



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

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

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 3 September 2015

Mr Chairman,

I would like to commend Ambassador Schlumberger and the OSCE Mission in Kosovo for the way they fulfil their mandate. The Mission is highly regarded and trusted by all communities throughout Kosovo.

Mr Chairman,

Problems of governance and development in fragile states are increasingly becoming global security concerns. In the latest report from Freedom House Kosovo is described as a Semi-Consolidated Authoritarian Regime, and has constant low scores on corruption and decreasing scores on Judicial Framework and Independence.

Therefore, further OSCE support to good governance and strengthening of the judiciary is urgently needed to prevent and fight problems of corruption and organized crime. We are convinced that progress on these issues is a condition for moving forward towards Euro-Atlantic integration. These are priorities also in our own assistance to Kosovo.

The OSCE Mission provides crucial support to security and public safety. In particular, the assistance the Mission provides to the Government in drafting the Strategy and Action Plan on the Prevention of Violent Extremism and Radicalization that lead to Terrorism should be commended.

Mr Chairman,

In late 2014-early 2015 there was a sudden increase of irregular migration from Kosovo to various EU countries. Many aimed for asylum based on socio-economic factors. Some of them are now returning to Kosovo, and often find themselves in a worse economic situation than when they left. The OSCE Mission is doing important work with local partners in re-integrating the migrants.

Mr. Chairman,

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo has continued to provide support for projects on gender equality. During 2015, these projects have contributed to strengthening women's empowerment and access within institutions of public decision-making. By organizing regional conferences and supporting women's caucus groups, the OSCE Mission has managed to create mechanisms that can help resolve different issues of concern to women. This is a good contribution to strengthening women's participation in public life.

Mr Chairman,

During the last few months, there have been several reported attacks on journalists in Kosovo. While Freedom House reported a slight improvement in media freedom in Kosovo from 2014 to 2015, we support the mission's priority to further strengthen freedom of speech and media. Creating a helpline for journalists, as well as bringing together journalists from Kosovo and Serbia for closer co-operation, are important steps in the right direction.

Thank you, Mr Chairman