



**PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR MARYSE DAVIET,
HEAD OF THE OSCE MISSION IN MONTENEGRO**

Delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 1 March 2018

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

We thank Ambassador Maryse Daviet, Head of the OSCE Mission in Montenegro, for her informative and useful report made available to participating States well in advance of this meeting of the Permanent Council.

The field missions are an essential part of the OSCE's operational activities. In 2006, when the OSCE Office in Podgorica was transformed into the Mission in Montenegro, it became a full-fledged operation to assist and promote the implementation of OSCE principles and commitments in Montenegro, as well as to strengthen Montenegro's co-operation with the OSCE, and maintain contacts with Montenegrin authorities, universities, research institutions and civil society. Over more than 10 years, through mutual agreement with Montenegro, the Mission has contributed to security, stability and development in Montenegro.

The Mission's efforts to direct programmatic efforts to those areas where the OSCE has added value, are commendable. The Mission has particular expertise in the areas of elections and rule of law, capacity building in the area of law making, freedom of the media, police reform, and more. VERLT remains a priority and further efforts and progress would be welcome.

Some recent developments are worrying. We regret the decision of the opposition to maintain its boycott of the parliament in 2017. A vital and effective parliament is essential for political stability, rule of law and a strong democracy in Montenegro. As it is anywhere else. It behoves all members fully and actively to participate in the parliamentary process in order to safeguard both particular and common interests, as well as Montenegrin democracy itself.

We remain concerned about the alleged coup attempt on Election Day in October 2016, and trust that the ensuing judicial process, through a fair trial, will put this regrettable incident to rest.

The border demarcation between Kosovo and Montenegro remains unsolved. A constructive and fairness-based approach should lead the process towards an equitable solution. We commend Montenegro for its approach in the matter.

We welcome the positive steps noted on implementing the Law on Gender Equality and strategic documents such as the National Action Plan adopted in 2017. We welcome the Mission's efforts at gender mainstreaming in its work on elections and police reform, as well as in the cooperation with Montenegrin authorities generally. Ensuring equal access and opportunities for women is the only way to unleash the full economic potential of the population. This is but one aspect, of many, of the utility of equality.

Montenegro has the opportunity to play a significant and positive role for implementation of OSCE commitments, further European integration and for contributing to peace and stability in our region. We look forward to observing further positive developments in Montenegro and continued good co-operation between Montenegro and the OSCE Mission