



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY  
TO THE OSCE

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

As delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council,  
Vienna, 21 September 2023

Mr Chair,

I join others in welcoming Ambassador Bruce Berton to the Permanent Council and thank him for his report.

We thank the OSCE Presence' support to Albanian reform efforts, including its work on environmental and human rights protection, as well as in fields such as arms control and anti-corruption. We particularly appreciate the Presence's efforts to ensure inclusive representation in decision-making processes and underline the importance of mainstreaming gender across all activities. We commend the Presence in its flexibility when dealing with the ongoing difficult budgetary situation.

Norway appreciates the Presence's support to Albanian institutions and civil society when it comes to promoting a comprehensive, human rights-based approach to combating trafficking in human beings. This includes efforts to strengthen Albania's law-enforcement and prosecution capacities as well as to ensure victim-centered prosecutions.

Mr Chair,

We welcome the peaceful and generally competitive manner in which the local elections in Albania on May 14 were conducted. We were glad to see that the opposition parties decided to participate, thus enabling a more democratic process.

Norway is a staunch supporter of Albania's reform path to EU accession. We commend Albania's commitment to a screening process well on track to deliver on key reforms. We urge the government of Albania to intensify its efforts to strengthening the functioning of the judiciary, and countering corruption and organized crime, as well as to ensuring media freedom.

We acknowledge Albania as a key contributor to stability in the Western Balkans. The potential for further destabilization in the north of Kosovo is of great concern, and we are thankful for your commitment to finding effective solutions to the EU facilitated dialogue path to normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia.

Mr Chair,

Norway sees the field missions as an integral part of what makes the OSCE unique. Assisting participating States in upholding our commonly agreed commitments, through capacity building and sharing of best practices is worthwhile. At the same time, this work is reliant on having the means to do so. If appropriate, we would ask ambassador Burton to elaborate on the particular priorities that have to be made due to the budgetary situation.

We again urge all participating States to join consensus on the unified budget.

We once again thank the OSCE Presence for its important work. We wish ambassador Berton and his team all the best in the continued work to assist Albania in implementing its OSCE commitments and reiterate our full support to Albania's continued reform efforts.

Thank you.