



PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE
HEAD OF THE OSCE MISSION IN KOSOVO,
AMBASSADOR TIM GULDIMANN

As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, January 31 2008

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

Like others, Norway warmly welcomes the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Ambassador Tim Guldumann, to the Permanent Council. We thank him for his lucid report on the situation in Kosovo, and we highly value his comprehensive overview of the Mission's activities. The multitude and the character of the activities are a strong testimony to the importance of the Mission's work and the indispensability of this organization's presence in Kosovo.

Mr. Chairman,

The future status of Kosovo is one of the most significant issues currently facing the OSCE region. Status quo is not an alternative. Whatever will be the outcome, we all share the responsibility of ensuring stability and security in Kosovo and in the region as a whole. It is indeed important that the necessary flexibility and good will are shown by all sides in order to cope with challenges that will arise, not least in the field of human rights and minority rights.

It is crucial that the international community acts in a concerted manner in order to deal as rationally and reasonably as possible with future developments. In this regard, it is of vital importance that we secure a continued strong presence from the international community in Kosovo. We cannot afford a vacuum in the international presence when UNMIK concludes its mission.

Mr. Chairman,

Norway highly values the work of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo. We believe that regardless of coming developments, our Mission will continue to have an important role to play. The activities of our Mission will be as relevant as ever before in order to promote a peaceful,

democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo, based on the rule of law, internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. This essential work is for the benefit of all citizens of Kosovo, regardless of national identity and ethnic origin, and must continue.

On 15 November last year, in his speech to this very Council, UN Special Representative in Kosovo, Joachim Rucker, highlighted the OSCE's work in Kosovo and stated that the Mission's comparative advantage, namely the extensive field presence, now, more than ever, is an indispensable tool through which the rest of the international community remains well informed on what is happening throughout Kosovo. We could not agree more and consider the Mission's presence in the field to be a very valuable asset in the longer run, not least with regard to minority issues.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, let me take the opportunity to commend the Head of Mission, Ambassador Guldemann, on the tenacity of purpose and professionalism he and his staff show in their daily work, which was very much reflected in the excellent contribution to the organization of the elections in Kosovo in November last year. I wish them all the best for the challenging times ahead and sincerely hope that the Mission will be able to continue its work till its mandate can be regarded as completed.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.