriere to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his excellent report, which provides us with a comprehensive overview of the developments in Kyrgyzstan, as well as of the Centre's broad range of activities since May 2007. Norway is pleased to note that the Centre continues to enjoy excellent relations with both the Kyrgyz Authorities and civil society.

Norway follows closely the political and economic developments in Kyrgyzstan. In the legislative field, we welcome the recent approval of strengthened legislation in the fight against terrorism in Kyrgyzstan. We also commend Kyrgyzstan for its new law on humanization of criminal legislation, including abolition of the death penalty. Like others, we are however concerned about the new Election Code and the amendments to Kyrgyzstan's freedom of assembly law as well as the Media law, and we encourage Kyrgyzstan to reconsider these steps, which go in the wrong direction.

Mr. Chairman,

In view of the many challenging tasks facing the Centre in Bishkek, Norway welcomes the Centre's emphasis on pursuing a cross-dimensional approach around the six "hubs" chosen in order to better shape the Centre's strategic direction. We also concur with the Centre's increased emphasis on issues related to border management, with regard to environmental risks, as well as on mainstreaming gender and youth into all activities.

Norway commends the Centre for its programmatic activities addressing a wide range of issues in all three dimensions. Over the years Norway has supported a number of extra-budgetary OSCE projects in Kyrgyzstan e.g. with regard to police reforms and electoral support. We also support the valuable work of the HCNM related to ethnic

tolerance and education in the southern part of the country. In a regional perspective, we are pleased to note that the OSCE Academy in Bishkek has developed a strong professional reputation, and we welcome the continuation of the cooperation between the Academy and the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI).

Mr. Chairman,

Ambassador Tesoriere's very pertinent and timely remarks concerning inadequate recruitment and retention conditions for international and national staff in Bishkek prompt me to recall our oft-stated concerns on the same issue. Adequate staffing is a precondition for the OSCE field operations being able to discharge their important responsibilities in a fully satisfactory manner, and the present system makes it all but impossible. Ambassador Tesoriere's very eloquent plea provided us with another reminder of the urgent need to find adequate solutions to these problems.

Mr. Chairman,

In my statement to the Council on 10 July, I raised Norway's concerns regarding the formal registration and immigration processes in connection with the establishment of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee's Central Asian Office in Bishkek (NHC). Developments since then have brought up additional problems, and the matter of registration has not yet been finally resolved.

However, based on recent positive discussions between Norwegian and Kyrgyz authorities, Norway confidently assumes that the registration process of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee will be in place in the very near future and that the visa issue will be solved shortly.

In conclusion, let me commend Ambassador Tesoriere and his team for their dedicated work and assure them of our continued support in their further efforts.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.