



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE
REPORT BY THE HEAD OF THE MISSION TO SKOPJE

Delivered by Chargé d’Affaires a.i. Henning Hj. Johansen at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 27 May 2021

Madame Chair,

We thank ambassador Koja for his presentation to this Council, and for an informative and interesting report and commend him and his able team for their good work in a difficult year.

The report demonstrates an emphasis on sustainable solutions which we find commendable. The Mission’s focus on local ownership, mentoring programmes, and for example on assistance to strengthen implementation of laws, enables a future independent from assistance. After all, the goal of our Missions should be to make themselves redundant.

We also appreciate that the Mission clearly focuses on strengthening accountability and transparency in government institutions, the judiciary, and other parts of society. Increased accountability brought about by - amongst other things - more transparency, will create a stronger foundation for trust, and undermine the serious issue of corruption.

Increased trust between groups in society will enhance stability in the future, and youth are a major target group. We were glad to read that the project of joint classes in seven secondary schools in Skopje has had such positive results, and we hope it can be replicated through local ownership in the rest of the country.

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The Mission seems to have incorporated gender- related questions into most of its programmes. We strongly believe that mainstreaming the efforts on gender equality like this, is the most effective way to achieve sustainable and long- lasting results. We therefore encourage the Mission to continue this path.

Norway strongly supports the reform agenda of North Macedonia and see the OSCE Mission as an important actor in moving this agenda forward. Further support should be given especially in the areas of good governance, judicial reform, and the fight against corruption.

It is important to resolve the outstanding bilateral issue with Bulgaria on language and identity. This issue threatens to halt further reforms as well as European integration, not only in North Macedonia, but also in the broader region.

Lastly, as chair of the Human Dimension Committee, we would like to thank the Mission for its willingness to share its experiences with the committee during our April meeting. We view the field operations as one of the OSCEs strongest assets, and their best practices and lessons learned deserve more attention.

Thank you