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**STATEMENT BY  
AMBASSADOR ROBERT KVILE, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF NORWAY, AT THE 1108th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

14 July 2016

**In response to the address by the Minister for Europe, Integration and  
Foreign Affairs of Austria, His Excellency Sebastian Kurz**

Mr. Chairperson,  
Foreign Minister Kurz,

On behalf of Norway I warmly welcome you to the Permanent Council and thank you for your detailed report on the priorities of the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship for 2017.

The Austrian priorities are very similar to those of Norway. I am therefore convinced that our Organization will again be in the best hands next year.

I can only join in what my colleagues have already said, including Slovakia on behalf of the European Union. I should therefore like to limit myself to five brief points that are very important to us.

I shall now continue in English.

Mr Chairman,

A leitmotif of the incumbent German OSCE chairmanship is renewing dialogue, rebuilding trust, restoring security. We fully support the German efforts in this regard. I must however underline that efforts to re-establish dialogue and thereby restore security, cannot mean closing our eyes to violations of the fundamental principles that underpin our organisation. Renewing our commitment to the OSCE acquis must therefore be an important task.

My second point is on the crisis in and around Ukraine. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol and destabilizing actions in Donbas continue to pose a serious challenge to European security. The OSCE plays an important role in our efforts to reach a peaceful settlement of the conflict and restoring Ukraine's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, within its internationally recognized borders. We will continue to support an active and constructive role for the OSCE, including through seconding qualified personnel to the

Special Monitoring Mission. Let me add that we appreciate Minister Kurz' focus on resolution of the protracted conflicts in Moldova and Georgia as well as of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

My third point, Mr Chairman, is that respect for human rights is a prerequisite for secure, stable and prosperous societies. We therefore note with great concern that human rights are under increasing pressure in a number of OSCE participating States, most of them, but not all of them, east of Vienna. I therefore welcome the incoming Chair's focus on the Human Dimension.

Of late we have witnessed a rather hostile attitude from certain participating States towards the OSCE institutions. Attempts at paralyzing them are motivated by a wish to weaken the OSCE and must not be allowed to succeed. The institutions are important not only for the third dimension. Strong institutions are important also in our efforts to counter transnational threats. An key priority of any Chair-in-Office must therefore be to safeguard the autonomy of ODIHR, RFOM and HCNM.

Mr Chairman,

At the Belgrade Ministerial in December last year a majority of Ministers highlighted the challenges posed by terrorism and migration to the security and stability in the OSCE area. Through a number of important decisions taken by our Ministers we have now defined a concrete and substantive role for the OSCE in countering terrorism. During the last few months we have had in-depth discussions on migration, which we are confident will help us define a useful role for the OSCE also in this area.

My final point, Mr Chairman, is this: even in difficult times – or rather especially in difficult times – must we continue to keep conventional arms control and Confidence and Security Building Measures high on our agenda.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.