



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE CO-ORDINATOR OF
OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES

Delivered by Minister Counsellor Henrik Malvik at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 30 March 2023

Thank you Mr. Chair,

Norway joins others in warmly welcoming Ambassador Hasani back to the Permanent Council, and thanks him for his report, and his valuable reflections.

We are pleased to see the range of activities conducted by his office and results achieved. We also welcome his team's efforts to develop activities that address the consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

Indeed, the importance of the OSCE's work in the second dimension has become increasingly apparent these past years. The economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic continues to affect our societies. It has also caused irreparable damage to progress on gender equality, with the pandemic having undermined women's opportunities for paid employment in parts of the world.

These challenges have been compounded by the emergence of new, and the revival of old, conflicts in the OSCE region. Each conflict brings its own devastation, and, more often than not, reverses progress made in the fields of economic development and gender equality. These sobering realities confirm the long road we have ahead of us in reducing social and economic disparities and reinforce the paramount importance of economic and environmental issues for the stability and security of the OSCE area.

Yet, nothing so clearly demonstrates the present value of the OSCE's second dimension as the consequences of Russia's illegal war against Ukraine, the reverberations of which are felt globally. Russia's war has not only caused devastating impact for the people of Ukraine, but it has also caused significant harm to the environment. According to the

United Nations Environment Programme, the war has led to air, water, and land pollution, as well as the degradation of ecosystems. These are but some examples of the long-term damage that Russia has brought on not only Ukraine, but on other States as well.

This war has demonstrated that the insecurity of one State invariably affects the security of others. It has, furthermore, revealed the frailty of our economic, energy, food, and environmental security. The security of participating States is inextricably tied to the security of Ukraine.

This holds particularly true in the global fight against climate change. We must ensure that Russia's war does not complicate and weaken global climate action. We cannot begin to express the gravity of the situation and the unprecedented danger of our continued failure to address climate change as a threat to humanity.

Mr. Chair,

We have just outlined the incontestable reasons for continuing to uphold a focus on the OSCE's work in the second dimension. At the same time, the second dimension serves another equally important purpose. Norway firmly believes that the second dimension has the potential to promote confidence and trust amongst participating States, foster dialogue, and reduce tensions. Yet, in order for it to serve such a function, participating States must be *willing* and *committed* to its continued functioning.

The Economic and Environmental Forum cycle is a fundamental part of second dimension activities; it is vital that we maintain our formats, and that we continue to carry out activities that can have tangible impact on our efforts to implement our OSCE commitments. Like others we are extremely disappointed that we have not been able to agree on an agenda, theme and modalities for the 31st Economic and Environmental Forum. We call for a swift adoption of the necessary decision, such that we may continue our work for a more inclusive, sustainable, and secure future.

In closing, we thank you, Ambassador Hasani, and your able team for the excellent work you have done and continue to do for the OSCE and its participating States. Rest assured that we remain a staunch supporter of your office.

Thank you.