



STATEMENT ON THE 2022 PROGRAMME OUTLINE

Delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 6 May 2021

Madam Chair,

Let me thank the Secretary General for presenting the Programme Outline for 2022, and those who have contributed to the process.

As we are now preparing to discuss the content and composition of the next year's budget, we have yet to agree on the budget for the current year. This has serious and costly consequences for the organisation and its ability to implement its programmes.

We all know that the delay is caused by the diverging views of participating States. It is exacerbated by an increased willingness of some states to use the budget as a bargaining tool in the pursuit of narrowly defined national interests. Norway again urges the remaining participating States to join consensus on the Unified Budget for 2021 without any more delay.

The delay is, however, also made possible by the nature of the OSCE's budget process. We need a process that is more efficient and responsible, and reform is urgently needed. In this regard, we appreciate that the Swedish Chairpersonship has started informal discussion on multi-year planning of the budget.

Madame Chair,

Norway's primary objective remains to preserve and strengthen the programmatic and operational capacity of the OSCE. The Field Operations and Institutions are the spearheads of OSCE activity in support of participating States. The Secretariat also contributes to this end, first and foremost through its valuable support to other Executive Structures, in particular the Field Operations.

Gender Equality remains a key priority for Norway. To that end, it is welcome that all Executive Structures include gender mainstreaming among their strategic priorities. Without equal and meaningful participation of women, and without proper consideration of gender in our programme activities, we as an organisation can not

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reach our full potential. There is no peace without women and no security without gender equality.

We appreciate that the Programme Outline for 2022 takes into consideration the exceptional context of the ongoing pandemic. At the same time as the situation puts additional strains on the organisation, the OSCE still has important tasks and mandates that need to be fulfilled. This calls for funding that is adequate, reliable, and predictable. Yet it seems that participating States are contributing to the opposite.

Years of sustained budget cuts in real terms has led to a reduction in the ability of the OSCE to help make our region more stable, peaceful, and democratic. This is happening despite agreement among the participating States that the organisation's relevance has increased along with the tension in the OSCE area and during the current pandemic.

The increasing gap between supply and demand undermines our common security. As an example from the Programme Outline, ODIHR notes that the need for its assistance continues to grow while the resources are decreasing. In addition, some states are also calling for more and larger election observation missions west of Vienna. Yet, the same States do not seem willing to increase the budget for this purpose.

When the methodology calls for it and resources permit, we wish that ODIHR would observe more elections in the entire OSCE region. This requires more resources. ODIHR is also responsible for a number of other tools to assist participating States in implementing their human dimension commitments. When some delegations seek to further reduce ODIHR's resources, they are stalling the implementation of agreed commitments in other participating States.

Madame Chair,

There is an urgent need for providing the OSCE with the resources it needs to carry out the mandates that we, the States, have entrusted to it. We bear this responsibility collectively as the participating States.

Thank you.