



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**REPORT ON AN INFORMAL VISIT OF OSCE AMBASSDORS
TO WESTERN BALKANS, SEPTEMBER 8-13, 2013**

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 19 September 2013

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to take this opportunity to give the Council a brief account of a visit to Western Balkans, undertaken by 24 OSCE ambassadors from the 8th to the 13th of September 2013. I speak in my capacity as coordinator of the visit.

The program included meetings and briefings in Belgrade, Bujanovac, Priština, Mitrovica, Gračanica, Tetovo and Skopje.

In Belgrade the group met with the President of the Republic of Serbia, the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the National Assembly, as well as with high-ranking representatives of the Foreign Ministry. The group also benefitted from meetings with leaders of political parties represented in Parliament and with a number of civil society representatives.

In Bujanovac in South Serbia we met the President of the Coordination Body for the municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa, together with a number of representatives of these municipalities.

The program in Kosovo included meetings with Deputy Prime Minister Slobodan Petrović, representatives of the international community and with local community representatives. An agreed meeting with Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi did not materialize.

At the Gračanica Monastery we had an interesting meeting with Bishop Teodosije. Time permitting the group might have benefitted from meeting also a Muslim religious leader.

The program in Skopje included meetings with the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs, a panel discussion with civil society representatives, briefings by Security Principals as well as a meeting with the Deputy President of the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia.

In Tetovo the group met leaders of two political parties representing the Albanian community.

Throughout the visit the group received detailed briefings by the OSCE missions.

Mr. Chairman,

The visit gave the participants firsthand information about the challenges facing the region and their work to meet these challenges. In most of the meetings our interlocutors emphasized questions concerning interregional relations, interethnic relations and European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

On behalf of the group of Ambassadors I would like to thank host country colleagues here in Vienna, Ambassador Vuk Žugić and Ambassador Zoran Dabik. Without their support the visit would not have been possible. On behalf of the group I also extend our gratitude to them and their authorities for outstanding hospitality. I also thank Deputy Director Pascal Heyman and his able staff in the Policy Support Service of the CPC for their professional and solid work before and during the trip. Last but not least I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the heads of the involved OSCE missions, Ambassadors Peter Burkhard, Jean-Claude Schlumberger and Ralf Breth and their staff, for indispensable support and for making the necessary arrangements for our visit.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman