



## PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

### CLOSING STATEMENT TO THE HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING 2016

As delivered by Counsellor Hilde Austad,  
Warsaw, 30 September 2016

Mr Chair,

HDIM has again provided us with insight into the experience, viewpoints and challenges of our citizens, through the civil society organisations represented here. My delegation is grateful to all civil society representatives for bringing these issues to our attention. Some have travelled far. Some tell us they have received threats of reprisal, or even that family members have suffered negative consequences of their attendance. This is unacceptable. Human rights defenders have the right to communicate with and take part in international bodies. The main idea of HDIM is the exchange between civil society and governments. Intimidation of participants represents an attack on the OSCE itself. All participating States must refrain from reprisals, and protect participants and their families from attacks by non-state actors.

Participation at HDIM this year was higher than ever. We see this as a sign of the continued relevance of the meeting. We are concerned by the many testimonies of direct and indirect suppression of civil society organisations, restrictions on freedom of assembly and association, on freedom of expression and independent media, and abuse of the justice system for political purposes. These violations of OSCE commitments undermine enjoyment of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. This threatens the stability of states and thereby security in our region.

Mr Chair,

Norway considers improved implementation of existing commitments to be fundamental. However, our OSCE commitments should also be updated in line with developments in the UN and other international obligations. We look

forward to proposals from the Chairmanship that can be carried forward towards decisions in Hamburg. Some of the side events here have also provided input to our coming discussions.

We thank the incoming Austrian chairmanship for giving us an overview of their priorities in the Human Dimension for the coming year. We look forward to working with them and other participating States in realizing these priorities.

Mr Chair,

The crisis in and around Ukraine has once again featured prominently in our discussions. This is a consequence of the serious violations of fundamental commitments that have led to a breakdown of justice and grave human rights violations in Eastern Ukraine and Crimea. We will continue to call on Russia to reverse its actions in Ukraine and renew its fundamental OSCE commitments in word and deed.

Finally, we thank the host government, the German chairmanship and, not least, ODIHR, for having organised HDIM fully in line with the modalities of this meeting.

Thank you, Mr Chair