



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

NORWEGIAN STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT BY THE HEAD OF THE OSCE MISSION IN KOSOVO, AMBASSADOR JEAN-CLAUDE SCHLUMBERGER

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council 5th September, 2013

Mr. Chairman,

Let me join previous speakers in thanking Ambassador Schlumberger for his comprehensive report on the activities of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo. I would like to reiterate Norway's strong support for the work of Ambassador Schlumberger and his dedicated team in assisting the development and reform of Kosovo.

Norway commends the governments of Serbia and Kosovo for their courage and foresightedness in reaching agreement for normalisation of their relations. We are encouraged by the concrete steps that have been taken to implement the agreement of 19th April.

We fully support the EU facilitated dialogue and see the EU as playing a constructive role in this process.

The upcoming local elections in November will be a key element in the continued development of relations between the two governments and between the inhabitants of Kosovo. Well organised and orderly elections will consequently also mean progress for the European agenda of both countries. We hope to see a good election turn-out especially in the north of Kosovo and appreciate the special efforts of the OSCE Mission in facilitating elections here. We appeal to all communities in Kosovo to take part in the democratic process.

The role of the OSCE in facilitating elections not only contributes decisively to the practical implementation of the elections. It also strengthens their legitimacy for the people of Kosovo.

Rule of law, including the EULEX operation, and economic development are top priorities for the bilateral cooperation between Kosovo and Norway. Kosovo will remain one of our main partners in the Balkans. Kosovo's further progress towards closer regional and European cooperation is a key objective of our policy.

The development and consolidation of this young nation is vital for the further progress and European integration of the whole region.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.