



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

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

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 4 February 2016

Mr Chairman,

I thank Ambassador Schlumberger for an informative and wide-ranging report on developments in Kosovo. As the Report points out, political tension has been a feature of Kosovo politics throughout the reporting period. The report provides a useful factual overview of recent events.

Mr Chairman,

Despite repeated calls from the international community for dialogue and respect for parliamentary and democratic procedures, the activities of the opposition parties continue to block the work of the Kosovo Assembly and to create a climate of political tension. While political opposition and popular protest are legitimate in their own right, violence is unacceptable. The throwing of eggs, release of teargas and use of pepper spray inside the Kosovo Assembly constitutes unacceptable and undemocratic behaviour. We need to state this clearly.

As the report points out, it was indeed noteworthy that the opposition parties did not disrupt the extraordinary Assembly Session that ratified the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the European Union. That was a sign of political responsibility that we hope to see repeated in the coming period. All responsible political actors in Kosovo must help ensure that the legislative reform agenda

moves ahead. This should be seen as an issue of national interest of concern to all parties and citizens of Kosovo.

Mr Chairman,

Norway supports the OSCE Mission's important contribution to democratisation, minority rights, returns, reconciliation and security throughout Kosovo. Facilitation and support on legislation and policy help ensure the application of international norms and best practices. Training programs for the Kosovo police and assistance in implementation of Community and Intelligence-led policing are important contributions to the continued progress of the Kosovo Police as a modern, European police service. We should not underestimate the important role that the OSCE and the Mission in Kosovo play in this regard.

We would especially like to highlight the work of the Mission's facilitation and support for Local Public Safety Committees throughout Kosovo. These Committees are important for several reasons: They encourage local participation in issues of common concern, while promoting inter-community collaboration and cooperation with local Kosovo Police. Norway has supported the implementation of projects within the framework of the Local Public Safety Committees. We can affirm that the Mission has conducted this program with utmost professionalism and effectiveness. We would like to commend the Mission for this successful endeavour and to thank for excellent cooperation.

Mr Chairman,

The Mission to Kosovo has published a series of very useful reports during the last period regarding justice, property issues and issues related to Community Rights. These reports constitute contributions to factual and knowledge-based policy responses and supporting activities from Embassies and Organisations.

Public statements by the Mission, for example after incidents in the Serbian community of Goraždevac in early December, are significant markers of OSCE concern and engagement.

Mr Chairman,

It is still not clear whether there will be an agreement between Kosovo and Serbia on facilitation of voting for citizens of Serbia resident in Kosovo in the expected Serbian Parliamentary elections in the spring. In previous Serbian elections, there was agreement that allowed the Mission to facilitate collection of ballots. We encourage the Mission to prepare for this, should the authorities of Kosovo and Serbia agree to request such assistance.

Mr Chairman,

In conclusion I would like to note that the Mission continues to be held in high regard in all communities in Kosovo. This is due to the Mission's track record of professionalism and impartiality.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.