



**PERMANENT DELEGATION  
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS OF  
THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE, H.E. DIDIER REYNDERS**

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile  
to the Permanent Council,  
Vienna, 12 March 2015

Mr Chairman,

We greatly appreciate this opportunity to hear the priorities of the Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and to exchange views with him.

We are particularly pleased to see that political consultations and coordination with other international organisations, including the OSCE, is high on the list of Belgian priorities for its chairmanship. Our two organisations share many goals, not least concerning human rights, the rule of law and democracy. We work on many of the same issues.

The continued lack of implementation of important commitments makes it necessary to stress these commitments in Strasbourg, Geneva and Vienna, through discussions, dialogue and concrete projects. A certain duplication need not be a cause for concern, as long as we inform each other of our plans and activities. Greater cooperation between the Council of Europe and the OSCE, as well as the UN, will help us achieve our objectives.

This applies both at headquarter and field level.

Mr Chairman,

The recent terrorist attacks in Paris and Copenhagen were attacks on the freedom of expression and the freedom of the media, and they were manifestations of hatred and intolerance. These issues are already high on the agenda of our organisations, including in the OSCE Human Dimension Committee, which is currently chaired by Norway. We support the initiative of the Council of Europe to strengthen their work on combating extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism. The OSCE has valuable experience in this. There is scope for cooperation that will enhance the efforts of both organisations.

Mr Chairman,

The crisis in and around Ukraine demands many different forms of response. The Council of Europe and the OSCE each have mandates and expertise that can contribute to long-term solutions. Coordination and cooperation must be at the core of the work in both organisations.

Mr Chairman,

The recent launch of the Guidelines on Freedom of Association, elaborated jointly by the Council of Europe's Venice Commission and ODIHR, is a good example of how the expertise of both organisations can be combined. The launch took place during the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, marking the relevance of these guidelines to all three organisations.

Mr Chairman,

Strengthening human rights protection is another priority we fully support. Belgium will focus on human rights violations based on gender, including violence against women. A lot of effort was put into this topic last year by the Swiss OSCE chairmanship, and we hope this can be carried forward this year. Norway is preparing ratification of the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and we expect to ratify it this year.

Let me conclude by ensuring Minister Reynders of the full support of Norway during his chairmanship.

Thank you, Mr Chairman