



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY  
TO THE OSCE

Statement in response  
to the Constitutional Referendum in Belarus

Delivered by Ambassador Anne- Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council  
Vienna, 27 January 2022

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr Chair,

Let me start by thanking the Belarusian colleague for his orientation to the Council. It is important to have a dialogue about these issues within the OSCE.

We strongly believe that Belarus would have benefitted from the legal support ODIHR can provide when drafting changes to the Belarusian constitution and urge the authorities to make use of all parts of the OSCE toolbox.

The planned constitutional referendum would take place against the backdrop of widespread repression. This raises serious concerns about the legitimacy of the process and the proposed constitutional changes. Such a development could threaten to destabilise the situation even more.

We believe that Belarus urgently needs an inclusive political process aimed at solving the current crisis in the country. The planned referendum is not that.

Let me therefore call on the Belarusian authorities to engage in a genuine dialogue with the democratic forces in the country, as well as to release all political prisoners.

Thank you