



STATEMENT BY NORWAY IN RESPONSE TO THE HEAD OF THE OSCE
CENTRE IN DUSHANBE, AMBASSADOR VLADIMIR PRYAKHIN

**As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik to the Permanent Council, Vienna,
October 18, 2007**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

The Norwegian Delegation welcomes Ambassador Vladimir Pryakhin back to the Council in his new capacity as Head of the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe. We thank him for his comprehensive report focusing on main developments in the country and the Centre's activities since May 2006.

Norway has duly noted the significant political developments that have taken place in Tajikistan during the reporting period, as well as Tajikistan's emphasis on furthering political consolidation, stability and dynamic economic development, and a continued open door foreign policy. We have also noted the challenges facing Tajikistan in a number of areas, including the need for assistance in the implementation of Tajikistan's international commitments on strengthening democratic institutions and the rule of law.

We are pleased to note the close dialogue and good co-operation between the Centre in Dushanbe and the Tajik authorities, including discussions on increasing the Centre's activities to address issues of a regional nature in new areas such as border management and security, and with regard to trans-boundary water management.

Norway supports the Centre's balanced approach to the three dimensions in its programming. We also share the view of the host country that an increase in activities related to the political-military and the economic and environmental dimensions should not be at the expense of the human dimension activities.

Within the political-military dimension Norway has supported the Small Arms and Light Weapons and Conventional Ammunition Programme (SALW/CA) for Tajikistan since it started in May 2005. We are impressed by the continuous success of this programme, and we are very satisfied with the development of task one in phase two of the programme, safe destruction of obsolete rocket boosters.

Norway is pleased to inform the Council that after the tragic traffic accident and the loss of the two Norwegian Chief Technical Advisers in June, the new Chief Technical Adviser to the programme, Commander Senior Grade Eddy Lindholm, has today arrived in Dushanbe to take up his duties. We look forward to the final phase and the planned completion of the programme next year.

Following the request from Tajikistan for OSCE assistance in strengthening its border security and management, Norway has noted with positive interest the development of a number of project proposals by the Centre in Dushanbe and the Conflict Prevention Centre in close consultations with the Tajik authorities, and we hope for an early launching of concrete projects. Let me add that Norway is also supportive of OSCE assistance to develop a national strategy for border management in Tajikistan.

We commend the Centre for its efforts within the economic and environmental dimension, and we especially appreciate the Centre's work in assisting governmental institutions in developing environmental strategies, as well as its activities in support of water management.

Within the human dimension, Norway fully supports the many important activities the Centre has undertaken in promoting human rights and freedom of the media, as well as with regard to gender-related and anti-trafficking activities. We encourage the Centre to further develop its activities in these areas in close co-operation with the Tajik authorities.

We have listened with interest to Ambassador Pryakhin's elaboration on the background for the Centre's budget proposal for 2008. On a general level, and without pre-empting the upcoming discussions on the Centre's budget proposal, Norway concurs with the proposal for a stronger regional involvement of the OSCE in Central Asia by strengthening the activities of Field Operations, including for the Centre in Dushanbe.

In conclusion, let me commend Ambassador Pryakhin and his team for their extensive work and assure them of our continued support for their efforts.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.