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**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS BY H.E. MOBAREZ RASHIDI,
MINISTER OF COUNTER NARCOTICS
OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 13 March 2014

Mr Chairman,

I aligned myself with the European Union statement. In my national capacity and with special reference to Norway's bilateral engagement with Afghanistan I would like to add a few points.

First, the presidential election in April will mark an important milestone in the efforts to develop Afghanistan into a stable and democratic society. We must ensure that the election process contributes to confidence in a democratic future for Afghanistan and to reconciliation between the parties to the conflict.

To help achieve these objectives Norway has contributed 12.5 million Euros to UNDP for election preparations and execution. We are – of course – also very supportive of the ODIHR Election Support Team.

Second, our partnership with Afghanistan is based on the commitments we agreed to at the Tokyo conference in July 2012. In return for the international community's long-term support, we expect the Afghan government to honor its promise to continue vigorous reform efforts.

Afghanistan has taken important steps and achieved some positive results in the areas of security, education, health, freedom of the media, government institutions and economic growth. But there are still endemic corruption problems, abuse of power and violations of human rights.

And finally, the increased violence against women is destructive for the efforts of building an Afghanistan safe for all. We therefore strongly urge Afghan authorities to continue their efforts to improve the situation for Afghan women, including by implementing recently adopted measures to strengthen their legal protection.

Thank you.