



**NORWEGIAN MINISTRY  
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

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**STATEMENT BY NORWAY ON THE CLOSING SESSION  
OF THE OSCE HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE  
ON TOLERANCE AND NON-DISCRIMINATION**

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile, Tirana  
22 May 2013

**Closing plenary session.**

Mr. Chairman,

Two days of discussions on tolerance and non-discrimination are hardly enough time to cover all aspects of this challenging topic. Still, we have managed to put tolerance and non-discrimination higher up on the OSCE agenda. That is by itself a positive achievement.

Contributions by civil society have underlined the multitude of issues that has to be addressed.

I need not go into details about national shortcomings. This was eloquently expressed by Prime Minister Sali Berisha at the opening of the conference, when he underlined that our commitments exist – on paper – but that there are serious shortcomings in the implementation of them.

Mr. Chairman,

We have learned a lot about problems faced by religious minorities and their struggle to achieve respect for their freedom to practice. We should invite religious leaders to co-operate with governmental authorities in combating intolerance. Religious leaders are instrumental in this respect, also because their religion advocates respect and tolerance as a guiding principle.

Mr. Chairman,

We have heard a lot about problems faced by the LGBTI communities. We will continue to fight for their rights. And we will continue to voice our concern about the introduction of legislation that restricts the rights of LGBTI persons, be it in Russia or in any other OSCE participating State. Such legislation is in conflict with our OSCE commitments.

We will also work for a Ministerial decision in Kiev that reconfirms the fundamental human rights and a common obligation to fight discrimination on any ground.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation has yesterday and today made several references to recommendations from the international conference on right wing extremism and hate speech in Oslo last week. The conference in Oslo and this conference here in Tirana complement each other. And we need to address hate speech, intolerance and discrimination in every possible fora. An important message cannot be repeated too often.

I urge all participating States to follow up recommendations from both conferences, in the OSCE, in the United Nations as well as in other international organizations.

In this we need to support of the ODIHR. I therefore agree with my US colleague who in his statement argued in favour of increasing the budget allocations to the ODIHR.

Finally, allow me to thank our Chairman, the ODIHR and our Albanian host for having organized this conference and Albania also for excellent hospitality.

Thank you.