



PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

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

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 10 July 2014

Mr Chairman,

I join others in welcoming High Commissioner Thors to the Permanent Council, and I thank her for her comprehensive and balanced report.

The High Commissioner's mandate for containing and de-escalating tensions involving national minorities has never been more relevant than today. My government will continue its strong support for the HCNM, and we reiterate that the institution should be given the necessary resources to carry out its mandate.

Let me also underline the importance of the autonomy of all the OSCE Institutions. We applaud High Commissioner Thors' defence of this autonomy through her frank and unbiased approach.

Mr Chairman,

Recent events in Ukraine may have serious and long-term consequences for European security. We commend the High Commissioner's special emphasis on Ukraine. We encourage her and her staff to continue their extensive efforts in the country, including Crimea.

Reports of human rights abuses in Crimea, and especially the situation for Crimean Tatars and Ukrainian speaking communities, are of deep concern to us. Lack of access for international observers and media aggravates this concern.

We strongly object to the blocking of Crimean residents from returning home, including prominent Crimean Tatar leaders Mustafa Dzhemilev and Refat Chubarov.

As the High Commissioner affirms in her report, States have the primary responsibility to protect the rights of minorities in the territories they control. We agree with the High Commissioner that protection of minority languages is especially important to prevent conflict and create cohesive societies.

Mr Chairman,

Let me conclude by expressing once again my government's appreciation for the High Commissioner's diligent and impartial discharge of her responsibilities. The High Commissioner and her staff contributes significantly to making the OSCE area safer and more secure, and we reaffirm our continued support for the institution.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.