



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

PC.DEL/786/11
28 July 2011

ENGLISH only

**STATEMENT BY NORWAY ON THE TERRORIST ATTACKS IN
NORWAY ON 22 JULY 2011**

As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
28 July 2011

Mr. Chairperson,

Please allow me, on behalf of the Government and people of Norway, to express our most sincere and heartfelt thanks to the Lithuanian Chair and to all the previous speakers for all the warming expressions of sympathy and solidarity in the tragedy that has hit our country. Let me also add my personal thanks to all the colleagues that have showered us with e-mails, SMS-es, letters, hugs, and oral condolences, as well as many thoughtful messages in our condolence protocol.

Our Prime Minister, who has been on the ether media almost constantly since last Friday, has not failed to convey to the Norwegian people the overwhelming wave of sympathy and support expressed by his colleagues, not least in other OSCE participating States. It is no exaggeration to say that all these messages, including massive and spontaneous expressions of popular support, have given us much comfort and consolation in this situation of national mourning. They have also added a lot to the feeling of national unity and solidarity which has dominated the public sphere in Norway, by showing that our grief and despair are not only ours, but are shared by virtually the whole world, and in particular our closest friends, neighbors and partners.

Last Friday brutally reminded us that none of us are immune to violent terrorism - in this case targeting the heart of the government, as well as young political activists. It is also a sobering realization that it is virtually impossible to protect ourselves against violent extremists, and perhaps particularly the solitary madman, influenced by distorted ideas and ideologies, which so far seems to have been at

play here. There is in such situations often a tendency to try to curb extremism and violence by more control, including control of opinions expressed. But such methods are likely to fuel more extremism and violence, not less.

I am pleased to report to you that there is a virtually complete national consensus in Norway, clearly and repeatedly expressed by the Prime Minister and endorsed by all the other political leaders, that this shameful act of terrorism will not have the desired effect of changing our open and democratic society. On the contrary, we will have more democracy and more transparency and contact between the people and our elected leaders. The steadfastness of this resolve has already been demonstrated on several occasions, notably the memorial church service on Sunday and the big rally in Oslo on Monday, gathering more than 200.000 people. On both these occasions, members of the Royal family and of the Government found themselves in the midst of their people, without disturbing security measures.

Our King has expressed the feelings of the Nation as follows: "I maintain that freedom is stronger than fear. I maintain my belief in an open Norwegian democracy and society. I maintain my belief in our possibility to live freely and safely in our own country."

Once again, profound thanks to all of you for your sympathy and support. The focus in Norway is now on consolation and healing, a process in which the whole country participates. Your messages here today show us that you are also with us in this process.

The OSCE is also an important forum for cooperation in anti-terrorism activities. We have received numerous offers of assistance and cooperation, all highly appreciated, and we have gratefully accepted some offers of useful technical support. But the apparently isolated character of this atrocious act, without obvious operational links to any international networks, has limited the scope and the need for cooperation with other anti-terrorist authorities. We do look forward, however, to sharing experience and analysis of the whole background for this tragic event, including its possible relationship with public discourse and how to counterbalance extremist tendencies without limiting the freedom of expression, not least in the new media.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson