



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
NORWAY, AMBASSADOR METTE KONGSHEM, IN RESPONSE TO
H.E. KASSYMZHOMART TOKAEV, MINISTER OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN**

**OSCE Permanent Council
27 October 2006**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

Norway warmly welcomes the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, H.E. Kassymzhomart Tokaev, to this Special Permanent Council. We highly value the broadened involvement by Kazakhstan in the activities of the OSCE and the importance it attaches to keeping participating States informed about developments in the country in regard to its programme on democratic reforms. Today we thank the Foreign Minister for providing us with further information on Kazakhstan's expressed commitments to pursue democratic reforms, and for his outline of the priorities of Kazakhstan with regard to its candidacy for the Chairmanship of the OSCE.

Norway holds its relationship with Kazakhstan, both bilateral and in multilateral fora as here in the OSCE, in the highest regard. Kazakhstan is steadily becoming a more active partner on the international arena. In ensuring long-term security and stability in Central Asia, Kazakhstan plays a leading and important role. Norway is ready to take on a partnership with Kazakhstan in areas of common concern and common interest.

Mr. Chairman,

Kazakhstan's success in pursuing market reforms, steady economic growth, religious and ethnic harmony, provides a solid basis for further democratization. Norway follows the work of the State Commission on Development and

Concretization of the Programme of Democratic Reforms with great interest. We look forward to receiving further information about the progress and implementation of concrete measures with regard to the ongoing reform programme in core areas such as good governance, rule of law and freedom of the media, and to the comprehensive proposals for democratic reforms 2007-2008 anticipated to be drafted by the State Commission in December this year. It is expected that stated policies will be followed up by concrete political measures. We are encouraged by Foreign Minister Tokaev's statement this morning that Kazakhstan wants to be a genuine democratic country.

Reform measures promoting the freedom of assembly are one of the key areas where further political decisions are necessary in order to implement democratic reforms in Kazakhstan. Norway therefore welcomes the recent information that Kazakhstan's Parliament passed amendments to the Law on Elections in its first reading, which would remove the ban introduced in April 2005 on holding peaceful assemblies and demonstrations during the period between the closure of the polls and the announcement of results. We trust that the Parliament will confirm these amendments in its second reading next month.

Mr. Chairman,

Three years ago Kazakhstan announced its aspirations to take on a leading role in the OSCE. Norway welcomes these aspirations as an opportunity both for further democratization in Kazakhstan itself, for the Central Asian region and for the OSCE.

Norway has duly noted the priorities outlined by Foreign Minister Tokaev with regard to a future Chairmanship by Kazakhstan. We share his view of the importance of tolerance and non-discrimination issues for the promotion of comprehensive security in the OSCE area. His outline will be carefully studied by my authorities.

In order for Kazakhstan to receive international support for its bid for the OSCE chairmanship, it is for Kazakhstan to demonstrate that it is ready and able to commit to full compliance with all OSCE values and standards. It is of utmost importance that a country holding the Chairmanship of the OSCE represents the OSCE standards and commitments with legitimacy. We hope that an intensive effort, in close co-operation with civil society and OSCE structures, will put Kazakhstan on an ambitious and unwavering course towards implementation of its programme of democratic reforms and thereby attain its goals in the international community.

I thank you.