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**NORWEGIAN STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE HEAD OF THE OSCE
CENTRE IN ASHGABAT**

As delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council, Vienna, 11 July
2024

Madam Chair,

Norway warmly welcomes the Head of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat, Ambassador John MacGregor, to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his comprehensive report.

Norway appreciates the close cooperation with the Centre. Funding from Norway has this year supported an evaluation of the Centre's long-running domestic violence project. We are pleased to note that the long-time work for awareness raising and measures for combating domestic violence has been positively met by the Turkmen society. We encourage Turkmen authorities to follow up by legal and other effective measures.

Let me also mention the work of the Centre on media freedom and media development providing information to journalists, university professors and students on the work of free media in other parts of the OSCE area. We hope the project will strengthen the competence of the media in a long-term perspective. We encourage continued close cooperation with the OSCE Representative for freedom of the media.

The Centre has supported Turkmenistan border service capacities by specialized training any by providing necessary equipment to enhance the capacity of Turkmenistan to combat transnational threats. We appreciate the Centre's regional focus by regional training workshops for border security officials from the five Central Asian countries.

Despite some progress we remain concerned about serious shortcomings in human rights and protection of fundamental freedoms in Turkmenistan. The Centre's work to support the Office of the Ombudsperson is important, including the sharing of best practices with counterpart institutions of other OSCE participating states.

We appreciate that the relationship between the Centre and the host country continue to progress as evidenced by the newly renovated premises being provided by the host

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country. We also note with pleasure the increased interest in cooperation with OSCE structures and other participating states.

Madame Chair,

Allow me again to stress the importance of reaching a consensus for a unified budget, in order to enable all OSCE missions to deliver on their mandates.

To conclude, I wish Ambassador MacGregor and his team the best of luck in advancing the work of the Mission. You can count on Norway's support.

Thank you.