



**PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO
THE HEAD OF THE PROGRAMME OFFICE IN BISHKEK
AND THE DIRECTOR OF THE OSCE ACADEMY IN BISHKEK**

Delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 21 May 2020

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Mr. Chair,

The full text of my statement will be distributed through the regular channels.

I thank Ambassador von Arx and Dr. Wolters for their reports to the Permanent Council.

The presence of an OSCE field mission significantly increases our organisation's impact with regards to capacity building in the participating states. Good relations between our Programme Office in Bishkek, the OSCE Academy and the Kyrgyz authorities makes a solid basis for achieving good results. Norway is pleased to see that the identified priorities for the Office's work are balanced across all three dimensions. In 2019 several delegations from Norway had the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the work OSCE does in Kyrgyzstan.

Transparent, well-functioning economies help build more stabile, secure countries. The Programme Office work to simplify interaction between rural communities and national authorities as well as support to develop SMEs are well noted.

We appreciate the Programme Office's active engagement in the electoral reform. The adoption of a 30 percent quota for women in local elections will, once enacted, hopefully contribute to a better understanding of the challenges of a bigger part of the population.

We note the report's attention to gender parity, or lack thereof, through counting the number of male and female participants in events and trainings. We also appreciate the substantial information on initiatives directed at women under the Human Dimension headline. We would encourage the Programme Office to gender mainstream all activities, throughout all dimensions. We also ask that reporting on how its activities affect men and women differently is included throughout the report.

Page 1 of 2

We highly appreciate the OSCE Academy's work to further increase its academic standing and professionalism. The continued high number of applicants is an indication of the quality in its work. Norway is currently the OSCE Academy's major donor with funds directed through the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. We appreciate the efforts taken to broaden the donor base.

As it is the last time Ambassador von Arx reports to the Permanent Council in his capacity as head of the Programme Office in Bishkek, we would like to thank him for a job well done and wish him all the best in his future endeavours.