



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NORWAY,
AMBASSADOR METTE KONGSHEM, IN RESPONSE TO THE SECRETARY OF
STATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN AND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF
THE STATE COMMISSION ON DEVELOPMENT AND CONCRETIZATION OF
THE PROGRAMME OF DEMOCRATIC REFORMS, H.E. MR. ORALBAI
ABDYKARIMOV**

**OSCE Permanent Council
26 September 2006**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

Norway welcomes the Secretary of State of Kazakhstan, Deputy Chairman of the State Commission, to the Special Permanent Council, and thanks him for his comprehensive presentation of the work being done on democratic reforms in Kazakhstan. We also found the informal meeting yesterday a most constructive initiative. It gave us valuable insight into the work of the State Commission and welcome information about Kazakhstan's intentions as to further democratic reforms.

Kazakhstan plays a leading role in ensuring long-term security and stability in Central Asia. A strong and democratic Kazakhstan will be a locomotive for democratic reform in the region. This is key to our common endeavour to meet new security challenges in this region. We welcome the constructive approach taken by Kazakhstan in this regard.

Much has been achieved in Kazakhstan over the past 15 years. Impressive economic development has contributed to increased prosperity and stability. This is important. But economic development will not be sustainable without political reforms and consolidation of democratic structures, good governance, rule of law and freedom of the media.

We therefore welcome Kazakhstan's expressed commitment to continued democratic reforms. Dedication and hard work is needed in order to bring the reforms forward. It is absolutely necessary that the entire society – both political structures and civil society – take part in these efforts.

As we heard from the Kazakh High Level delegation yesterday, and indeed from the State Secretary's presentation this afternoon, important work is ongoing to put in place measures to implement the agenda on democratic reform. This should in our view encompass issues such

as political pluralism, free and fair elections, freedom of assembly and freedom of the media. Stated policies must be followed up by practical and political concrete action measures. Implementation is key. Norway has urged Kazakhstan to take a more decisive road towards reaching the political reforms the country is aiming at. Recently, developments have not always taken such a clear course. We hope and expect that a firmer stance will now be put in place.

Mr. Chairman,

Since Kazakhstan three years ago announced its aspirations to take on a leading role in the OSCE, Norway has stated that we welcome these aspirations as an opportunity both for further democratization in Kazakhstan itself, for the Central Asian region and for the OSCE. The candidacy is considered as a clear commitment by Kazakhstan to push its reform agenda forward.

But, leadership in the OSCE entails a special commitment to this Organization as well as political will and best efforts in implementing its standards and commitments. Democratic transformation is a long and complicated process. The direction such a process is taking is however important, momentum must not be lost and it must be avoided that developments take a downward turn.

Mr. Chairman,

Norway welcomes and looks upon Kazakhstan's candidacy for the Chairmanship as an opportunity for further democratization. We hope Kazakhstan will succeed in implementing the reform programme and are confident that this will give Kazakhstan a leading role both within its region and within the OSCE. Like the EU, Norway is of the opinion that it is for Kazakhstan to demonstrate that it is ready and able to commit to full compliance with all OSCE undertakings and standards.

I thank you.