



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

STATEMENT BY NORWAY

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile to the 2011 Human Dimension implementation meeting, Warsaw 26 September 2011 - Opening Session

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

Let me first join previous speakers in expressing our gratitude to the Polish host government for its hospitality and to the Lithuanian Chair and to Director Lenarcic and his ODIHR team for all the hard work laid down in the preparations for this important meeting.

I would also like to thank Poland, speaking on behalf of the EU, for presenting views and positions which are representative also for the positions of my Government. This allows me to concentrate my remarks on a few issues that we deem to be particularly pertinent on this occasion.

Mr. Chairman,

this morning you –as well as other speakers – reminded us that last December, in Astana, our heads of State and government stated “categorically and irrevocably that the commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned”. That statement has lifted our co-operation on human dimension issues up to a new level and it makes this HDIM a first time experience when it comes to the realisation of these words from the Astana Summit declaration.

The 17 working sessions ahead of us are of equal importance for strengthening the human rights and democracy in the OSCE area. I and my delegation will participate actively during the days to come, and I will limit myself in this opening session to a few issues of particular importance for Norway:

Mr. Chairman,

1. Freedom of expression is a basic condition for democracy. A society where citizens are afraid of raising their voices is not a free society. We must stand together in protecting a free media and against imprisonment of journalists and human rights defenders.
2. Rule of law is another such basic condition from which there can be no exception. The only way to build a modern state is through rule of law.
3. We are indeed proud of the system developed by the OSCE when it comes to international election observation. We must actively use this system. But we must also work on improved procedures for follow ups of recommendations from the observation teams as suggested in the Corfu-process paper brought forward by Romania. And we must agree that these recommendations are built upon studies that can only be carried out by observation teams as plentiful as suggested by the ODIHR needs assessment teams.
4. National minorities, refugees, displaced persons as well as immigrants are vulnerable groups. They need our support and assistance. If neglected, individuals in these groups may develop sentiments and sub groups that can become a threat to our common security. The High Commissioner on National Minorities' has issued a very pertinent and useful set of recommendations on how to deal with these issues in interstate relations. Full respect for the Bolzano/Bozen recommendations would represent an important contribution to increased peace and stability in our region.
5. Hate crime and xenophobia have become head line news also in Norway after the July 22nd terror attacks in Oslo and at Utøya. In the years to come we must devote more attention to the challenges represented by hate crime and xenophobia .
6. Non-discrimination is a broad topic that also includes gender issues. There is a strong support in the OSCE for gender equality, but there is a lack of will in our organization to use the necessary measures to achieve our objectives. We must agree on an updating of our own action plan. But we must also take into consideration what each and every one of us participating states can do domestically to improve gender equality.

And finally, Mr. Chairman,

7. The fight against trafficking is crucial in order to stem cross-border criminal activities which nature is truly a threat to our societies. This is why my government funds several projects related to police and border control activities and why this is a high priority for us.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for your attention.