



**PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR STEFFEN KONGSTAD
IN RESPONSE TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S PRESENTATION OF THE
UNIFIED BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR 2018**

Delivered to the Permanent Council

Vienna, 5 October 2017

Chair,

I would like to thank the Secretary General for presenting the Unified Budget Proposal and look forward to working with the participating states in the ACMF and especially with the Italian chair to ensure the timely adoption of the 2018 budget. The Italian chair can count on the support of Norway throughout the process.

The OSCE comprises a diverse group of countries with diverging priorities. Remaining true to the principle of consensus requires us to remain willing to find compromises and solutions together. That is the only way to preserve both our common and particular objectives and interests.

The OSCE, the secretariat, the institutions and the field missions, work on our behalf, implementing the decisions formed by our consensus. As such, it rests on us, the participating States, to ensure that the organization has the required resources to perform adequately the functions that we want and expect it to. We should not stay on our current path, which leads to an organization increasingly dependent on secondments and voluntary contributions in order to function in accordance with its purpose.

The budget presented today is restrained. Norway regrets the closing of the office in Yerevan, which is a major reason for the nominal decrease in the proposed budget for the field operations. Last year's budget freeze, following a number of years with decreases, has led to significant purchasing power loss in real terms of the Unified Budget. The modest nominal increase of the 2018 proposal is offset by inflation, leading, yet again, to an overall real decrease in the budget. This development is regrettable.

The Secretary General has urged us to see the bigger picture. The establishment of the SMM demonstrated the ability of the participating States to pull together in response to one ongoing situation. Still, there is a bigger picture of the OSCE region: the Executive Structures of the OSCE engage in complicated situations and provide advice and

support throughout the entire region. We should enable the OSCE to respond to situations throughout the region by pulling together to ensure a Unified Budget addressing the need of the Executive Structures.

This year, as before, Norway has the objective of giving the OSCE the necessary resources to meet increasing demands in the areas of crisis prevention, crisis response and conflict management as well as strengthening the independent institutions and with the necessary gender perspective and measures being integrated in all activities. Norway looks toward enhancing the efficiency and credibility of the OSCE, including the transition to a two-year budget cycle. Norway will remain a constructive and transparent partner throughout the discussions.

As noted by the Secretary General, since 2006 a regrettable practice has evolved where the Unified Budget has not been adopted by 20 December in accordance with the financial regulations of the OSCE. Norway is committed to reversing this practice, and looks forward to the timely adoption of an adequate Unified Budget for 2018. We stand ready to work with the Italian ACMF chair and other participating States to achieve this goal.

Thank you.