



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NORWAY,
AMBASSADOR METTE KONGSHEM
IN RESPONSE TO H.E. KAREL DE GUCHT, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF
BELGIUM
OSCE Permanent Council, Vienna
12 January 2006

Mr. Chairman,

It is an honour for me, on behalf of Norway, to warmly welcome our new Chairman-in-Office, H.E. Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht, to the Permanent Council. Norway has always been a strong supporter of the OSCE, and we will continue to make full use of this Organization. We therefore look forward to work actively with the Belgian Chairmanship.

This is also a good opportunity to express our appreciation to the outgoing Slovenian Chairmanship for the leadership they provided in building security through cooperation. They started out facing big challenges, which they actually made into their priorities : we will remember the triple R agenda – revitalize, reform, rebalance. They brought the OSCE forward in all these three areas.

Looking ahead today, we welcome that the Belgian Chairmanship in defining its priorities for 2006 is seeking continuity. Streamlining and bringing more coherence to ongoing activities rather than expanding our agenda is a wise course to take. We should remain faithful to our core activities, define our priorities, and adapt them where necessary to new circumstances. We should maintain an open mind about the way we are working, our approach must be operational and inclusive. The goal must be to achieve concrete results, not only words, seminars and conferences. But dialogue must prevail. The OSCE was created on the basis of trust, confidence and a belief in our region. This is a heritage we must carry forward. Mistrust is our enemy.

Mr. Chairman,

Norway strongly supports the new Chairmanship`s objective of promoting rule of law across the OSCE region and fighting organized crime. In many countries criminal activity, corruption and intimidation continue to obstruct stability and

progress. The answer is effective law enforcement, respect for the rule of law and institutions responsible for upholding it. We fully concur with the Belgian Chairmanship that fighting organized crime requires an effective criminal justice system.

In our view the activities of the OSCE in this sector could benefit from increased coordination. Our approach should be more systematic, comprehensive and cross-dimensional. Human rights must be upheld. The criminal justice system is like a chain which is no stronger than its weakest link. Norway is ready to work with the Chairmanship towards this goal.

Fighting organized crime is also fighting all kinds of trafficking, be it in human beings, drugs or weapons. Criminal networks take advantage of people in poverty and in search of a better life. Deprivation and economic hardship is perhaps the main root cause of human trafficking. We welcome that combating trafficking in persons has become, and rightly so, a priority for successive OSCE chairmanships. Good work has been done and the organization has positioned itself in the forefront internationally on this issue. In 2006 our attention should be on re-trafficking, on children and on trafficking in forced labour.

Mr. Chairman,

There will be no lasting peace and stability without economic development. We must focus more on the economic and environmental dimension. The Strategy for this dimension is in place, but more needs to be done in practical terms to strengthen our response to economic and environmental challenges. We must be more operational and provide real assistance to participating States to meet those challenges. Transportation is a very interesting issue. Norway for her part, as expressed by my foreign minister in Ljubljana, will be focusing on the linkages between transport and environment. From our experience in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council we have learned that cooperation between participating States and sub-regions can produce significant benefits for a region. We are ready to share that experience.

Mr. Chairman,

In Ljubljana we agreed on a roadmap for reform. It was a good compromise. We must now continue this important work in order to increase effectiveness and adapt this Organization to new international circumstances. We must regain the sense of a common purpose: that we share a common perception of the goals and principles of the Organization.

In our reform work we must also focus on necessary efforts and possible mechanisms that can contribute to the settlement of unresolved conflicts in the OSCE area. And more attention and resources must be channelled towards the

Central Asian countries. We should also consider innovative ways and possible mechanisms to deal more effectively with the many challenges across all three dimensions which the participating States in Central Asia are facing. Their problems are our problems. Our focus must be on building operational capacities to deal effectively with transnational threats.

Mr. Chairman,

The role of the OSCE in the Western Balkans will remain important. This Organization should continue to consolidate ongoing activities while promoting solutions to issues with regional significance. The OSCE field presences should continue to contribute in partnership with other organizations to reform processes and Euro-Atlantic integration in the region. In Kosovo, the OSCE must stand ready to sustain its contribution and continue its long-term engagement, building on its expertise and extensive field presence, also after the completion of the future status process.

Mr. Chairman,

The OSCE shall continue to forge ahead, and to do so in close cooperation with other regional organizations. But it will be particularly useful for the OSCE to improve its cooperation with the UN within the framework of its conflict prevention capacities in line with the call in UN Security Council Resolution 1631 adopted last autumn.

Mr. Chairman,

All our efforts will require that we are ready to provide the OSCE with the necessary resources to carry out the decisions taken. Or, rather, we should agree on the necessary financing before those decisions are made.

The OSCE is an inclusive, cooperative security organization. No participating State can expect always to obtain what it sees as the ideal solution. We all have to live with compromises. But those compromises are more easily reached when the discussion is perceived as open and inclusive. We should strive for that.

Thank you.