



## PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

### STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE H.E. SEBASTIAN KURZ

As delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna, 12 January 2017

I join previous speakers in welcoming you, Foreign Minister Kurz, to the Permanent Council and thanking you for presenting your plans.

You have identified three important priorities: defusing conflicts, re-establishing trust and fighting radicalization and violent extremism.

In Ukraine, fundamental OSCE commitments and principles of international law have been breached. The conflict in and around Ukraine can only be resolved by restoring respect for these principles.

Foreign Minister, you emphasized that the human dimension is of prime importance in the comprehensive approach to security. We wholeheartedly agree. Respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law is a cornerstone in stable and secure societies. Terrorism is indeed a threat to all our countries, but fighting terrorism must never be at the expense of human rights. On the contrary. Lack of freedom of expression and assembly, as well as discrimination and intolerance, are often among the root causes of marginalization, radicalization and recruitment to terrorism. Promoting human rights is among our most efficient tools in combating terrorism.

We are concerned by the attacks on civil society, independent media and human rights defenders in many participating States. They are often accused of undermining stability and supporting terrorism. Fighting terrorism must never be used as a pretext for restricting the rights of our citizens.

We welcome and support your intention to mainstream the gender perspective in your efforts in all three dimensions. This will strengthen the outcome of our work and make results more durable.

Mr Chair, Federal Minister,

You have an ambitious plan to work in-depth on important aspects of our common security. As Chair of the Security Committee, I look forward to supporting you by elaborating a work program and engaging speakers with the necessary enthusiasm and expertise to encourage constructive discussions and carry our work forward.

We also agree with your aim of strengthening our organization. Adequate resources to maintain the high quality of work is a fundamental condition. All participating States must be willing to invest in an organization which is established to assist us all. Recruiting qualified, strong leaders of the institutions and a new Secretary-General will be an extremely important task for you as chairmanship. The institutions and the secretariat, as well as the field missions, are vital to achieve our goals.

In conclusion, allow me to thank the outgoing German chairmanship for their dedicated work throughout a challenging year. We wish you, Minister Kurz, and your able team, every success and ensure you of our full support.

Thank you, Mr Chair.