



**PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY  
TO THE OSCE**

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

Delivered by Henning Hj. Johansen, Chargé d'Affaires a.i.,  
to the Permanent Council  
Vienna, 31 January 2019

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Mr. Chair,

By long-standing decision of the Permanent Council, the participating States maintain that the OSCE Mission in Kosovo takes the international community's lead role in matters relating to institution and democracy building, and human rights in Kosovo. Today, we thank Ambassador Jan Braathu for reporting on the progress towards this end.

Allow me first to repeat our well-known position: the field operations are the clearest example of the added value of the OSCE, also in Kosovo. By its mandate, the mission cooperates with all key stakeholders: institutions, communities, and international actors. It offers support and expertise to enhance compliance with good governance and international human rights standards.

We continue to appreciate the mission's steadfast commitment to the mainstreaming of gender into its activities. The mission has concluded the first year of implementation of its Gender Equality Action plan, having conducted over 80 activities aimed at both programmatic as well as internal activity. What objectives have been achieved, what lessons have been learned, and how do these inform the implementation of the plan in 2019?

On the programmatic side, the mission reports on significant efforts in preventing gender based violence, both through awareness raising and through building capacity in the Kosovo Police. The cost to society of violence against women clearly demonstrates that gender equality is not merely a normative issue about what is right. It is a practical issue that empowers societies to function more effectively. It is also a tool for the achievement of mission objectives.

In accordance with its mandate, the mission is guided by the importance of bringing about mutual respect and reconciliation among all ethnic groups in Kosovo and of establishing a viable multi-ethnic society where the rights of each citizen are fully and equally respected. The report provides an important overview of the situation in non-Albanian communities and on efforts to prevent ethnic tension. Strong democratic institutions that safeguard and strengthen the rule of law are necessary in this respect. Norway remains in strong support of the mission's efforts to strengthen the rule of law in Kosovo, including through monitoring and reporting.

Other efforts are also important: Ensuring the safety of journalists is important for the press and public to be able to keep authorities accountable. Capacity building for police and prosecution offices on the Financial Action Task Force recommendations aids global efforts against violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism. The mission's support to anti-corruption activities helps ensure effective and efficient law enforcement.

Norway firmly supports the dialogue to normalize relations between Prishtina and Belgrade. Sustainable regional stability and prosperity requires comprehensive normalization of relations, including a legally binding agreement. The process demands determination, courage and will to compromise on both sides. In times of tension and uncertainty, we must remember that the mandate of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo is completely independent of this goal. Institution and democracy building, and adherence to human rights, have inherent value, regardless of how this dialogue proceeds.

Thank you