



**PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE
SWEDISH CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE**

Delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 14 January 2021

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Madame Chair,

We join others in welcoming H.E. Minister Ann Linde to the Permanent Council for the first time in her capacity as chairperson-in-office.

Norway supports the Swedish priorities. We look forward to cooperating with you on a wide range of issues. Let me here just mention a few.

In the region our organisation covers, there are still unresolved conflicts. Though realism may tell us that the chances of resolving them before the Ministerial Council in December are small, we, as participating states, bound by our agreed commitments and the Helsinki Charter, cannot allow ourselves not to continue working towards easing the burdens on the people affected.

I will also commend you for placing gender equality high on our agenda. The first sentence in the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality states unequivocally: "The peace and welfare of the world require maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields." Sixteen years later, we as an organisation as well as the 57 participating states are still far from reaching this goal. We will assist you in your continued efforts to integrate gender equality in all areas of work of our organisation.

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We are especially proud to have been trusted with the responsibility of chairing the Human Dimension Committee for 2021. We still have a way to go to implement the commitments in the human dimension. Discussions will be demanding in 2021, but we still aim for constructive and interesting discussions in the HDC, building on the wish to find common ground and to move the agenda forward on relevant issues. I am grateful for valuable input from several participating states already on how to achieve this.

Our Swedish neighbours take up the mantle after our Albanian friends conducted their chairmanship in an impressive way in the extraordinary year of 2020. As last year so explicitly proved, the Swedish chairpersonship may and will meet unexpected challenges, where the ongoing dialogue with all participating states will be crucial. We are certain that the organisation is in good hands and we look forward to stand with you in striving towards meaningful multilateral cooperation.

Let me also welcome Poland in the OSCE troika and thank you too for the readiness to fill the big Albanian-Swedish shoes next year.

The value of this organisation manifests itself clearly through the work of the organisation in the field. It is vital that the executive bodies of the OSCE has both the mandate, the tools and the funding to fulfil their tasks. For the OSCE to stay relevant, the autonomous institutions must also stay strong and we will continue to support them.

Our organisation is living through difficult times, but the need for it has not diminished. Norway is ready to work for increased security in all three dimensions together with the chair and with all participating states in 2021.

Thank you