



STATEMENT IN REPLY TO THE BRIEFING GIVEN BY
AMBASSADOR VILLADSEN

Delivered by Minister Counsellor Henning Hj. Johansen at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 24 January 2019

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chair,

I would like to join others in welcoming Ambassador Willadsen to the Permanent Council, and thank him for his report.

Norway strongly supports Ukraine's reform process. Ukraine has made good progress and is implementing important reforms, but much remains to be done, also in this election year. We believe the OSCE institutions and the PCU are highly capable in assisting Ukraine.

Implementation of OSCE commitments is an important part of the reform process. We appreciate the PCU's support to ensuring transparency of the election administration process and increasing cyber security. We also appreciate the close cooperation the PCU has with the ODIHR, within existing mandates and procedures, in preparations for the upcoming election observations. Public trust in the legitimacy of elections is essential.

For any reform to be effective, the authorities must understand the needs of the citizens and respond to them. We believe the Dialogue for Reform and Social Cohesion can be

helpful in creating awareness of problems in the conflict zone and finding constructive solutions. This will contribute to stability and economic development.

Journalists and media are important in providing information, but can also contribute to political polarisation. We commend the two projects on supporting conflict-sensitive journalism and strengthening media self-regulation. This is at the heart of building an inclusive society based on mutual respect.

With many international donors involved in Ukraine, we would like to hear more on what you and the PCU do to avoid overlap and coordinate your efforts with those of other organisations, both inside and outside the OSCE family.

Norway highly appreciates your efforts to promote gender related issues, including by assisting in introducing gender focal points in courts and the Ministry of the Interior. We look forward to seeing the effects of introducing gender mainstreaming in all areas of your work later this year, as was mentioned during yesterday's informal meeting.

The OSCE and other partners can provide expertise and build capacity. However, it is the responsibility of Ukrainian authorities to make full use of the knowledge and capacity they acquire, and to build on it in further development.

Norway will continue to support the PCU in its efforts, and we will continue our bilateral support towards building a democratic and stable Ukraine.

Thank you.