



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO H.E. ILKKA KANERVA, MINISTER OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF FINLAND**

As delivered by Deputy Permanent Representative,
Mr. Asbjørn Brandsrud
to the Permanent Council, Vienna January 10, 2008

Mr. Chairman,

It is a pleasure for Norway to warmly welcome the new Chairman- in- Office, His Excellency Foreign Minister Ilkka Kanerva, to the Permanent Council on the occasion of the first meeting under the Finnish Chairmanship. We look forward to taking on this year's challenges with renewed vigour in full co-operation with you and your team. Let me also take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the outgoing Spanish Chairmanship, especially to Ambassador Sanchez de Boado and his colleagues, for their tireless work over the past year.

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to reiterate Norway's full commitment to the shared values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law to which our governments subscribed. Respect for these commitments remain as valid today as was the case 30 years ago. We believe that our organisation still has a strong role to play in ensuring a comprehensive approach to security and stability. Without full respect for human rights and continued support for democratic transformation, there will be no lasting security and stability.

Norway welcomes the priorities of the Finnish Chairmanship and its aim to improve the coherence of the OSCE's work. We its emphasis on dialogue, co-operation and transparency on all matters, including the less easy ones. We agree with its cross-dimensional approach, and look forward to concrete initiatives in this regard, not least in the field of combating trafficking and border management.

Mr. Chairman,

Free and fair elections are fundamental to democracy. The methodology developed by the OSCE to monitor elections is internationally recognized as the "gold standard". Norway has full confidence in the ODIHR's professionalism, impartiality and expertise. Like the Chairmanship, we call on all participating states to implement fully the election related commitments subscribed to in this organization.

Any democracy needs a vibrant civil society and NGOs are indispensable contributors to the functioning of our democracies. They are an integral part of our work in the OSCE. This role must be maintained. As fundamental to our democratic values is respect for the freedom of expression and of assembly - as well as for democratic forces of opposition. We agree with the chairmanship with regard to the role of national human rights institutions and independent media and welcome its efforts to increase support for the important work of the human rights defenders in participating states.

Mr. Chairman,

The continued presence of the OSCE field mission in Kosovo is of particular importance. Let me reiterate that it is difficult to imagine that the OSCE mission will not be even more needed in the years to come than it has been until now regardless of the status of Kosovo.

Mr. Chairman,

The CFE Treaty has contributed to unprecedented stability and transparency in Europe. Now, our immediate goal must be to have the Adapted Treaty ratified by all State Parties. An efficient arms control regime belongs just as much to our future security agenda as it has belonged to our past. It is no less relevant and no less important.

Mr. Chairman,

All our efforts will require that we are ready to provide the OSCE with the necessary resources. We would urge all participating states to spare no effort to come to a speedy agreement on the budget for 2008 and on the scales of contribution.

In concluding Mr. Chairman, allow me again to congratulate Foreign Minister Kanerva on assuming this important responsibility and wish him and his teams in Helsinki and Vienna all possible success.

Thank you.