



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY
CHAIRMAN OF THE CABINET OF MINISTERS AND MINISTER FOR
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF TURKMENISTAN, H.E. RASHID MEREDOV**

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 27 February 2014

Mr. Chairman,

I thank Foreign Minister Meredov for his statement and I appreciate his comprehensive approach to the OSCE concept of security. I note a strong emphasis on second dimension issues, with a particular focus on energy, transport and the environment. These are priorities I understand, being myself a representative of an oil and gas producing and exporting country.

Mr. Chairman,

As Chair of the Human Dimension Committee, allow me to make a few remarks on human dimension issues.

First, Mr. Chairman, I would welcome a stronger involvement of Turkmenistan in issues related to human rights, democracy and good governance. These are topics of great importance to all of us, not least to participating States with challenges typical for countries in unstable surroundings and with a short history of independence.

Turkmenistan is – as far as I know – the only OSCE participating State that does not regularly attend the annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw. This is unfortunate because the HDIM is an arena for a broad and mutually beneficial dialogue on issues at the heart of our organisation's agenda.

It is unfortunate also because I would like to learn more about ongoing endeavors in Turkmenistan with regard to third dimension issues. One example is the development of a National Human Rights Action Plan for Turkmenistan. I am confident that I speak on behalf of many around this table when I encourage our Turkmen colleagues to update the members of the Human Dimension Committee on the status of this work.

Allow me also to welcome Turkmenistan's efforts to improve its electoral system, to increase the role of political parties and to diversify the media landscape.

Mr. Chairman, to develop a sustainable democracy is not done overnight. Active participation in OSCE third dimension activities will help speed up the process.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I take this opportunity to ask Foreign Minister Meredov for assistance in clarifying the situation of Mr. Gulgeldy Annaniyazov. He received refugee status in Norway in 2002, where he has been living with his wife and three children. While visiting his native Turkmenistan in 2008 he was arrested. He was charged with illegal entry into Turkmenistan and sentenced to 11 years in prison. His family has since been unable to obtain information about his situation. We hope that Mr. Annaniyazov might soon be released from prison and, if he so wishes, be allowed to return to his family in Norway.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman