



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

PC.DEL/1552/22
20 October 2022

ENGLISH only

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE
OFFICE FOR DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS (ODIHR)

Delivered by Ambassador Anne- Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 20 October 2022

Mr Chair,

We welcome director Mecacci back to the Permanent Council and thank him for his report. We also thank him and all his colleagues in ODIHR for their efforts in an extremely demanding year.

This includes assistance to the CIO in organizing the recent Warsaw Human Dimension Conference. We agree with the Director that a consensus around HDIM would have been preferable. Still, we found the Warsaw Human Dimension Conference to provide an important platform for civil society to meet each other and representatives of States. As the Director has stated, investing in dialogue is essential.

Civil society organisations and human rights defenders are indispensable voices to hold States to account for their human rights obligations. They were the first to notice the backsliding the Director mentioned - the erosion of human rights and rule of law principles and the shrinking civic space. And they were the first to warn. As a consequence, they face threats, harassment, violence, and incarceration. Particularly women human rights defenders continue to face multiple and intersecting forms of violence and discrimination.

As our State Secretary Mr. Vad Pettersen confirmed to Director Mecacci when they met in Warsaw during the conference, ODIHR can be assured of the continued financial and political support of Norway. Protection and promotion of human rights is a priority for the Norwegian government, especially considering the security challenges in the OSCE region. We look forward to the next report from ODIHRs monitoring mission in Ukraine.

Norway appreciates ODIHRs work on election observation, including the constant elaboration of the methodology. Norway has primarily been able to provide funding for election observation in ODA-approved countries. This will change somewhat from next year. In light of the developments we are seeing in many Western democracies, the

Government has proposed setting aside earmarked funds in 2023 for participation of Norwegian election observers in Western Europe and North America.

Norway also strongly supports ODIHRs emphasis on promoting gender equality, and we look forward to learning more about your new gender mainstreaming strategy.

Chair,

The lack of an approved budget is detrimental to the work of this organization, and Norway is deeply disappointed both by the willingness of some to hold the budget hostage to national interests and by the lack of willingness to compromise to find consensus. I would like to ask Director Mecacci for examples on how the system of monthly financial allocations affects ODIHR and impacts on its work.

As Chair of the Human Dimension Committee for almost two years, my delegation is in contact with ODIHR on a weekly basis. We highly appreciate this close cooperation, and thank both the Director, Mr. Mossop and all those in ODIHR in Warsaw that aid us in this demanding and important task. We look forward to the upcoming presentation of ODIHRs hate crime reporting work, and hope ODIHR will be able to present the Ukraine monitoring report to the Committee when it is published.

Thank you