



**PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE HEAD OF THE OSCE
MISSION TO SERBIA**

As delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council, Vienna, 13
June 2024

Thank you, Madame Chair.

Let me start by joining others in welcoming Ambassador Braathu to the Permanent Council and by thanking him and his team for an excellent report. We would especially like to commend the Mission's competent work in areas such as the rule of law and strengthening the capacities of law enforcement, as well as human and minority rights, media freedom, environmental good governance, gender mainstreaming, and by integrating a youth perspective in all of this.

Dear colleagues,

Allow me to highlight two points regarding the concerns mentioned in the report.

Firstly, the safety of journalists, access to a free media and the tolerance for minorities and difference of opinion are all pillars in a functioning democracy. Norway notes with concern the high number of attacks against journalists and continues to encourage the Serbian government to speak up against all forms of attacks on journalists and civil society. It is important to follow up the legislative work with the implementation of the new media laws.

With its newly consolidated mandate, we also encourage the Serbian government to take steps in accordance with ODIHR's recommendations to ensure that political engagement is free and safe for all. This includes observing the rights of the Albanian minority, which are best protected through the normalization of relations with Kosovo.

Second, Norway is a proud contributor of extrabudgetary funding for the OSCE Mission in Serbia. However, the adoption of a unified budget is proving crucial for the Missions to conduct their activities and avoid attrition among their staff. We call on all delegations to

do their utmost to compromise and find consensus on the budget for 2024 as this will better allow the Missions to operate effectively and with foresight.

Madame Chair,

A stable, pluralistic democracy is no easy feat to consolidate. Norway will continue to support the Serbian authorities in its close cooperation with the Mission to implement the necessary reforms in accordance with its OSCE commitments.

In conclusion, I wish to commend you, Jan, and your team on the dedication and professionalism you show in your daily work and wish you every success in advancing the work of the Mission.

Thank you, Madame Chair.