



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

PC.DEL/1113/23
8 September 2023

ENGLISH only

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO
THE PRESIDENT OF THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 07 September 2023

Mr. Chair,

We join others in congratulating the newly elected President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Pia Kauma. We warmly welcome her to the Permanent Council and thank her for her presentation. Norway highly appreciates the work of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the important role it plays in bringing together parliamentarians from the participating States, thus enhancing the political and popular legitimacy of the OSCE as a whole. The OSCE has over many years contributed to stability, confidence-building, and peace in our part of the world. In the difficult security policy situation we are experiencing, not least on the backdrop of the Russian aggression in Ukraine, it is thus of high importance to safeguard the organization, as well as the principles on which it is built.

As the President rightly noted, the consensus principle is being abused by some Participating States. This sometimes prevents States from making full use of the OSCE toolbox. Parliamentarians can create understanding at home for the need for all Participating States to make use of available OSCE tools, and for the need to allow the same for neighboring States.

Further, if we are serious about the OSCE and value its contributions, the Unified Budget cannot be used as a bargaining tool. We would ask the parliamentarians of the Assembly to help developing the understanding of national parliaments of the need for a robust budget for the OSCE to be able to fulfill its mandated tasks. In general, we urge all participating states to return to constructive discussions in good faith on this and other structural issues.

In providing legitimacy for government, elections are an essential element of democracy. Observation of elections is an important instrument for assisting states in their efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, and the role of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is significant. It is also crucial that the OSCE Parliamentary

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Assembly continues to bring parliamentarians representing all our countries and every political view together to uphold a dialogue and build confidence. We highly value that the Assembly and its president speaks clearly out against threats to peace and democracy and against unfulfilled commitments.

Thank you.