



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

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

Delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad to the Permanent
Council Vienna, 5 September 2019

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

For 20 years now, the OSCE Mission in Kosovo has held 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 another report on progress.

As decided by its mandate, the Mission in Kosovo cooperates with all key stakeholders, including institutions, communities, and international actors. It offers support and expertise to enhance compliance with good governance and international human rights standards. Through this cooperation, the mission delivers progress and results for Kosovo and the region beyond.

The mission's reporting on gender mainstreaming continues to be exemplary. It is clear that the mission continues to be deeply committed to gender equality and the integration of a gender perspective as a means better to achieve its mandate. For example, the increase of female police cadets, from barely three percent in 2016 to over thirty percent today, is a significant and welcome result.

While gender mainstreaming is ultimately about equality, that is not its immediate objective. In the first instance, gender mainstreaming serves merely to take into account the differences in needs, conditions and circumstances between women and men, in order to achieve the mandate more effectively. We would still appreciate a mid-year update on the implementation of the mission's gender action plan.

The mission's activity towards the youth of Kosovo is important for reducing barriers between the different groups living in Kosovo and for building a better future for all. This is particularly important in Kosovo, where the average age is only 26 and almost forty percent of the population is 18 years old or younger.

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. The work of the mission is an important contribution to reducing tension and improving governance throughout the territory. As shown in the report, it brings results.

The continuing efforts to promote inter-community cooperation towards enhancing relations between communities are bearing fruits. In June, the municipalities of the Mitrovicë/Mitrovica South region signed the Inter-Municipal Declaration for the Promotion of Inter-Community Dialogue and Co-operation. This welcome development brings the number of municipalities committed to enhancing inter-ethnic cooperation through practical action plans to 29.

The resignation of the Haradinaj government, following the announcement of the Prime Minister to resign, has naturally garnered significant attention in this reporting period. Elections have been scheduled for 6 October, and the impasse in the dialogue between Belgrade and Prishtina continues. This bodes for both a tense and complex situation.

It remains essential to progress in the dialogue to normalize relations. Sustainable regional stability and prosperity require comprehensive normalization of relations, ultimately through a legally binding agreement. The process demands determination, courage, and will to compromise on both sides. In the absence of progress, the OSCE Mission in Kosovo remains as important as ever: As the international community's lead on institution and democracy building, as well as human rights in Kosovo, the mission performs tasks and achieves results that are valuable on their own. The building of well-functioning democratic institutions has value far beyond its contribution to European integration.