



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE PRESENTATIONS OF THE THREE
PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE**

As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
1 November 2007

Mr. Chairman,

Norway welcomes two of the three Personal Representatives of the Chairman-in-Office: Ambassador Ömür Orhun, Personal Representative on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslim, Ms. Anastasia Crickley, Personal Representative on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination and Professor Gert Weisskirchen, Personal Representative on Combating Anti-Semitism, to this meeting of the Permanent Council, and thanks them for their presentations.

Mr. Chairman,

The core task of the OSCE is conflict prevention. The Organization is therefore well placed to promote tolerance and mutual respect in order to assist participating States in countering acts of xenophobia, hate crimes, discrimination, stereotyping and defamation targeting minorities, often on the basis of their ethnicity or religious beliefs or both. It is alarming that such acts seem to be on the increase. In the OSCE we have a unique platform for raising political awareness of the need to address this problem. We should make full use of this platform.

The OSCE approach and comparative advantage is to address these issues in a comprehensive and cross-dimensional manner. At the same time it is important that all forms of racism and discrimination are dealt with without any prioritization of efforts or artificial hierarchy between them. Discrimination is discrimination and must be condemned as such and dealt with whatever the underlying motive, as an assault on human dignity. It is therefore important that the three Representatives work in a co-ordinated and consistent manner and through collective efforts and activities, in close cooperation with ODIHR. Drawing on each others experience, they can assist us in dealing with the challenges confronting us and in

putting the international, normative framework to combat intolerance and discrimination into full use.

Mr. Chairman.

Norway recently had the pleasure of welcoming Ambassador Ömür Orhun on a visit to Oslo. We feel that the meetings were fruitful

Mr. Chairman,

How do we best proceed to stop developments of racism and discrimination? There have been calls for dialogue, for education, for fostering mutual respect and for countering ignorance and fear. In order for such efforts to be successful we need clear objectives for the dialogue to be undertaken, we need political will and engagement and a well defined process for achieving confidence and trust. Links must be established between various initiatives by governments, international organizations and the civil society. The process should have a holistic approach in order to be successful in promoting the overarching goal, which should be understanding and respect for each others ideas, opinions, cultures and beliefs.

Thank you.