



**PERMANENT DELEGATION  
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE OF  
MINISTERS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE, H.E. MARINA KALJURAND**

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile  
to the Permanent Council  
Vienna, 26 May 2016

Mr Chairman,

We greatly appreciate this opportunity to hear the priorities of the Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, Minister Kaljurand, and to exchange views with her.

Mr Chairman,

UN and Council of Europe conventions, as well as OSCE commitments, are our common heritage and safety net in challenging times. We need to recommit to these standards and to the spirit of co-operation they represent. Abiding by our international obligations and implementing our commitments are key to overcoming the challenges we face.

The Council of Europe, including its field offices, is essential in promoting judicial reform and democratic development in member states. A particular example is the impressive task carried out by the Council of Europe in Ukraine. The office has worked closely with Ukrainian authorities and civil society to implement the comprehensive joint Action Plan. The goal is clear, achieving common European standards in constitutional and judicial reform.

Mr Chairman,

Norway supports the intention of the Estonian chairmanship to strengthen the protection of human rights and the rule of law online. Freedom of opinion and expression as well as access to information, online and offline, are important priorities for my government. Our own Representative on Freedom of the Media,

Dunja Mijatović, has raised interesting issues for discussion that clearly show the opportunities and challenges the Internet represents. Internet freedom must be promoted and safeguarded, and we support the engagement of the Council of Europe in this.

Mr Chairman,

We welcome the promotion of gender equality as an Estonian priority. Combating violence against women and promoting political participation of women are goals shared by the Council of Europe and the OSCE. Therefore, we are pleased to note the intention to co-operate with the UN, the OSCE and other organisations in implementing gender mainstreaming. We regret it was not possible to reach consensus on an addendum to the Gender Action Plan in Belgrade and hope this can be achieved during the year.

Mr Chairman,

We also support Estonia in following up the Strategy for the Rights of the Child that was launched in the Council of Europe in April.

Mr Chairman,

Human rights, in particular freedom of opinion, expression, assembly and association, are under pressure in several participating States. OSCE commitments are not fully implemented. This makes multilateral co-operation more essential than ever. We must make good use of the Council of Europe and the OSCE as forums for genuine co-operation, including on how to strengthen the implementation of our commitments.

We congratulate Estonia on assuming the chairmanship and assure the Minister of our full support.

We look forward to the day when *all* European OSCE participating States are members of the Council of Europe.

Thank you, Mr Chairman