



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

**STATEMENT ON THE REPORT TO THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL BY
THE HEAD OF THE OSCE PROGRAMME OFFICE IN DUSHANBE**

As delivered by ambassador Ellen Svendsen at the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 26 September 2024

Madame Chair,

Norway warmly welcomes Ambassador Kempel as the new Head of the Programme Office in Dushanbe. We are encouraged by the swift and effective engagement he has demonstrated since taking on this important role in July, setting a strong foundation for continued progress.

We particularly value the focus on border management, countering violent extremism, demining and promoting gender equality in the report presented today. These are critical areas for fostering long-term regional security. The Programme Office's work in strengthening Tajikistan's border management is especially timely, given the ongoing security challenges arising from Afghanistan.

We also recognize the significant role of the Women's Resource Centers in empowering women and addressing domestic violence. Ensuring safety and independence for women is essential for sustainable development and peace, and we commend the Programme Office for its continued support in this area.

The emphasis on civil society engagement and good governance is crucial for building a resilient and inclusive society. Let me therefore seize this opportunity to express our concern for the development in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region and urge Tajik authorities to resume full cooperation with the Aga Khan Development Network and to release Ismaili political prisoners. We encourage further efforts to enhance transparency and accountability in line with the commitments made by all participating states.

As donors to the field operations, we must also ensure that they are able to carry out their work effectively. Let me also take this opportunity to reiterate the importance of reaching a consensus on a unified budget. While Norway has this year signed a new and flexible four-year cooperation agreement with the OSCE, the absence of an approved unified budget remains a significant challenge for all of the organization's bodies.

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Norway remains a committed partner in supporting Tajikistan's journey toward greater stability and security, and we look forward to continuing our collaboration with the Programme Office in advancing these important objectives.

Thank you, Madame Chair.