



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT ON THE 2023 PROGRAMME OUTLINE

As delivered by Minister Counsellor Henrik Malvik at the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 9 June 2022

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

I join others in thanking the Secretary General for presenting the Programme Outline for 2023.

Mr. Chair,

As we are now preparing to discuss the content and composition of the budget for 2023, we are yet again in a position where we have failed to agree on the budget for the current year. We are more than half a year behind – again – and it is harming the organisation – again.

We urge our fellow participating States to stop using the budget as a bargaining tool for pursuing narrowly defined national interests and come to an agreement. The micromanagement that some States are insisting on, often through selective application of unfounded requirements, is endangering our common security.

The delay is unfortunately also made possible by the nature of the OSCE's budget process. We need a budgetary process that is more efficient and responsible, and reform is urgently needed. Multi-year budgeting would be one helpful step in the right direction.

Mr. Chair, I can assure you that this is not a critique of the chairmanship, nor the Secretary General. I think that you are doing an excellent job. It is we, the participating States, that need to get our act together. That is, if we want this organisation to function properly.

Mr. Chair,

As the Secretary General pointed out, the OSCE was founded “to reduce the likelihood of conflict and to help alleviate its consequences when it does occur”. The consequences of the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine are immense, and its

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ramifications are felt well beyond the OSCE region. We appreciate that the OSCE is utilising its mandate to support Ukraine, to alleviate the situation, and to help rebuild.

At the same time, the global covid pandemic has not only taken lives and damaged our economies. It has also exacerbated the democratic backsliding and deterioration of human rights in our region. Whilst the demand for the OSCE's services is increasing, its budgets are in many instances cut to the bone. The result from more than a decade of zero nominal growth is a less effective organisation.

The widening gap between demand and supply has undermined our common security. A stronger OSCE is evidently needed. To be stronger and more effective, the organisation needs funding that is adequate, reliable, and predictable. What we have now is quite the opposite.

Mr. Chair,

Norway's primary objective remains to preserve and strengthen the programmatic and operational capacity of the OSCE. The Field Operations and Institutions are the spearheads of OSCE activity in support of participating States. The Secretariat also contributes to this end, first and foremost through its valuable support to other Executive Structures, in particular the Field Operations.

Parts of the Executive Structures have been underfunded for a long time. We are particularly concerned about the situation for ODIHR. Its budget is being strangled, despite broad support from participating States and a steadily increasing demand for its services. The insistence of some participating States to limit ODIHR's work, often with artificial justifications, is hampering the ability of other participating States to fulfil their commitments.

Mr. Chair,

Gender equality remains a key priority for Norway. To that end, we welcome that all Executive Structures include gender mainstreaming among their strategic priorities. Without equal and meaningful participation of women, and without proper consideration of gender aspects in our programme activities, we as an organisation cannot reach our full potential. There is no peace without women's active involvement and no security without gender equality.

Mr. Chair,

We share the Secretary General's conviction that the budgetary situation is not sustainable. There is an urgent need for providing the OSCE with the resources it needs to carry out the mandates that we, the States, have entrusted to it. As participating States, we collectively bear this responsibility.

Thank you.