

**STATEMENT  
ON BEHALF OF THE LIKEMINDED COUNTRIES  
CANADA, ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN,  
NORWAY AND SWITZERLAND**

**on the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons**

**As delivered by the Norwegian Ambassador,  
H.E. Mette Kongslem  
to the 561<sup>st</sup> Permanent Council, Vienna  
30 June 2005**

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the likeminded countries, Canada, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Switzerland and Norway, I would like to congratulate Ambassador Vollebaek and the other members of the Panel of Eminent Persons on a comprehensive, compact and well-written final report and recommendations on "Strengthening the Effectiveness of the OSCE" and also for their thought-provoking presentations this morning. Let me pause here and, on behalf of the likeminded countries, convey our deep condolences to the Russian Federation on the death of Ambassador Afanasievsky. His contribution to the report has been of great value. Our thoughts are with his family.

Mr. Chairman, the likeminded countries recognise the achievement in producing this document in such a short period of time, fully in keeping with the deadline set in Ministerial decision no. 16/04. We furthermore welcome the ability of the Panel to achieve consensus on its recommendations. As such, it provides participating States and the Chairmanship with the materials to move towards concrete decisions and implementation. It is now up to the participating States to prove that the discussion on the follow-up of the recommendations can be as productive as the Panel's deliberations and hopefully also just as swift, while retaining the consensus based approach. It is indeed important that we keep up the momentum which has been created by the report.

We will, however, all need some time to digest, assess and discuss the content of the report before taking a position on which recommendations we would like to see implemented. The report may also inspire additional ideas. The likeminded countries are however encouraged to see that the report raises many of the same concerns which have been expressed by our delegations. The need for a streamlined structure, a Secretary General with a clearly delineated role , and the focus on the work in the field, are all issues we look forward to explore.

Mr. Chairman,

Reform of the OSCE has been thoroughly discussed here in Vienna for years. The report of the Panel of Eminent Persons will hopefully contribute to finalizing this process. Proposals, alternatives and issues are now on the table, allowing us to focus our discussion. Time has come to make political choices and decide how the role of the OSCE can be enhanced. This was indeed also the idea behind the initiative taken by the likeminded last autumn, when we proposed to have this Panel of Eminent Persons established.

What will now be important is how best to structure our work in dealing with this report, including the organizational modalities of the High Level Consultations and the road map towards the Ministerial Meeting in December in Ljubljana. In this connection we noted with interest specific ideas which were voiced at the ASRC last week on the need for a concrete, result-oriented process with a clear time-frame. It is also important that capitals are involved on a high level, and that an efficient structure, including a working group or similar structure, is established. In our view we should strive to achieve a substantive result on reform at the Ministerial Council in Ljubljana. An endless debate on reform will make this Organization less effective in addressing the issues and challenges that are calling for our response, and for our ability to seek solutions to outstanding problem areas.

I thank you.