



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

STATEMENT REGARDING the murder of
human rights lawyer Stanislav Markelov

As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
22 January 2009

Madame Chairperson,

Norway expresses her deepest regrets about the brutal murders of Stanislav Markelov and Anastasia Baburova in Moscow on 19 January 2009.

Mr. Markelov was a prominent human rights lawyer and human rights defender and will be remembered as a brave man who pursued numerous human rights cases throughout the Russian Federation including the Chechen Republic. He was representing, inter alia, Anna Politovskaya prior to her tragic death in October 2006.

Ms. Baburova, who was accompanying Mr. Markelov last Monday, was an independent journalist working for Novaya Gazeta, an independent Russian newspaper.

Madame Chairperson,

In its press release of 15 December 2008, the ODIHR stated that human rights defenders are under threat. The brutal murders in Moscow last Monday were another tragic example of that.

The OSCE must maintain and even strengthen its focus on the Rule of Law, the freedom of expression, freedom of the media and human rights defenders.

Norway sends her condolences to the victims' families and colleagues. Sadly, these murders are only the latest attacks on human right defenders, journalists and NGO activists in the OSCE area. Murders of lawyers and journalists are especially upsetting, because they also constitute attacks on the rule of law and the freedom of expression. We expect that prompt, independent and efficient investigation by the competent Russian authorities will bring all the perpetrators to justice.