



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY NORWAY IN RESPONSE TO GEORGIA'S FOREIGN
MINISTER MIKHEIL JANELIDZE**

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council
Vienna, 2 June 2016

Mr Chairman,

For several years, Georgia has been a regional front-runner in terms of democratic reform. The parliamentary elections in 2012 were especially significant. For this, Georgia has earned well-deserved recognition and respect. Even though important challenges remain, a solid foundation for addressing them has been built.

Parliamentary elections this October will be the next milestone for Georgia. Needless to say, democratic elections are not just about appropriate legislation and well-organized procedures on election day. They are also about the overall context. About a level playing field through equal access to state resources and the media. And about political culture. We call on government and opposition alike to ensure that the elections will be successful, free and fair. OSCE election observation will be crucial. As always, ODIHRs's golden – but strict – standard will be applied.

Mr Chairman,

We reiterate our support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and call on Russia to uphold its commitments from the ceasefire agreement and subsequent implementing measures of 2008. Russia's so-called "treaties" with Georgia's breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia are clear violations of Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and have no legal standing. They are, however, indications of the gradual integration of Georgia's breakaway regions into Russia's governing structures. An illegal referendum in the breakaway region of South Ossetia would not be recognised, but would be a further signal of this trend.

We repeat our concern over the human rights situation in the breakaway regions. The lack of information from the regions exacerbates our concern. We join others in calling for the re-establishment of a meaningful OSCE presence covering all of Georgia's internationally recognised territory and all three dimensions. The OSCE's autonomous institutions and other international monitors must also be given unrestricted access to Georgia's breakaway regions.

Mr Chairman,

We remain supportive of the Geneva International Discussions. We are alarmed by the tragic killing near the Administrative Boundary Line at Kurcha. We hope the extraordinary meeting of the Gali IPRM on 27 May will be followed by the full resumption of the IPRM.

Mr Chairman,

We look forward to continuing to cooperate with Georgia as an equal partner on the basis of shared fundamental values.

Thank you.