



STATEMENT BY NORWAY IN RESPONSE TO THE HEAD OF THE
OSCE CENTRE IN ALMATY, AMBASSADOR IVAR VIKKI

As delivered to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 10, 2007

Mr. Chairman,

The Norwegian Delegation warmly welcomes Ambassador Vikki back to the Council and thanks him for his comprehensive report on the developments in Kazakhstan and the Centre's activities during the last six months.

Mr. Chairman,

Norway has positively noted the launching of a broad programme on democratic reforms including in important areas such as follow-up to the State Commission's report on a number of measures, concerning the media situation and the freedom of assembly, on the freedom of religious associations, on elections and on the developments with regard to political pluralism. We have, however, also noted that concrete cases within the human dimension of security point to the need for additional legislative measures in the same areas. We encourage Kazakhstan to continue its work on democratic reforms in all areas of concern.

Mr. Chairman,

Norway highly values the continued close co-operation between the Kazakh authorities and the OSCE Centre. We are pleased to note the many well-founded projects and activities which are being carried out by the Centre in all three dimensions in co-operation with Kazakh authorities and institutions, and the civil society. We fully concur with the Centre's increased emphasis on carrying out activities in the regions of Kazakhstan.

The Centre's work in the politico-military dimension has our full support. Its work on confidence and security building measures, and on assisting Kazakh authorities in

their fight against terrorism and organized crime, is highly appreciated by my Delegation.

In the economic and environmental dimension we fully support the Centre in its work on combating corruption, as well as its activities on combating financing of terrorism and anti-money laundering. We commend the Centre for its work on environmental issues.

In the human dimension field, Norway commends the Centre for its continued focus on activities related to the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in Kazakhstan, as well as in support of the adoption by Kazakhstan of the two optional protocols.

We are particularly pleased with the Centre's active engagement in promoting gender equality and its continued participation in further developing the draft law on equal opportunities for women and men, as well as with the Centre's important work related to combating the trafficking in human beings.

Mr. Chairman,

As mentioned in our response to the address by H.E. Foreign Minister Tazhin to the Permanent Council last week, we are confident that the relocation of the Centre to Astana, while maintaining a liaison office in Almaty, will contribute to a further strengthening of the close relations between the Centre and the Kazakh authorities.

In conclusion, let me thank Ambassador Vikki and his team for their extensive work and assure them of our continued support for their very commendable efforts.

I thank you.