



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF EDUCATION

Delivered by Chargé d’Affaires a.i. Henning Hj. Johansen to the Permanent Council
Vienna, 23 January 2020

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chair,

I am speaking on behalf of Andorra, Canada, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, and Norway.

Education is a driver for more democratic and inclusive societies where all are equal. It equips young people with skills that are needed to take part in the labour market and benefit from inclusive economic growth. Moreover, it is key to developing the knowledge needed to manage our planet and its resources more sustainably. SDG 4 on education is key to unlocking success on all other SDGs and has a special place in the 2030 Agenda on sustainable development.

Education plays a role in the OSCE’s comprehensive approach to security. The High Commissioner on National Minorities engages with participating States to formulate national minority education policies. ODIHR promotes respect for diversity and mutual understanding in schools, and assists educators in training their colleagues to understand, respect, and defend human rights.

Education also forms part of the efforts of many of our field operations. Not least, the OSCE Academy in Bishkek has shown that the OSCE can itself be a successful educator.

In these efforts, the OSCE is making small, but important contributions to achieving the fourth sustainable development goal: to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

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Education also plays a role in managing and resolving conflict. Schooling not only gives children and youth the skills and knowledge they need to rebuild their society once a conflict is over; it also offers them protection and a sense of normality in an otherwise chaotic and traumatic situation.

Attacks on education in conflicts have a devastating effect on communities, and long-term consequences for safe access to education. Without access to quality learning, children are not only deprived of an education; in fact, they are being robbed of their future.

This affects all of us. When children grow up without a proper education, they are not able to play their part in building well-functioning, democratic, inclusive and thriving societies. The protection of education from attack is a security issue with both humanitarian and development aspects. It is a social and a political issue to which we must respond.

The safe schools declaration was launched for this purpose in 2015, and more than 100 states have endorsed it. We encourage the participating States that have not yet done so to endorse and implement the declaration.

With less than 10 years to go to reach SDG 4 it is time for states to set a clear path for moving forward. It is important that we all play our part. Recognising the OSCE's contribution to reaching this goal is one way to show the relevance of the OSCE in a broader context.

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