



**PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY  
TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE  
CHAIRS OF COMMITTEES**

Delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad at the Permanent Council  
Vienna, 1 February 2018

*CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*

Mr. Chair,

I am very happy to welcome the three Ambassadors as Chairs of the Committees to the Permanent Council and thank them for presenting their priorities for 2018. Though congratulations on their appointments and reappointments are due for all, I am of course especially pleased to see Ambassador M. Victoria González Román as my successor as Chair of the Security Committee. We look forward to support and work with all three Committee Chairs.

Norway's priorities in the Security Committee will remain in line with key priorities of the OSCE: Preventing and countering transnational threats, such as terrorism and VERLT, as well as Security Sector Governance and Reform. The gender perspective and gender equality must be integrated into all our deliberations and actions. This is not merely a normative issue about what is right: Gender equality is an enabler for tolerance and non-discrimination and empowers organisations and societies to function more effectively. We must never overlook the utility of equality.

In the Economic and Environmental Committee, we welcome the chair's emphasis on green growth and on environmental impact and risks. To mitigate climate change and counter global warming, major changes in energy supply, transportation and industry are required. Norway hopes to see further progress this year on greening our economies.

The Chair of the Human Dimension Committee places an emphasis on our fundamental freedoms: expression, thought, conscience, religion or belief, association and on rule of law. We welcome these priorities and would like to emphasise the need to support those who actually defend these freedoms.

In November, the UN General Assembly adopted, by consensus, a resolution on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. In collaboration with other participating States Norway will raise awareness on this issue. We urge the OSCE, as requested in the resolution, to report on its role in defense of human rights and fundamental freedoms. This is particularly relevant in 2018 when we will mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In our work in the Committees we will emphasise areas and activities where the OSCE has added value in contributing to our common security and cooperation when addressing challenges we are facing regionally and globally.

Thank you.