



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY NORWAY IN RESPONSE TO THE
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF MONTENEGRO H.E.
MILAN ROČEN**

**OSCE Permanent Council, Vienna
25 October, 2007**

Norway welcomes the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Montenegro H.E. Mr. Milan Ročen to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his address.

Mr Chairman,

Montenegro has seen positive developments since the newly gained independence. Vital reforms have been initiated and are ongoing in key sectors. Montenegro has managed to attract new investments and has experienced a positive economic development. Norway, on her part, remains committed to supporting the reforms and processes furthering Montenegro's Euroatlantic integration. We would like to use the opportunity to congratulate Montenegro on the signing of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the European Union.

Norway applauds the adoption of the new constitution only a few days ago. After long and extensive deliberations Montenegro has reached final decisions on a number of vital issues for the country. We hope the new constitution will be a significant contribution to further developing a united and pluralistic society, respecting the different linguistic and religious backgrounds of its citizens.

The Norwegian assistance to Montenegro is focused on supporting reform initiatives, capacity and institution building as well as economic development. One of our priorities is further reform of the judiciary.

Mr Chairman, an independent, accountable, trusted and efficient judiciary is fundamental for any state. A recent expert report published as part of the bilateral cooperation between Montenegro and Norway states that the lack of trust by the public is a serious problem for the legitimacy of the judiciary in Montenegro. Norway urges Montenegro to establish a well working Judicial Council and to actively improve the rule of law and strengthen the fight against corruption and organised crime. We look forward to cooperate with the Montenegrin Government on these issues and appreciate the OSCE mission's activities to assist Montenegro in this area.

Norway commends Montenegro for developing active and positive relations with neighbouring countries and hope that Montenegro will be an example to be followed by other countries in the region.

In closing, Mr Chairman we would like once again to thank Foreign Minister Roćen for addressing the Permanent Council today. We wish him and his country success with their political and economic reforms and efforts of further Euroatlantic integration.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman