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**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY NORWAY IN RESPONSE TO MINISTER OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS, H.E. SEBASTIAN KURZ**

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council
Vienna, 14 July 2016

Vielen Dank, Herr Vorsitzender,

Sehr geehrter Herr Aussenminister Kurz,

Im Namen Norwegens heisse ich Sie im Ständigen Rat herzlich willkommen und danke Ihnen für den ausführlichen Bericht über die Prioritäten des österreichischen OSZE-Vorsitzes 2017.

Die österreichischen Prioritäten decken sich grösstenteils mit denen Norwegens. Daher bin ich überzeugt, dass unsere Organisation auch nächstes Jahr in den besten Händen sein wird.

Ich kann mich dem bisher Gesagten meiner Kollegen, unter anderem der Slowakei im Namen der Europäischen Union, nur anschliessen. Deshalb möchte ich mich auf fünf kurze Punkte beschränken, die für uns sehr wichtig sind.

Ich werde nun auf Englisch fortfahren.

Mr Chairman,

A leitmotif of the incumbent German OSCE chairmanship is renewing dialogue, rebuilding trust, restoring security. We fully support the German efforts in this regard. I must however underline that efforts to re-establish dialogue and thereby restore security, cannot mean closing our eyes to violations of the fundamental principles that underpin our organisation. Renewing our commitment to the OSCE acquis must therefore be an important task.

My second point is on the crisis in and around Ukraine. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol and destabilizing actions in Donbas continue to pose a serious challenge to European security. The OSCE plays an

important role in our efforts to reach a peaceful settlement of the conflict and restoring Ukraine's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, within its internationally recognized borders. We will continue to support an active and constructive role for the OSCE, including through seconding qualified personnel to the Special Monitoring Mission. Let me add that we appreciate Minister Kurz' focus on resolution of the protracted conflicts in Moldova and Georgia as well as of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

My third point, Mr Chairman, is that respect for human rights is a prerequisite for secure, stable and prosperous societies. We therefore note with great concern that human rights are under increasing pressure in a number of OSCE participating States, most of them, but not all of them, east of Vienna. I therefore welcome the incoming Chair's focus on the Human Dimension.

Of late we have witnessed a rather hostile attitude from certain participating States towards the OSCE institutions. Attempts at paralyzing them are motivated by a wish to weaken the OSCE and must not be allowed to succeed. The institutions are important not only for the third dimension. Strong institutions are important also in our efforts to counter transnational threats. An key priority of any Chair-in-Office must therefore be to safeguard the autonomy of ODIHR, RFOM and HCNM.

Mr Chairman,

At the Belgrade Ministerial in December last year a majority of Ministers highlighted the challenges posed by terrorism and migration to the security and stability in the OSCE area. Through a number of important decisions taken by our Ministers we have now defined a concrete and substantive role for the OSCE in countering terrorism. During the last few months we have had in-depth discussions on migration, which we are confident will help us define a useful role for the OSCE also in this area.

My final point, Mr Chairman, is this: even in difficult times – or rather *especially* in difficult times – must we continue to keep conventional arms control and Confidence and Security Building Measures high on our agenda.

Thank you, Mr Chairman