



STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF MONTENEGRO, H.E. MIODRAG VLAHOVIĆ

As delivered by Ambassador Mette Kongslem
to the OSCE Permanent Council, Vienna
July 18, 2006

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

Norway joins others in welcoming the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro, Miodrag Vlahović to this meeting of the Permanent Council. We have listened carefully to his very important statement, sharing the visions of his country with us all. On behalf of the Norwegian Government I would once again like to congratulate the Government and the people of Montenegro with independence following the free and fair referendum on 21 May. The Norwegian Government formally recognized Montenegro as an independent and sovereign state on 16 June.

Mr. Chairman,

Europe has recently, through peaceful means, seen the birth of a new state in a region which has previously been marred by conflict. In our view, the orderly and peaceful conduct of the referendum in Montenegro represents an important contribution to regional stability.

Independence marks a new start for Montenegro. The Montenegrin people and authorities have a great responsibility to ensure clear and stable progress not only for Montenegro, but for the region as a whole. We are confident that Montenegro will strive for good neighbourly relations and strong regional cooperation, thus promoting regional stability. We are convinced that the governments of both Montenegro and Serbia will work together in a spirit of close co-operation in dealing with regional as well as global issues and challenges in the future.

The Montenegrin Government has expressed its strong aspirations for Euro-Atlantic integration. The path towards Europe will be demanding. There is indeed no short-cut to Europe. Nevertheless, we are convinced that the Montenegrin Government will work with utmost determination to fulfil its aspirations. We see the newly established OSCE Mission to Montenegro as an important partner and facilitator in carrying out necessary reforms.

Furthermore, Norway stands ready to support Montenegro's Euro-Atlantic integration and reforms. My country has over a number of years been engaged in project cooperation with Montenegro, in the fields of institution and capacity building, economic development and development of infrastructure. We stand ready to continue this engagement, confident that it makes an important contribution to Montenegro's path towards Euro-Atlantic integration.

Mr. Chairman,

On June 22 Montenegro became the 56th participating State of the OSCE and took its seat as an independent country at the OSCE Permanent Council. We take positive note of the fact that Montenegro chose the OSCE as the first international organization it would join. Norway perceives this as a strong vote of confidence in this Organization and its untiring work for security and cooperation in Europe.

Finally Mr. Chairman, and on a personal note, it is a great pleasure for me that my very good friend Ambassador Garčević is seated next to me at this table. Under his able leadership I am confident that Montenegro will be a serious and responsible actor in the OSCE.

I thank you.