



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
NORWAY, MR. ERLING SKJØNSBERG, IN RESPONSE TO H.E. ACTING
PRESIDENT OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC, MR. KURMANBEK BAKIEV

OSCE Permanent Council, Vienna
30 May 2005

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister Rupel,

Norway is honoured to welcome H.E. Acting President Bakiev to the Permanent Council. We have listened carefully to his account of the March events in Kyrgyzstan, as well as to his views on the country's future prospects. We highly appreciate the fact that the Acting President meets the OSCE Permanent Council, and we see this as a token of the importance of the co-operation between Kyrgyzstan and the OSCE.

The OSCE has taken the leading role in the international efforts in Kyrgyzstan, thereby demonstrating that flexibility is one of the main strengths of this organisation. The chairmanship shouldered this responsibility in a commendable manner. An OSCE Workplan has been developed in close consultation with the Kyrgyz side. Norway welcomes the approval of the workplan by the Kyrgyz Government. The Workplan addresses the most pressing challenges, as well as those of a longer-term perspective. We support the priorities of the plan. Norway is prepared to contribute to the funding of projects within the framework of the plan. We intend to make a formal pledge within a few days.

The immediate priorities are re-establishing law and order throughout the country, political dialogue and ensuring free and fair presidential elections. ODIHR has developed a number of recommendations for improvements in advance of the presidential elections in July. We encourage Kyrgyz authorities to take advantage of the expertise of ODIHR and do their utmost in ensuring that the elections comply with OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections.

After the recent tragic events in Uzbekistan, many people have crossed the border into Kyrgyzstan. We emphasise the importance of providing for the safety and humanitarian needs of these refugees. We acknowledge the efforts of Kyrgyz authorities with assistance

from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in this regard. International conventions and commitments regarding refugees must be respected.

Mr. Chairman,

Democracy is a crucial prerequisite for Kyrgyzstan's social and economic progress. Norway fully concurs with the assurances of the Chairman-in-Office that the OSCE is ready to assist Kyrgyzstan on its path towards stability, prosperity and democracy.

I thank you.