



**PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE**

Norway in response to the UNHCHR

Delivered by Ambassador Anne- Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 08.06.2023

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

We welcome the UN High Commissioner of Human Rights, Mr. Volker Türk, to the OSCE Permanent Council, and applaud his outreach to regional structures and organizations dealing with human rights, including the OSCE. We congratulate him and his staff on the 30th anniversary of the Vienna Declaration, establishing the Office of the High Commissioner.

This year also marks the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration is based on the fundamental notion that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.” No more, no less. Furthermore, twenty-five years ago, the Human Rights Commission united around the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

Mr. Chair,

Despite the anniversaries, these are challenging times. We are facing war, climate change, food insecurity and inequality. Human rights are under pressure in all parts of the world. The OSCE region is no exception. On the contrary.

Russia’s unprovoked and illegal invasion of Ukraine is also an attack on the rules-based international order. It undermines multilateral cooperation when we need it the most. This has devastating consequences.

We are witnessing massive destruction and suffering in Ukraine and hear about new human rights violations in this Council every week. There are many indications of

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systematic and large-scale war crimes. The most recent Moscow mechanism report described deportations of Ukrainian children, with clear violations of human rights and the Geneva conventions. At the same time, we also worry about the extreme pressure on civil society, free media, opposition, and minorities within the Russian Federation.

Mr. Chair,

We see increasing autocratic rule and shrinking civic space in many parts of the OSCE region. These actions are signs of weakness from leaders who feel threatened by fundamental freedoms, such as the freedom of association, of peaceful assembly, and of expression. This tendency is reflected in recent Moscow mechanism reports. The reports shed light on the crackdown on civil society and media freedom in Russia, and on the deteriorating situation for political prisoners in Belarus. The rights of LGBTI+ persons are also severely violated in several OSCE states.

Human rights defenders continue to speak up bravely, persistently, and peacefully. Their tireless efforts contribute to uphold the human rights in our region, and we need to take their voices seriously. The broad and free participation of civil society in OSCE meetings is a unique feature of our organization, and something we must protect and preserve.

The independent OSCE institutions The Office of Democracy and Human Rights (ODIHR), the High Commissioner of National Minorities (HCNM) and the Representative of Freedom of the Media (RFoM) carry out vital work on human rights. These institutions guide and help us Participating States to uphold our human rights commitments. Being sources of knowledge, experience and methodology, their impact goes beyond the OSCE region.

Mr. Chair,

The OSCE human dimension is one of three equally important pillars of security. Efforts to weaken the human dimension of the OSCE cause the weakening of our common security. Cooperation between the OSCE and relevant UN bodies to ensure the respect for democracy and human rights is both necessary and valuable.

We need to renew our joint commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and recall the consensus we had 75 years ago.

I wish High Commissioner Türk the best of luck in his endeavours.

Thank you.