

Statement by Mette Kongshem, the Ambassador of Norway to the OSCE

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”The Role of the OSCE in the European Security Landscape”

The OSCE is unique. We have heard it before, but it is true nevertheless. Our organisation *is* different; it has different tools, a different scope and a different and wider kind of membership than most international bodies. Where else do the the US, Russia and EU participate in daily work on an equal footing in the same forum? This organisation gives us an excellent possibility for dialogue and co-operation at a time when too little communication between cultures and religions are often a source of instability and even threats to security.

In order to improve coordination and avoid duplication it is crucial that the OSCE strengthens its contacts with other organisations such as the UN, the EU and NATO. Norway favours further active efforts in this direction. Only when all international players recognise that various international bodies have different and complementary tasks, will we become truly successful in our work to accomplish security and stability in the whole of the OSCE area.

In the OSCE, we have a very special political organism at our disposal and at the same time a responsibility to put it to use in an active but focussed and forceful way. The question is if we are doing that?

The Eurasian-Atlantic security framework is changing. The OSCE cannot remain static. We have an obligation to strengthen and streamline this organisation and respond to the broad scope of security threats through a cross-dimensional approach.

The OSCE has undergone changes during the last twelve years. It was in many ways the first organisation to feel the fundamental political changes which swept over Europe. The days of fairly open-ended conferences are obviously still with us, but today we have a more structured organisation to promote our common views throughout the OSCE area. Despite many obstacles, the OSCE has risen to its tasks in a completely new environment in a truly impressive way. If we consider all views of all 55 member states, we have done well in creating the present platform on which the OSCE rests.

There *are* tasks that no other international body can tackle in the same way as the OSCE. Democracy-building, confidence-building, guarding human rights, election observation etc. are all areas in which the OSCE has specific and outstanding competences, sometimes way beyond what other institutions can offer.

Naturally the OSCE does not operate in a vacuum. Other organisations are involved in work which the OSCE is also qualified to do. The important thing is that we avoid overlapping and that all tasks are sufficiently dealt with. In the Balkans we have seen how various international bodies have split tasks among themselves, and the OSCE has been able to do its share. We have gained experience and contributed to international efforts through our missions in the field. That is where we make a real difference.

Mr Chairman,

This organisation is what we make out of it – no more, no less. Let us keep in mind that in defining the future role of the OSCE we are working for our mutual benefit in an interdependent world. As the executive director of UNODC, Mr Costa, reminded us at the recent Economic Forum, we need "security for prosperity".