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**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY NORWAY IN RESPONSE TO THE HEAD OF THE OSCE
CENTRE IN BISHKEK, AMBASSADOR ANDREW TESORIERE**

As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
7 May 2009

Thank you, Madam Chairperson,

Norway warmly welcomes Ambassador Andrew Tesoriere back to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his comprehensive report providing us with an extensive overview of the developments in Kyrgyzstan, as well as of the Centre's broad range of activities since October 2008.

Norway is pleased to note that the Centre continues to enjoy an excellent working relationship with both the Kyrgyz Authorities and Civil Society, and consequently has a wide scope for programme support and policy dialogue. We share the Centre's emphasis on the need for streamlining of project activities in order to avoid an overload of project work.

Norway continues to follow closely the political and economic developments in Kyrgyzstan. In the economic and environmental field we note with concern the obstacles to economic development stemming from corruption, the threat of contamination from radioactive waste, as well as the growing competition for scarce water resources. We highly appreciate the work of the Centre in these areas. In the political field we hope that the ODIHR recommendations following the parliamentary elections in December 2007 will be fully implemented, and we encourage the Kyrgyz Authorities to do their utmost to ensure that the upcoming presidential elections in July will take place in accordance with OSCE commitments. In the legislative field, like others, we are concerned about some of the draft amendments to the Law on NGOs, as well as the new draft law on the right of citizens to assemble peacefully. We encourage Kyrgyzstan to follow up on the expert opinions provided by the ODIHR, and also to remedy the recent setbacks with regard to the media legislation.

Madam Chairperson,

Norway commends the Centre for its programmatic activities addressing a wide number of issues in all three dimensions. We continue to value highly the work of the Centre in collaboration with the HCNM related to multilingual education and ethnic tolerance in the southern part of the Kyrgyzstan. We support the establishment of an improved Customs Training Facility in Bishkek through extra-budgetary means. We also support further strengthening of the regional profile of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, and we value highly the ongoing cooperation project related to education and research between the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and the Academy. Let me also assure Ambassador Tesoriere of our continued support to the Centre's Police Reform Programme and its broad assistance to the whole process of police reform, in order to establish a truly democratic and professional police service in Kyrgyzstan.

Let me add that we appreciate the check-list Ambassador Tesoriere has presented on key operational priorities for the remainder of 2009, which would also be a valuable tool in helping us to further focus our efforts in the months to come.

Madam Chairperson,

In his report, Ambassador Tesoriere also refers to two human right defenders who were denied entry into Kyrgyzstan, one of them being the Norwegian citizen Mr. Ivar Dale, who until recently was the Regional Representative of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee in Central Asia. In previous statements to the Council, I have raised Norway's concerns regarding the problems encountered in Kyrgyzstan by the Norwegian Helsinki Committee and Mr. Dale, who on 12 October 2008 was denied entry into the country for a period of ten years. Despite extensive efforts to clarify and solve this problem, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs still awaits an explanation from the Kyrgyz Ministry of Foreign Affairs why this matter has still not been rectified.

In conclusion, let me commend Ambassador Tesoriere and his dedicated staff for their very valuable work and assure them of our continued support for their.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.