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**PERMANENT DELEGATION  
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE CURRENT SITUATION IN TUNISIA**  
As delivered by Deputy Representative of Norway Asbjørn Brandsrud  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
20 January 2011

**Mr. Chairman,**

Allow me to quote the Norwegian Foreign Minister, His Excellency Mr. Jonas Gahr Støre's comments on the current situation in Tunisia:

“Events have unfolded very quickly in the past few days, and the situation in the country is still tense and unresolved. But I am pleased to note that the interim government has announced that elections will be held soon,”

“The upheaval in Tunisia underscores that economic and political reforms must go hand in hand, and that fundamental human rights must be respected. It is now crucial that everyone joins forces to ensure a peaceful transition to lasting democratic rule in Tunisia,”

“At the same time, the events in Tunisia demonstrate the challenges faced by many authoritarian regimes in that part of the world. Authoritarian rule and the absence of democratic legitimacy make it more difficult to deal with economic and social challenges,”

“Norway supports the Tunisian people in their aspirations for a democratic Tunisia in which political and social rights are safeguarded,”

**Thank you, Mr. Chairman**