



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

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

Delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 15 October 2020

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chair,

I join others in welcoming Ambassador Jan Braathu to the Permanent Council, and thank him for what was probably his last report to in his present capacity. Through this report, the mission in Kosovo has again showed how it contributes to the democratic development of Kosovo, as mandated by the participating States, in a variety of areas.

We appreciate the Mission's efforts to adjust its work to be able to achieve many of its original goals for the reporting period, despite the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. We commend the Mission's ability to see emerging issues where its competence could be of use to the government and the communities. An example is contributing to the diffusion of important information about the pandemic and about the necessary infection control measures in minority languages, including braille. We also commend that the Mission was able to find ways in which its staff could continue the vital direct dialogue with communities under these difficult circumstances.

Norway welcomes the National Assembly of Kosovo's recent adoption of an amendment to the Constitution giving direct effect to the *Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence*. We have seen from the report that the Mission assisted crisis centres in preparing for an increase in cases during the pandemic, and that it facilitated agreements on financing of crisis centres in several regions. The Mission's continued focus on gender equality and domestic violence will be of high importance.

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Priority should also be given to the continuation of activities towards the youth of Kosovo, such as school debates on gender equality, trainings for young journalists, and trust- building activities. Young people are the most effective advocates for change.

Chair,

As the regular reporting to the Council is mainly activity based, we would encourage the ambassador – now that he is finishing his term – to share with the participating States his reflections on the larger impact of the Mission in Kosovo during his period in office.

Let me end by thanking ambassador Braathu warmly for his engagement, efforts and investments in Kosovo over the past years, and congratulate him on his achievements as head of this mission. You have made us/Norway proud, ambassador!

Thank you