PC.DEL/1148/26
13 November 2026

ENGLISH only

PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT ON SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE OSCE CiO ON CIVIL SOCIETY

As delivered by Knut Are Okstad at the 1585th Permanent Council, Vienna, 12 November 2026

Thank you Chair,

First let me express my deepest condolences to Poland following the terrible attack in Krakow this past weekend. Our thoughts are with the victims, their families, and all those affected by this tragic act of violence.

Special Representative Juvonen, welcome.

Fifty years ago this week ten citizens in Kyiv founded the Ukrainian Helsinki Group. Their task was simple. To check whether Moscow kept the promises it signed in Helsinki in 1975. By 1981 every one of them was in prison or in exile. Their successors carry on this important work. The Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union and its partners have documented tens of thousands of alleged violations of international humanitarian law by the Russian Federation in Ukraine. They carefully preserve evidence that may support future investigations and accountability.

Last month 1,900 participants registered for Warsaw Human Dimension Conference. Russia and Belarus again blocked consensus on the mandated meeting. Civil society came anyway.
Across the OSCE region, civil society actors document human rights violations, support vulnerable groups and hold authorities to account. Meaningful civil society participation is central to the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security.
The OSCE is stronger when civil society voices are heard. They help us do our job. We have a responsibility to help them do theirs.

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We must protect meaningful civil society participation and reject any intimidation or reprisals against those who engage with this Organization. That ODIHR needs a dedicated email address for people facing reprisals after engaging with us says enough.

Special Representative Juvonen, we commend your continued dedication to civil society across the OSCE region. Norway remains firmly committed to supporting you work and to safeguarding civil society engagement throughout the OSCE.

Thank you.