

**STATEMENT IN THE RESPONSE TO THE REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE
FOR DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS (ODIHR)**

As delivered by Ambassador Ellen Svendsen at the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 13. March 2025

Mr. Chair,

A warm welcome to Director Maria Telalian to the Permanent Council, we thank her and her team for this comprehensive report. We are grateful to you and your team for your professionalism, integrity and commitment in fulfilling the mandate of ODIHR in these challenging times.

Mr. Chair,

In times of democratic backsliding, shrinking civic space and increased violations of human rights in many parts of the OSCE area, ODIHR's work to support participating States is more needed than ever before. Human rights, democracy, and the rule of law are at the core of the OSCE concept of comprehensive security.

Norway highly values ODIHR's election observation work, which sets the highest international standards in this field. ODIHR's professional and transparent elections observation teams have seldom been as busy – and as important as right now. We warmly welcome ODIHR to Norway to observe our upcoming Parliamentary election in September.

We are pleased to see that most states open their elections for independent observations and are open for ODIHR's advice on how to improve their election process. However, it is regrettable that some states have made decisions that directly contradict the commitments made by them as OSCE participating States, including, including late invitations and lack of accreditation, undermining the principle of transparency essential for holding genuinely democratic elections.

Mr. Chair,

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We are pleased that a substantial amount of Norway's extra-budgetary support to the Office has since 2014 been used to advancing the respect for human rights and to strengthening democratic institutions through capacity-building, co-operation and advocacy.

We particularly commend ODIHR's work relating to human rights monitoring in Ukraine and thank you for your interim reports. This reporting forms an important contribution to ensuring accountability for Russia's violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in their illegal war of aggression against Ukraine.

Mr. Chair,

ODIHR continues to demonstrate resilience and resourcefulness in tackling the dire budget situation. In the end however, it is on us, the participating States, to resolve the budget situation.

Norway remains steadfast in its support of the comprehensive concept of security in all three dimensions. The work of ODIHR must not be compromised. Director Telalian, you have our full support, and we wish you and your entire team at ODIHR continued success in all your future endeavors.

Thank you.