



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO
THE HEAD OF THE OSCE MISSION IN KOSOVO

Delivered by Minister Counsellor Henrik Malvik at the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 4 May 2023

Thank you, Mr Chairman,

It is our pleasure to welcome Ambassador Michael Davenport back to the Permanent Council and thank him for his latest report. We also thank ambassador Davenport and his team for the excellent manner in which they are carrying out the Mission's mandate.

Mr. Chair,

A stable and prosperous Kosovo is crucial for the security and stability of South-East Europe, and consequently for the entire OSCE region. Efforts to strengthen regional cooperation and socio-economic development in Kosovo are important in this regard, and our OSCE Mission in Kosovo has an important role to play.

Norway supports Kosovo and the other Western Balkan countries in their Euro-Atlantic aspirations. Full integration in these structures will however not be possible for neither Kosovo nor Serbia without a comprehensive agreement on full normalisation of relations. There is no alternative to the EU-led process, dialogue, and compromise. Norway will continue to contribute to the normalization process between Prishtina and Belgrade.

We welcome the proposal for normalisation of diplomatic relations and subsequent verbal agreement between Kosovo and Serbia for its implementation, reached on 27 February at the summit in Brussels, and at the 18 March Summit in Ohrid, under the EU-facilitated dialogue. We expect the acceptance of the proposal from both parties to improve over-all relations and stability in the region. We strongly regret the low turnout at the 23 April local elections in the North of Kosovo, however the elections were held in an orderly manner and without incidents.

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On 24 April Norway voted to support that Kosovo's application for membership in the Council of Europe is referred to the Parliamentary Assembly. As the EU-facilitated dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia is ongoing, we call on the parties to refrain from any unilateral actions that may cause tensions in the area and to implement all agreements reached under the dialogue. The Association of Serbian Municipalities in Kosovo should be established as agreed. We commend the parties for agreeing to the joint statement of missing persons at the 2 May summit in Brussels. The declaration paves the way for a closure for the bereaved families and increased cooperation in the region.

Mr Chair,

Norway is proud to contribute financial support to extra-budgetary projects run by the Mission in Kosovo and we allow the Mission the necessary flexibility to identify projects where the Norwegian contribution can be of most value. As a consequence, we now contribute to strengthening the electoral process in Kosovo, and we contribute to strengthening the canine capacity of the police services to detect and confiscate weapons, ammunitions, and explosives. Both are areas of work which are very important for Kosovo and for the region.

Mr. Chair,

Through tailor-made assistance to the host countries, the field operations contribute directly to improving the situation for the population on the ground. As donors to the OSCE field operations, it is our responsibility and duty to ensure that they can carry out their work effectively. A sufficient budget would be a minimum requirement. Avoiding the fragmentation caused by individual participating States' imposing their national priorities on the work of the field operations would also contribute to their effectiveness. As participating States, we must take this challenge seriously, and provide the space required for the field operations to work more efficiently, with long-term impact on the ground as their focus.

Thank you.