



PC.DEL/80/16  
25 January 2016

ENGLISH only

## PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

### STATEMENT ON NEW NORWEGIAN STRATEGY TO PROMOTE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND INDEPENDENT MEDIA

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile  
to the Permanent Council  
Vienna, 21 January 2016

Mr Chairman,

I would like to inform colleagues that the Norwegian government on Monday this week launched a new strategy to promote freedom of expression and independent media.

The strategy is a follow up of the 2014 white paper on human rights in Norway's foreign policy and development cooperation.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Børge Brende, presented the strategy for representatives from civil society, academia and the media, with Media Representative Dunja Mijatovic and UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression David Kaye as guest speakers.

In his presentation Foreign Minister Brende said that freedom of expression is the foundation on which all other democratic freedoms rest. Freedom of expression must be safeguarded and promoted tirelessly, every day and in every single country. We want everyone to be able to express their opinions openly, and be able to receive and share information freely.

The Foreign Minister also pointed out that we must recognise that inclusive dialogue and the free exchange of opinions is our best – and sometimes the only – alternative to repression, violence and conflict.

Freedom of expression and independent media are under growing pressure. Norway is therefore strengthening its international work in this field, Foreign Minister Brende concluded.

Mr. Chairman,

As part of Norway's foreign and development policy, the Government will focus on three cornerstones:

- **strengthen our support for independent media;**
- **provide protection for people who express their opinions publicly; and**
- **improve public access to information.**

Mr. Chairman,

Ms. Dunja Mijatović expressed that she very much welcomed the initiative by the Norwegian government to implement a comprehensive approach on how to promote freedom of expression in its foreign and development policy. She called for the strategy to serve as an example for other states.

Mr. Chairman,

The third cornerstone, 'Access to information', is a new focus area for Norway's international efforts. Access to information, both on-line and offline, is vital if people are to be able to make informed decisions about their own lives, and to make it possible for them to understand and exercise their rights.

Active efforts are needed to ensure that freedom of expression is safeguarded as new forms of communication and new technology platforms are developed.

Norway will therefore support efforts to strengthen independent media, ensure that journalists and human rights defenders can freely express their opinions and strengthen internet freedom and access to information.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.