



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE
REPORT OF THE MISSION TO BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Delivered by Deputy Head of Mission Henrik Malvik at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 31 March 2022

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Thank you,

Like others I warmly welcome ambassador Kavalec back to the Permanent Council and thank her for her presentation as well as for the Mission's written report.

Mr. Chairman,

Norway remains an active partner for Bosnia and Herzegovina, both bilaterally and within the OSCE. We continue to support reforms that increase stability and security in the country and in the broader region.

However, we are concerned about the political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is time for all parties to play a constructive role in ending the political crisis through dialogue, and thereby helping to build a better tomorrow for their citizens.

Let me reiterate Norway's full support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and fundamental structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a single sovereign state, comprising two entities. Norway will continue to address issues in a balanced way and remain a constructive partner in the country.

Mr. Chairman,

It is important that the upcoming general elections in October be held, and we encourage the adoption of necessary legislation to ensure free and fair elections. According to the Mission there is support among citizens for further reform of the electoral laws. The Mission's continued assistance in this reform is essential. We welcome plans to assist in the implementation of ODIHR's recommendations regarding the electoral process.

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Norway and others contribute financially to the Mission's support to the Central Election Commission and their efforts to ensure the conduct of elections in compliance with international standards. However, it is essential that the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina ensures that the Commission has sufficient resources to perform its duties. This includes securing, in a timely manner, the funding needed for necessary preparations of the elections in October.

The report of the Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina gives a detailed overview of activities specifically related to gender equality and gender-based violence, and the Mission is without doubt active in these fields. We are pleased to hear that the Gender Action Plan of the Mission has strengthened its gender mainstreaming in general, however we hope that this mainstreaming across all activities will be even more visible in future reporting.

Mr. Chairman,

Norway considers the field operations to be a key asset of the OSCE, as they provide tailored and dedicated support to the participating States. The OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina plays an important role in supporting reform efforts. The Mission has developed competence and has network in all parts of the country and is perceived to have a balanced approach to its work. This is particularly important in the present political situation in the country.

We wish ambassador Kavalec and her team all the best in the continued work to assist Bosnia and Herzegovina in implementing its OSCE commitments.

Thank you