



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**Statement in response to the Special Envoy of the
Chairman-in-Office, Ambassador Heikki Talvitie**

As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
13 March 2008

Mr. Chairman,

The Norwegian delegation joins others in welcoming the Special Envoy of the Chairman-in-Office, Ambassador Talvitie, to the Permanent Council, and thanks him for his report.

Norway welcomes the active contribution of the Finnish Chairmanship to help defusing crises and preventing and resolving conflicts in the OSCE area. Ambassador Talvitie's recent visits to Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine bear testimony to the active and ambitious involvement of the Chairman-in Office. He may count on our full support in his continued endeavours.

Mr. Chairman,

Norway remains deeply troubled by the situation in Armenia, and our discussions in the Council and subsequent informal meeting last week have not done much to allay our concerns. Neither did the release of an interim report from ODIHR detailing serious irregularities both in the conduct of the elections and in the subsequent recounts of votes and handling of complaints. This report, which still is preliminary, painted a much more doubtful general picture of the elections than the first, very preliminary assessments.

We expect full cooperation and a constructive response from the Armenian government to ODIHR's interim election monitoring report. As things stand, complaints and observed irregularities must be followed up, so that a full and fair picture of the whole election process can be established, and serious irregularities redressed.

And when the final report is issued, it will be important to draw lessons from this experience for future elections.

Mr. Chairman,

We once again urge the Armenian authorities to immediately lift all the provisions of the State of Emergency, including and not least the restrictions on the media. We would also like to reiterate our appeal to all political forces to return to dialogue and refrain from violence and other unlawful acts.

We deeply regret the tragic loss of life along the Line of Contact in the Nagorno Karabakh-conflict. We strongly support the work of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs and call upon both sides to strictly abide by the provisions of the 1995 Arrangement on strengthening the ceasefire. Like the Co-Chairs, Norway would like to reiterate that there is no military solution to this conflict. We appeal to the parties to settle conflict peacefully through the ongoing negotiations.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me now turn to the Finnish Chair's very laudable initiatives to get the stalled contacts and negotiations on Transnistria back on track, through visits by the Chairman-in-Office in mid-January, and the follow-up visits by Ambassador Talvitie at the end of February. I would like to recall that Norway's position is clear; we firmly believe that the Transnistrian conflict must be resolved through peaceful negotiations, with respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova. The parties to the conflict must resume their talks, preferably in the 5+2 format. If this fails to materialise, it is of utmost importance that 3+2 negotiations remain ongoing and that bilateral contacts between the parties to the conflict continue.

Finally, we would like to wish the Finnish Chair and Ambassador Talvitie every possible success in their further endeavours.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.