



**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO H.E. MS. URSULA PLASSNIK
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF AUSTRIA,**

**As delivered by Ambassador Mette Kongslem, Permanent Representative of
Norway to the OSCE, at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 2 February 2006**

The Norwegian Delegation joins others in warmly welcoming the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Austria, H.E. Ursula Plassnik to the Permanent Council. We have listened with great interest to her statement on OSCE and EU partnerships and fully agree that the overall goal must be to strengthen co-operation between the two organizations in such a way that they can complement each other in their efforts to ensure regional security and stability. There are already numerous examples of constructive co-operation. Our organizations share common values, interests and concerns, and together we should be able to achieve further results in tackling the "new challenges", thereby strengthening stability and democracy in Europe, and do so from innovative angles.

Norway for her part sees further potential for synergies between the EU and the OSCE. This organization will profit from an EU committed to reinforcing its engagement and to work with the OSCE with its many foreign policy instruments. Minister Plassnik's suggestions to develop a joint EU-OSCE document identifying issues of common interest is indeed welcome.

OSCE's core functions are fully in line with EU's objectives for its Neighbourhood Policy. Furthermore, the European Union's Security Strategy is based on a broad approach, with an emphasis on conflict prevention through the value-based use of the many EU instruments and resources. The aims of the Security Strategy correspond with those of the OSCE, although the means at our disposal may differ.

Co-operation on the ground between our organizations is crucial. Also in this respect is the OSCE a unique institutional partner for the EU. Both organizations will stand to gain from complementary efforts. This has worked very well in the Balkans. For Norway co-operating with the EU in all ESDP

operations in the Balkans has been extremely useful: We participate in the police mission and ALTHEA in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and we took part in the former operations Concordia and Proxima. Norway also welcomes EU's Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and the Ukraine and appreciate that this operation will be duly co-ordinated with OSCE efforts.

The OSCE is a very cost-effective organization for co-operation, and together with other international and regional organizations it constitutes an important instrument in our common toolbox for addressing transnational threats and new challenges to our societies and to solve the conflicts that still exists in our area. But for the OSCE to be put to maximum use and be proactive, we must create a stronger sense of common purpose, reach consensus on the Organization's future functions and priorities and adapt the working structures accordingly. Reform should reinforce the OSCE as a key promoter of comprehensive security in Europe. Together with the EU and other participating States, Norway would like to look at how we can make what we have even more effective. Reform is not unique to the OSCE, such processes are taking place in many organizations. Few if any are fully adapted to taking on today's challenges. That is also why common and concerted efforts are called for : the multilateral approach is our best hope for solving common problems. We must move the multilateral agenda forward, within organizations as well as between them.

Mr. Chairman,

My government is an active supporter of the OSCE. We will make the utmost use of our present European relationships and consider our participation in this organization as part of our active European policy. Our dialogue with the EU on foreign and security policy issues is being pursued also within the OSCE, which we highly value and consider very useful. Our focus will be on issues of mutual interest and on opportunities which we can help bring into reality.

Mr. Chairman,

In closing Norway would like to wish Austria success for its EU presidency. And as the OSCE host country I am pleased to express our gratitude to H.E. Ms. Plassnik for the excellent working conditions we enjoy here in Vienna.

Thank you.