



**PERMANENT DELEGATION  
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT ON PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN FYR MACEDONIA**

As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
June, 5 2008

Mr. Chairman,

Norway joins others in regretting that the parliamentary elections in FYR Macedonia on 1 June did not meet international standards in some important respects. Violent incidents, intimidation and ballot box stuffing characterised the elections in several polling stations. Although some of the incidents were more linked to personal conflicts, including infighting between criminal elements, than to political issues, the security situation in a number of polling stations was such that it deprived a sizable proportion of the electorate of the right to express its will due to irresponsible actions from some activists. We agree with the statement of international observers that this cast a shadow over the elections.

Norway urges the appropriate authorities to thoroughly investigate all violations of the law and take remedial steps. The way the rerun in a number of polling stations will be conducted and complaints dealt with will have an important impact on the final assessment of the elections. We have reason to believe that Macedonian authorities now will take these tasks very seriously, and we are pleased to note statements to that end.

At the same time, we take positive note of the fact that in the vast majorities of constituencies elections were conducted in a calm and orderly manner that gave most voters a real choice between political alternatives. In four of the six electoral districts there were no serious incidents at all, accounting for more than 98 % of the polling stations. On the positive side, we also note that media presented voters with a wide range of political views, although the coverage by the two public TV channels was not free from bias in favour of the incumbent government parties.

Mr. Chairman,

The less than optimal way in which the parliamentary elections were conducted can be interpreted as a set-back for the now long-lasting positive democratic development in the country. We believe, however, that the set-back is temporary and that the serious shortcomings can be rectified. Norway remains committed to continue the cooperation with FYR Macedonia in the efforts to build a democratic society based on the rule of law, which remains a precondition for integration into European and transatlantic structures, - aspirations that FYR Macedonia has, and which we warmly welcome and fully support.