



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT ON THE 2014 HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING BY THE DIRECTOR OF ODIHR

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council
Vienna, 30th October 2014

Mr Chairman,

I join others in thanking Director Link for his comprehensive report.

The large participation this year testifies to the need for HDIM and shows it is regarded as an important and useful human rights event. For many representatives of civil society it is perhaps one of the few opportunities to speak directly to their own governments.

We should all appreciate that NGOs bring new problems and lack of implementation of commitments to our attention. This should be an incentive to improve our practices, not to silence our critics.

There have been reports of detention and questioning of participants at HDIM on return to their home countries. Any form of reprisals against Human Rights Defenders and NGO representatives undermines HDIM as a forum to discuss implementation, and it undermines the credibility of governments who have signed up to these commitments. Prosecuting on charges of alleged criminal activity does not change this.

Bringing in government-controlled NGOs to praise the policies of their governments will hardly convince anyone and will not have the desired effect.

Mr Chairman,

This year there was a record number of side events at HDIM, many of them on important topics with interesting speakers. These events allow us to discuss difficult issues more in depth. My delegation was pleased to co-organise a meeting on enforced disappearances, with France and the Netherlands. We also co-sponsored an event on the effects of mass surveillance on the work of journalists and lawyers. We hope these and other side events can be an inspiration for future work and new ideas.

Mr Chairman,

HDIM is valuable in itself. It is no less important that we follow up the information and recommendations we receive there in the rest of our work. As underlined by my US colleague in this statement we need to consider how issues raised at HDIM can be better followed up.

We can take them up in the Permanent Council. We can discuss them in the Human Dimension Committee. Some topics would be suitable for a voluntary report in the HDC, and some concerns can be addressed by the field missions or by our institutions.

The point is, problems identified at HDIM must be kept on our agenda also after we leave Warsaw.

Mr Chairman,

This brings me to two final points:

Firstly, we heard both governments and civil society express gratitude to our institutions for assistance given, and we heard requests and recommendations for more cooperation. All governments draw on the expertise and advice of our institutions from time to time. It is our responsibility to ensure that they have the necessary resources to respond to our requests. We must not lose sight of this basic fact in the current budget discussions.

Finally: There have been long deliberations on how best to reform HDIM. One practical measure that seems to be convenient for all is moving HDIM to the last half of May. This will avoid collisions with the UN General Assembly, the Human Rights Council in Geneva, and other international meetings. We hope we can reach consensus on this.

Mr Chairman,

I thank director Link and ODIHR for their hard work and enthusiasm in organising HDIM, and for advancing our efforts in promoting human rights and democracy throughout the year.

Thank you, Mr Chairman