



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

STATEMENT BY NORWAY
As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik
to the OSCE Permanent Council
under the agenda item Report by ODIHR,
in exercise of the right of reply
Vienna, 28 October 2010

Mr. Chairperson,

Ambassador Azimov carefully omitted to name any names in his strong criticism of certain delegations' positions, but I strongly suspect that a statement I made in the Review Conference three days ago was one of those he had in mind.

If that was so, I must point out that what Ambassador Azimov said, was a total misrepresentation of what I said. I have never suggested that there should be different standards and criteria in the observation of different countries. On the contrary, one of the main reasons why we value ODIHR's election observations so highly is their objectivity, with very thorough and well-documented reports, allowing everyone to draw their own conclusions.

I note that even today, we have heard statements supported by the overwhelming majority of participating States praising ODIHR for the high quality of its election observation, which is also held in very high regard internationally. I therefore wonder how many might share Ambassador Azimov's assessment.

What I wanted to stress in my previous statement, which is on record (RC.DEL/295/10), was that in order to use scarce resources in the most efficient manner, the modalities of every election observation mission, such as numbers and special focus, must be tailor made to fit the particular circumstances prevailing in that country.

In response to repeated accusations about double standards, I also wish to point out that Norway in no way sets herself above receiving recommendations and good advice from our institutions. After our last election, ODIHR's observation report was fed into the very thorough review and evaluation exercise which takes place after every election, and it is still the subject of very careful consideration and follow-up. We also provided extensive reports on our follow-up to the Human

Dimension Committee, to the Permanent Council, and to the Anniversary Conference in Copenhagen. I vividly encourage other countries, both East and West of Vienna, to do the same.

My delegation was aligned with the EU statement, which we fully support. While I have the floor, I would like, though, to mention an additional point which was raised in Ambassador Lenarcic' report, which I noted with some concern. We very much welcomed the very open and unconditional invitation to observe the upcoming elections in Belarus. I was therefore alarmed to hear that ODIHR might not be able to respond to that invitation in the way it deserves, with a full-fledged observation mission, due to an unusual high number of election observation mission earlier this year. I therefore appeal to the all parties concerned to solve the issue of financing, so that we can send another very successful observation mission to Belarus

Thank you, Mr Chairperson