



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE HEAD OF THE OSCE MISSION IN KOSOVO

As delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad
to the Permanent Council
Vienna, 2 February 2017

Mr Chair,

I wish to thank Ambassador Jan Braathu for an informative and wide-ranging report on developments in Kosovo. The report provides a useful overview of recent events. Political tension has been a feature of Kosovo also during this reporting period. However, although the period has certainly proved challenging, the security situation in Kosovo during the last months has been stable.

The unresolved issues of the state border demarcation with Montenegro and the Association of Serb-majority municipalities represent major challenges.

Norway is concerned with these developments, as they negatively affect the legislature and other important institutions' ability to function.

As the report of Ambassador Braathu makes clear, several worrying events have taken place in Kosovo recently. However, it is promising that the EU-facilitated Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue continues, and has produced some tangible results in the implementation of the agreements on freedom of movement, telecommunication and justice. The EU-facilitated dialogue is a significant contribution to stability and security in Kosovo and the region.

The continued work on electoral reform is positive, although without full participation of the opposition. Notable developments have also occurred in addressing organized crime, war crimes and corruption. Investigations of wiretapping and the indictment filed by an EULEX prosecutor on 24th of October are examples of this.

Norway supports the Mission's important contribution to democratization, minority rights, returns, reconciliation and security throughout Kosovo. The Mission is a trusted and efficient international partner on the ground. As demonstrated by the increase in requests for engagement coming from key stakeholders, the Mission's relevance is increasing. The increased reliance on a cross-sectorial method of work seems promising, including sectors such as countering violent

extremism, Northern Kosovo and gender mainstreaming. We particularly appreciate the mission's broad range of activities focused on women and the gender perspective.

Norway also appreciates the focus on human and community rights, the engagement in education, and the work to facilitate inter-institutional cooperation on durable solutions for displaced persons from Kosovo.

We welcome the Mission's activities to promote mutual respect and reconciliation among all ethnic groups in Kosovo and establish a viable multi-ethnic society. The basis for a multi-ethnic society is that the rights of each citizen are fully and equally respected.

In addition, the Mission's contribution to improving access to justice, its support of development of democratic institutions and its efforts in enhancing security and public safety are highly appreciated.

Public statements by the Mission are significant expressions of OSCE concern and engagement.

In conclusion, I would like to commend the important fact that the Mission continues to be held in high regard in all communities in Kosovo. This is due to its track record of professionalism and impartiality.

Thank you, Mr Chair