



**PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE**

STATEMENT ON NORWEGIAN EXERCISE COLD RESPONSE 2026

As delivered by Military Adviser Colonel Bjørn Gaute Herlyng at the Forum for Security Cooperation,
Vienna, 18 February 2026

Madame Chair,

As a small country with powerful neighbours, Norway considers it essential to maintain stability and predictability, particularly in the High North. Norway has always been very vocal about our non-threatening intentions and have always acted accordingly in our defence planning and preparations. To maintain stability, we need the appropriate capabilities to deter any potential adversaries, and, if necessary, defend against a foreign attack. NATO remains a defensive alliance. Deterrence and defence are strengthened together with our allies. For deterrence to remain credible, our forces must exercise together.

As notified, latest in CBM/NO/26/0003/F25/O, in accordance with the relevant provisions and spirit of the Vienna Document, Norway will conduct one major national exercise with allied participation in 2026 – Exercise Cold Response 2026 (CORE26).

CORE26 will be conducted from 9 to 19 March 2026. Participating allied contingents will conduct additional pre- and after-exercise activities linked to national needs. The main land exercise area will be in the southern parts of the county of Troms and the northern parts of the county of Nordland. The exercise will include naval and air operations in adjoining waters and airspace. Finnish and Swedish forces will participate from an exercise area in Finland.

The number of participants is expected to be approximately 11,850 on land in Norway and about 25,000 in total, including naval forces and forces in Finland. The land forces in Norway will be from France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Norway. Other allies involved in the exercise are Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Sweden and Türkiye, with Finnish and Swedish ground forces in Finland.

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The purpose of Exercise CORE26 is preserve and further develop tactical military skills and affiliated joint functions within the framework of Defence Plan Arctic Guard and the priorities of the Norwegian Chief of Defence. CORE26 is a vigilance activity in the High North. It is in accordance with NATO's Concept for Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area.

The exercise encompasses preparations for and warfighting in a high-intensity scenario in demanding arctic cold weather climate. Furthermore, CORE26 will focus on training and exercising the Allied forces and command structures at the tactical level, facilitated by the joint operational level, enhancing cross domain cooperation and interoperability.

CORE26 will also facilitate for an effective use of allied forces under demanding climatic conditions as well as an effective transition from peace to crisis to conflict. After the end of the Exercise all units will return to their peacetime locations.

CORE26 is a recurring exercise with organisation, participation and activities typical for traditional Allied winter exercises in Norway. For the sake of transparency and risk reduction, Norway chooses to share information about the exercise, in line with the intentions in the mandate for the Forum for security cooperation and the Vienna Document. As a further measure of security and confidence building, Norway has invited Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova and the Republic of Serbia to a voluntary observation of the exercise. If any nations should require more information about the exercise, Norway will respond appropriately to all requests, reaffirming our commitment to the obligations of transparency outlined in the Vienna Document.

Madame Chair, thank you.