



**PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE**

RIGHT OF REPLY TO THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

As delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 19 October 2023

Chairman,

Child Welfare cases can be difficult for all concerned. The fundamental principle of child welfare in Norway is to safeguard the best interests of the child. This principle is strongly reflected in our laws and Constitution and is based on our obligations under international law (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child). When the rights of a child conflict with the interests of the parents, the rights of the child are to take precedence.

From time to time Norwegian child welfare authorities feel compelled to take children away from their parents. They are mandated to do so when it is necessary in order to safeguard the rights and the wellbeing of the child – or children – in question. Such a decision is never taken lightly and is – I would believe – rarely left uncontested by the families concerned.

Nobody in Norway would argue that our child welfare authorities never make mistakes. Norwegian media quite often ask critical questions about their work, including about individual cases. We welcome this. But I would warn against any attempt to create the impression that the child welfare authorities treat families of non-Norwegian origin differently from families of Norwegian origin.