



PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NORWAY,
AMBASSADOR GUTTORM VIK, IN RESPONSE TO H.E. KANAT B. SAUDABAYEV,
SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

As delivered to the Permanent Council, Vienna
September 20, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

The Norwegian Delegation warmly welcomes H.E. Kanat Saudabayev, Secretary of State of Kazakhstan to the Permanent Council. We thank him for his comprehensive and interesting statement on recent political developments and the ongoing reform process in Kazakhstan, as well as on Kazakhstan's policy towards OSCE and its bid for the OSCE chairmanship. We see his visit to the Permanent Council as yet another demonstration of Kazakhstan's will and intention to live up to common OSCE values.

We have followed the recent parliamentary elections in Kazakhstan with great interest, and we welcome the positive developments observed with regard to the progress in the pre-election process and during the conduct of the vote. At the same time, we are concerned that several OSCE commitments and international standards were not met, and we note the negative assessment of the counting of votes in several polling stations, the lack of transparency and the wide range of procedural irregularities observed. We are also worried that new legal provisions in some instances run counter to OSCE commitments.

We have, however, also noted that early elections interrupted an ongoing dialogue on election legislation. When we discussed the preliminary findings of the International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) in the Permanent Council two weeks ago, we were pleased to note that the Kazakh authorities will continue their close co-operation with the OSCE/ODIHR and other partners, in order to improve election procedures, as well as election legislation and promotion of independent mass media.

We welcome these positive developments. We encourage Kazakhstan to revise its election-related legislation in accordance with OSCE standards and to adopt new media legislation which fully introduces the concept of media freedom in Kazakhstan. In our view, this would

also contribute to the further development of a multi-party system and political diversity in Kazakhstan.

Norway continues to follow closely the developments of political reforms in other important areas, such as Kazakhstan's preparations for full abolition of the death penalty. We also hope for an early accession by Kazakhstan to the two facultative protocols to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

Norway has welcomed Kazakhstan's candidacy for the OSCE 2009 Chairmanship. We consider Kazakhstan's aspirations to chair the organization a commitment to a continued democratization process and reform agenda. We believe it is for Kazakhstan to demonstrate that it is ready and able to commit to full compliance with all OSCE values and standards. We continue to encourage Kazakhstan to vigorously implement its programme for democratic reforms and its OSCE commitments in all three dimensions, and we wish them every success in these endeavours.

I thank you.