



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS FOR SECURITY AND MULTILATERAL ISSUES OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC, MR IVO ŠRÁMEK

As delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad
to the Permanent Council
Vienna, 1 June 2017

Mr Chair,

We welcome this opportunity to hear the priorities of the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, and to exchange views with Deputy Minister Ivo Šrámek.

The Council of Europe is vital in strengthening respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law. We support the priorities outlined by the Deputy Minister, including the focus on implementation of commitments. We must all comply with our human rights obligations, also during challenging security situations.

Our two organisations complement each other, and we believe contact and co-operation is useful at all levels, particularly between field offices. All countries should make full use of the expertise and professional advice both organisations offer.

Mr Chair,

The European Court of Human Rights is a unique mechanism. The number of cases before the court is increasing, and it is important to improve the court's ability to tackle their caseload. We appreciate the intention of the chairmanship to follow up recent conferences and other on-going work to improve the functioning of the court.

We support giving priority to protecting the human rights of persons belonging to vulnerable or disadvantaged groups. Fighting discrimination and intolerance is important for ensuring human rights and for strengthening security and stability. Civil society is a valuable partner in these efforts and should be considered an asset by governments, not a threat.

We also commend the chairmanship for its intention to further strengthen the efforts of the Council of Europe to promote gender equality. This should obviously be a priority for both our organisations.

Combating extremism and radicalization that can lead to terrorism is another common goal. We welcome the planned co-operation with the Austrian OSCE chairmanship on this and on internet freedom.

Thank you, Mr Chair