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**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY NORWAY REGARDING THE OFFICE OF THE NORWEGIAN
HELSINKI COMMITTEE IN BISHKEK**

As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
16 October 2008

Mr. Chairman,

Let me first recall my previous statements to the Permanent Council on 10 July and 25 September regarding the formal registration of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee's representation Office in Bishkek and the problems encountered by the NHC's regional representative, Mr. Ivar Dale. On both occasions, we expressed our expectations that the long awaited formal registration would be granted without further delay, and we have confidently assumed that the problems encountered by the representative of the NHC concerning his visa would also be resolved shortly.

During her visit to the Kyrgyz Republic in September, the Norwegian Ambassador accredited to Kyrgyzstan raised the above mentioned issues with Kyrgyz officials as well as with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Ednan Karabayev. She was given assurances that the problems connected with the visa question had been solved and that Mr. Dale would meet no problems when returning to Kyrgyzstan.

We were therefore all the more disappointed to learn that Mr. Dale, on his return to Bishkek on Sunday morning 12 October, had been denied entry and informed that he would not be allowed entry into Kyrgyzstan for ten years. Efforts were made during that day to clarify and solve this problem, but without success, and Mr. Dale was forced to return to Norway on Monday morning 13 October.

Norwegian authorities are now in contact with Kyrgyz authorities on this issue and the registration of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee's representation Office in Bishkek. Despite this new setback, we continue to hope and expect that these issues will be solved soon in a satisfactory manner.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.