



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT ON THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN
GEORGIA 5 JANUARY 2008**

As delivered by Deputy Permanent Representative, Mr. Asbjørn Brandsrud
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
January 17, 2008

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

Norway adhered to the EU Presidential Declaration just read out by the Slovenian Ambassador on behalf of the EU, but would like to add the following:

Looking at the recent political development in Georgia, the Presidential Elections held on 5 January, were a litmus test for the democratic development and political stability in the country.

Norway is pleased to note that the preliminary reports from international observers, including the ODIHR and the OSCE's Parliamentary Assembly, assess the elections as in essence consistent with most OSCE and Council of Europe commitments and standards for democratic elections. The result can thus be taken as a true expression of the will of the electorate.

International monitors have, however, identified significant problems that should be corrected. At the same time, it is essential that any complaints about irregularities are thoroughly and adequately investigated.

Although considerable progress has been made in only a few years, the elections demonstrated that Georgia still has some ground to cover as regards democratic development. Ahead of the upcoming parliamentary elections, all political actors should engage in a dialogue to address the challenges and shortcomings that have been identified by international election observers.

We urge all political actors to show restraint in the months ahead and resolve any political differences within democratic institutions. Norway stands ready to continue to support efforts to strengthen democracy in Georgia.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.