



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

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

Delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 2 September 2021

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Thank you,

I join others in welcoming Ambassador Vincenzo Del Monaco to the Permanent Council and thank him for his report and for the interesting discussions in the informal meeting organized by the CiO yesterday.

The relations between Norway and Albania are good. Albania is an important partner for Norway in our cooperation with the Western Balkan countries, and it plays a key role in promoting stability in the region. We thank Albania for its excellent work in a leading role of this organisation, first as Chair and now as a member of the troika. This experience will contribute to the work as Albania joins the UN Security Council next year.

Norway commends Albania on the peaceful and orderly conduct of the 2021 parliamentary elections, set in the difficult times of a pandemic. As the whole political spectrum participated, the new parliament has the best possibilities of becoming a fully functional one, with a robust opposition.

Norway appreciates the Presence's support to reform efforts in Albania. They are important for the security and welfare of the Albanian people. In accord with the will of the host country, they can aid in further integration into Euro-Atlantic structures.

We note that the fight against corruption remains a key challenge for Albania. We are therefore pleased to hear about good cooperation between the Presence and relevant Albanian authorities in this regard and look forward to future updates on this work.

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The report mentions activities promoting gender equality and lists the number of men and women participants in different activities. We would welcome further elaboration on the general approach to integrate a gender perspective in all activities, providing measures to reach all groups of society.

We would appreciate more result-oriented reporting. The current activity-oriented reporting provides limited information about the impact of the work of the Presence. For example, what are the tangible results of the Presence's support to prison reform? Which results does the Presence see from the efforts over many years to promote investigative journalism?

We do not raise these questions because we doubt the effects of the work of the Presence in Albania. On the contrary – we are confident that there are many positive results, and that is why it is important that the Presence makes these results more visible to us as participating States and donors. We hope this is something which will be reflected in its next report.

Mdm. Chair,

Norway sees the field missions as one of the main added values of the OSCE. Assisting participating States in upholding our commonly agreed commitments through capacity building and sharing of best practices is worthwhile, and we commend the team in Albania for their work. Norway will remain an active partner in support of Albania's work on reforms, and a supporter of the OSCE Presence in Albania.

Thank you.