



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS
BY THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF KYRGYZSTAN,
H.E. MR. RUSLAN KAZAKBAEV

Delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 30 September 2021

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Chair,

Norway joins others in welcoming Foreign Minister Kazakbaev to the Permanent Council. We appreciate this opportunity to learn first-hand about the current developments in Kyrgyzstan and on the domestic and foreign policy of his country.

We are concerned about the severe stress the pandemic has put on the Kyrgyz people and its institutions, and we applaud the efforts by the Kyrgyz people and government to overcome it. We are glad to see that the Kyrgyz vaccination programme is developing, partly due to the COVAX programme and support from both national and international organisations.

We have with interest followed the political developments in the country after the elections last autumn and in January, and we see that the situation is still challenging. Whereas we understand the need for constitutional reforms, we are worried that there was not enough time to debate before the passing of decisions. It is critical that reforms are implemented in a manner that promotes democracy and political stability, in addition to economic growth, and we will continue to follow the developments. We are happy to see that you continue to make use of OSCE tools and instruments, and find this important for every participating state's ability to fulfil its commitments. I was also glad to hear your focus on the environment and climate change. We agree that such challenges are highly relevant within the OSCE comprehensive concept of security.

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Free and fair elections and election campaigns are absolutely crucial in achieving political and economic success. Norway welcomes Kyrgyzstan's willingness to work with ODIHR in its ambition to strengthen democracy and the rule of law. It is with great pleasure we note that ODIHR has been invited to observe the parliamentary elections scheduled for 28 November. We trust that the Kyrgyz authorities will implement the recommendations published by ODIHR after the election and referendum monitoring in April this year. It is important that women are included on equal terms in political processes, including election campaigns.

Norway considers the OSCE's field operations to be prime assets of the OSCE, and we are glad to see that the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek has good and strengthened relations with Kyrgyz authorities.

This was not least confirmed by the meeting between President Japarov and the Head of the Programme Office, Ambassador Alexey Rogov, on 2 August, where they discussed priority cooperation areas between Kyrgyzstan and the Office. We welcome President Japarov's expression on that occasion of the high importance Kyrgyzstan attaches to cooperation with the OSCE, and his reiteration of the commitment to uphold and implement OSCE commitments.

The clashes on the border to Tajikistan earlier this year proved that it is important to also have a regional approach in Central Asia. We are pleased to see that the OSCE Field Operations in the region cooperate within the respective mandates. We believe that strengthened cooperation between the five Central Asian states could increase the impact of OSCE's activities in the region. Cross border contacts and trade will improve both security and prosperity, in Central Asia, and in the entire OSCE region. This is not least important considering the security challenges in Afghanistan and the potential spillover in Central Asia and beyond.

Chair,

We consider the OSCE Academy in Bishkek and the Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe to be remarkable examples of how the OSCE can contribute in a practical and meaningful way. Norway has supported both institutions financially for many years. The Academy continues to be a flagship for our organisation, contributing not only to individual students and academia, but also to regional cooperation and integration. We applaud how the academy has developed and improved academic programmes, and are grateful for your support as host country.

Finally, I would be interested in hearing your assessment of how the changes in Afghanistan may influence your country's foreign policy further. Your Deputy Head of the national security council Mr. Taalatbek Masadykov met with mullah Baradar in Kabul a week ago. Would you like to share with us your impression of that meeting? Do you think that your dependence on neighbouring great powers will increase or decrease as a result of potential spread of terrorism in the region? What could the OSCE do to support your country and your neighbors in this regard?

Again, thank you for giving us this opportunity to comment and raise questions.

Thank you.