



NORWEGIAN STATEMENT ON UZBEKISTAN

*Permanent Council, Vienna
May 18, 2006*

Mr. Chairman,

Norway aligns herself with the statement made by the distinguished ambassador of Austria on behalf of the European Union.

In our national capacity we would like to underline and add the following:

Norway recalls with deep concern the tragic events that took place one year ago in Andijan. We deplore the negative development in the field of human rights in general including the further handling of the events in Andijan, and the very unfortunate expulsion of UNHCR last month.

In April this year Norway adopted a weapons embargo and travel restrictions for 12 Uzbek citizens in line with the measures implemented by the European Union.

Like others we commend ODIHR for providing the report on the monitoring of last fall's trials in Uzbekistan. We have taken due note of the conclusions and recommendations, not least the valid concerns regarding the defendants' rights to a lawyer in pre-trial stages and the right to effective legal counsel.

Norway is eager to see a positive democratic and economical development in Uzbekistan for the benefit of its people. We therefore suggest enhancing ODIHR's dialogue with the Uzbek authorities on the basis of the report, including further investigation of those parts which are unclear or disputed and how to implement recommendations contained in the report.

In closing, we would like to underline the importance of an early decision in renewing the mandate of the OSCE Centre in Tashkent without changes. A constructive and fruitful cooperation between Uzbekistan and the OSCE is of importance for the stability of the whole region.

I thank you.