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STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE PRESENTATION
OF THE 2022 UNIFIED BUDGET PROPOSAL

Delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 21 October 2021

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mister Chair,

Let me thank the Secretary General for presenting the 2022 Unified Budget Proposal. Our thanks also go to those who have contributed to developing the document. We greatly appreciate the hard work put into the process by the OSCE fund managers and their teams. Their efforts enable and facilitate the necessary discussions among the participating States that is supposed to lead to an agreement on the budget.

Earlier this year, the participating States set a new, depressing record in late budget approval. Such delays are disruptive and costly. We agree with the Secretary General, and others, that it is necessary to adopt our budgets on time. We therefore urge all participating States to engage constructively in the negotiations, and with respect for the organisation and our co-operation. Let us not make already difficult negotiations worse by again using the Unified Budget as a bargaining tool to pursue narrowly defined national interests. Not only do we risk harming the organisation, but also the spirit of co-operation among the States.

Mister Chair,

Norway supports the recommendations put forth in the Unified Budget Proposal and the commitment of the Secretary General as the Chief Administrative Officer in making the OSCE more effective and efficient. We trust that improving the internal governance, strengthening the result-based management, and enhancing the evaluation policy will bear fruits in this regard.

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That being said, efficiencies can only take us so far. The tasks of the OSCE and the demand for its services only seem to grow, as was pointed out in the presentation today. Yet, there is an unwillingness among the participating States to provide sufficient and timely funding to the OSCE. The situation is unsustainable. The Unified Budget no longer supply enough resources for the Executive Structures to perform all the tasks that we expect them to. The result is that the OSCE is growing more dependent on voluntary contributions and secondments. This creates more insecurity and risks undermining the principle of equal ownership of this organisation.

As part of a joint effort to strengthen the OSCE, Norway is willing to contribute so that this organisation can do more and better. Our priority is to ensure adequate funding of the OSCE's activities, not least in the Autonomous Institutions and the Field Operations. However, we do see merit in also investing in core functions necessary for all structures to function satisfactorily. A small step in the right direction is to allow the OSCE to at least account for the inflationary increases in the budget. Therefore, we support the recommendation to increase the Unified Budget for 2022. We encourage others to do the same.

Thank you.