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PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO C/o H.E. FRANK-WALTER STEINMEIER

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 14 January 2016

Mr Chairman, Foreign Minister Steinmeier,

Let me at the outset express my deepest sympathy and condolences to Turkey and to you, Minister Steinmeier, after the terror attack in Istanbul last Tuesday.

Mr Minister,

Europe is being challenged by terrorism, by an influx of migrants, and by gross violations of OSCE commitments and principles. We are pleased to see Germany at the helm of the OSCE during these difficult times.

We agree with you that a fundamental task for the OSCE is to help rebuild trust and confidence, which has deteriorated in recent years.

The crisis in and around Ukraine is the result of a fundamental breach of the most basic principles of the OSCE. The conflict can only be solved, and trust can only be restored, by a renewed commitment – in word and deed – to these principles.

The crisis has illustrated the crucial role of the OSCE for security and stability in Europe, and has showcased the organization's unique conflict management toolbox. It has also revealed shortcomings in our crisis response.

You are right in saying that we must strengthen our organization in all stages of the conflict cycle. This will require more resources. The next test of our common resolve is the extension of the SMM's mandate and the timely adoption of a sufficient budget for the mission.

Minister Steinmeier,

Without democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights, there will be no lasting security and stability.

We are concerned by negative developments in many participating States. The space for civil society is shrinking, media is placed under government control, and human rights defenders

are thrown in jail. Terrorism and other security concerns must not be used as a pretext for limiting the exercise of human rights.

We support your decision to devote particular attention to the human dimension and your intention to actively involve civil society in the work of the OSCE. We welcome your focus on the role of the media and minorities in times of crisis. Gender equality and the OSCE's part in the broader 1325 agenda deserve increased attention. We underscore the crucial role of the autonomous institutions.

Mr Foreign Minister,

We are pleased with the timely adoption of the 2016 Unified Budget, but not with the continuing trend of zero nominal growth. This does not reflect our ambitions, particularly for the autonomous institutions.

In conclusion, allow me to thank the outgoing Serbian chairmanship for their dedicated work during a difficult year for European security. We wish you, Minister Steinmeier, and your able team every success. You have our full support.

Thank you.