



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

STATEMENT BY NORWAY IN RESPONSE TO THE HEAD OF THE OSCE OFFICE IN
TAJIKISTAN, AMBASSADOR IVAR VIKKI

**As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik
to the Permanent Council, Vienna,
8 July 2010**

Mr Chairperson,

The Norwegian Delegation warmly welcomes Ambassador Ivar Vikki back to the Council, now for the first time in his present capacity as Head of the OSCE Office in Tajikistan. We thank him for his comprehensive, and at the same time concise, report, providing us with an excellent overview of main developments in Tajikistan and of the OSCE Office's impressive range of activities over the past year.

Our overall assessments of the work done and the priorities for further activities are well in line with the statement given by Belgium on behalf of the European Union, and also, to an unusual and remarkable degree, with the statements of the other previous speakers, representing USA and Russia. In particular, I would like to echo the well-deserved praise to Ambassador Vikki and his staff for all their achievements.

Mr Chairperson,

We have duly noted that the cooperation between Tajikistan and the OSCE Office has been further strengthened as a strategic partnership during this period, that an extensive and structured consultation process has taken place, and that the OSCE Office has provided legislative support and assistance to capacity building in all three OSCE dimensions.

Our long-term, consistent support for the efforts to assist Tajikistan in strengthening border security and management is well known. We have contributed financially to the Patrol Programming and Leadership Project, and we are a major contributor to the OSCE Border Management Staff College (BMSC). In our view, supporting Central Asian participating States in their efforts to strengthen border management and security, as well as contributing to the implementation of the MC Decision on OSCE engagement with Afghanistan, constitutes an area of assistance where the OSCE has proven its worth and shown that it can add real value to the efforts of other international actors.

Norway supported the very successful Small Arms and Light Weapons and Conventional Ammunition Programme (SALW/CA) for Tajikistan throughout its existence, and we note with satisfaction that follow-up activities contribute to keep momentum in this important field

of cooperation. We also note that the de-mining program has reached a new stage in the cooperation with local authorities. This, as well as the new partnership with the EBRD proves beyond doubt that the cooperation yields results, to the benefit of all partners.

Mr Chairperson,

Recognizing the many challenges facing Tajikistan in the economic and environmental area, Norway commends the Office for its work in assisting Tajikistan in addressing environmental threats to security, and its activities in support of water management at the national and at the transboundary level. We support the Office's emphasis on further intensifying its assistance to Tajikistan in promoting good governance and combating corruption.

We commend the good work on promoting gender awareness and equality, especially the apparently very successful project on establishing Women's Resource Centres in several regions in Tajikistan, which was also highlighted in the US intervention. We also hope that the Khujand shelter for victims of domestic violence will help addressing one of the most serious obstacles to gender equality.

Mr Chairperson,

Like previous speakers, we must also reiterate our concerns about the many and serious shortcomings revealed during the parliamentary elections held in February, as documented in the recently circulated Election Observation Mission Report. Based on our own recent experience, I can only recommend to the Tajik authorities to engage in a close cooperation with the ODIHR, in order to improve the electoral processes. We also hope that Tajikistan will follow our example and to report to the Permanent Council on the follow-up given to the recommendations.

The cooperation between Tajik authorities and the OSCE Office under the leadership of Ambassador Vikki has proven that good progress in a wide array of areas can be achieved, even with limited resources. We wish him and his competent and dedicated staff every success in their future work.

I thank you, **Mr. Chairperson.**