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PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF CYPRUS
AS CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

As delivered by Counsellor Hilde Austad
to the Permanent Council
Vienna, 26 January 2017

Mr Chair,

We greatly appreciate this opportunity to hear the priorities of the Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, Foreign Minister Kasoulides, and to exchange views with him.

We see the Council of Europe's work to promote respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law as fundamental for stable, inclusive and secure societies. Lack of enjoyment of human rights, discrimination and exclusion will lead to instability. The Council of Europe and the OSCE share the same goals and we see our efforts as mutually reinforcing.

Mr Chair,

We appreciate and support the priorities Cyprus has outlined for their chairmanship: Reinforcing democratic security in Europe by ensuring rights and freedoms for all, building democratic citizenship and strengthening the rule of law. These are important aims in themselves and will also contribute to preventing violent extremism and radicalization that can lead to terrorism.

Preventing and countering terrorism is an area where both our organisations are doing important work. We should keep each other updated and cooperate where this is useful. We see merit in increased cooperation also in other areas, on issues such as promoting tolerance and non-discrimination, national minorities, election observation and freedom of the media, not least between field missions.

Mr Chair,

Building democratic citizenship needs long-term effort and expertise. The Council of Europe has established the European Wergeland Centre to promote democratic citizenship, human

rights and intercultural understanding. Norway is proud to host this institution. It is a resource centre for teachers, researchers, civil society and policymakers. The Centre works with national authorities across Europe to strengthen democratic citizenship in practice, particularly through education. It offers capacity-building programmes, expertise and research to all member states of the Council of Europe.

Mr Chair,

Council of Europe obligations and OSCE commitments are fundamental for democratic development. We must work to improve implementation of these obligations, making full use of the valuable assistance offered by both our organisations.

Mr Minister, we congratulate Cyprus on assuming the Chairmanship and assure you of our full support.

Thank you, Mr Chair