



## PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

### STATEMENT BY NORWAY

As delivered by Counsellor Lars Løberg to the 2012 Human Dimension implementation meeting, Warsaw 28 September 2012 – Working Session 9

**Thank you, Mr. Chairman,**

Equality of opportunity for women and men may sound obvious to the younger generations, so obvious that it may even be difficult to understand why gender equality belong to the common priorities also for a regional security organization like the OSCE. Let me therefore remind you about the wording of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality: “equal rights of women and men and the protection of their human rights are essential to peace, sustainable democracy, economic development and therefore to security and stability in the OSCE region”.

Equal rights of participation are not only about making the best use of the entire Nation’s human capital. Equal rights are also about full acceptance of the fact that we’re all equal, no matter of gender, culture or religion. And still, even though we subscribe to equality in theory, I dare say that there is not one single participating State where women and men have their rightful equality of opportunity today. Norway is commonly regarded as a front runner in gender issues. That may be so, but gender based discrimination is still common in my country, not the least when it comes to the question of equal payment for comparable jobs.

I do not say that OSCE governments willfully suppress women, the way that the Afghan Taliban regime did. On the contrary, much has been achieved in a limited time, but much is not enough. That is also why we deem it important that the OSCE continues to give sufficient priority to gender issues. That includes continued implementation and perhaps even a renewal of an OSCE action plan. It includes a will to place women in key positions in field missions, institutions and in the Secretariat. And it includes the work that ODIHR does to assist participating States whenever asked to do so.

Norway welcomes the direct assistance that ODIHR is providing to OSCE participating States in meeting gender equality and human rights obligations in the security sector in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

ODIHR has built a track record, particularly in the area of providing gender training to police officers, border guards and armed forces personnel, on security issues that predominantly affect women such as domestic violence and human trafficking.

This work is unique as it is undertaken within a larger human rights framework, as part of a new program on Human Rights, Gender and Security, and it crosses OSCE dimensions. The expertise comes from the Human Dimension but it is tailored to the needs and realities of the Politico-Military Dimension.

Mr. Chairman,

At times we hear critical questions and debates on where the OSCE may bring added value and warnings about avoiding duplications of what may be done equally well or even better by other organizations. That is a just debate. But it is not just when it comes to gender equality. This issue is so important that it has to be dealt with and worked for in every thinkable organization. That is also why we support the priority the Irish chairmanship has shown to this issue and the commitment by the incoming Ukrainian chairmanship to follow up. We are ready to support you.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for your attention.