



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO RUSSIAN CONCERNS ABOUT THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD IN NORWAY

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council 30 October 2014

Mr Chairman,

I thank the Russian delegation for bringing up an issue of concern in my country. Voicing concerns about the situation in this or that area in other OSCE participating States is an important aspect of the work of the OSCE. It is an important aspect of assisting each other in implementing our OSCE commitments.

I am however neither able nor willing to discuss ongoing individual cases. If I did, I would most likely violate rules and regulations governing this particular family's right to privacy. Individual cases must be pursued in direct contact with the concerned Norwegian authorities.

I will therefore limit myself to a few general remarks.

Chairman,

From time to time Norwegian child welfare authorities feel compelled to take children away from their parents. They are mandated to do so when it is necessary in order to safeguard the rights and the wellbeing of the child – or children – in question.

Such a decision is never taken lightly and is – I would believe – rarely left uncontested by the families concerned.

Nobody in Norway would argue that our child welfare authorities never make mistakes. Norwegian media quite often ask critical questions about their work, including about individual cases. We welcome this.

But I would warn against any attempt to create the impression that the child welfare authorities treat families of non-Norwegian origin differently from families of Norwegian origin.

The Russian delegation refers to OSCE commitments on respecting the rights of parents to raise their children according to their own beliefs and traditions. We do not question this right. I must however underline that Norwegian laws apply to everybody in Norway, irrespective of their origin or citizenship, including of course laws on protecting the rights and the wellbeing of children.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.