



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

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

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires a.i.
Minister Counsellor Henning Hjortland Johansen
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 31 August 2017

Mr. Chairperson,

I thank Ambassador Braathu for an informative and wide-ranging report on developments in Kosovo during the last months. The report provides a useful overview of recent events.

It is positive that the 11 June Early Kosovo Assembly election process was orderly, and that no significant irregularities were observed. It is - however - of concern that a new government has still not been established, and that a parliament speaker has not been appointed. Kosovo needs a stable government with a clear eye for regional cooperation and European integration.

Norway is concerned that the stalemate will have negative effect on issues of importance for the stability and prosperity of Kosovo and the region. We are especially concerned about the lack of progress in the EU-facilitated Dialogue on normalization of relations between Belgrade and Prishtina. The EU facilitated dialogue is a significant contribution to stability and security in Kosovo and the region. Four agreements that were signed two years ago have not been implemented yet, one of them being the agreement on Association of Serb-majority municipalities.

Another important issue is the border demarcation with Montenegro. This issue is a prerequisite for visa-free access to the Schengen area, and affects Kosovo's progress in the EU integration process.

As the report of Ambassador Braathu makes clear, several worrying events have taken place in Kosovo recently. However, notable developments have occurred in the field of regional co-operation. The progress observed in the Berlin Process, and the outcome of the Trieste Summit is positive.

Mr. Chairperson,

Norway supports the Mission's important contribution to human rights, democratisation, security and public safety in Kosovo. The Mission is a trusted and efficient international partner on the ground. As demonstrated by the growth in requests for engagement coming from key stakeholders, the Mission's relevance is increasing. We particularly appreciate the Mission's broad range of activities focused on women and the gender perspective.

Norway also appreciates the focus on human and community rights, the engagement in education, and the work to facilitate inter-institutional cooperation on durable solutions for displaced persons from Kosovo.

We welcome the Mission's activities to promote mutual respect and reconciliation among all ethnic groups in Kosovo and establish a viable multi-ethnic society. The basis for a multi-ethnic society is that the rights of each citizen are fully and equally respected.

In addition, the Mission's contribution to improving access to justice, its support of development of democratic institutions and its efforts in enhancing security and public safety are highly appreciated.

In the Rule of Law area, we also welcome that the Mission continues the Trial Monitoring Programme.

Norway has a close and constructive co-operation with Kosovo on a bilateral basis. Security and prosperity for Kosovo is a key factor for the stability of the Western-Balkan region.

In conclusion, I would like to commend the important fact that the Mission continues to be held in high regard in all communities in Kosovo. This is due to its track record of professionalism and impartiality.

Thank you, Mr Chair