



PERMANENT MISSION OF NORWAY

Geneva, 5 February 2014

Dear Ms Amos,

I refer to the letter of 25 November 2013 from the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT), requesting information on Norway's progress in establishing or designating a National Preventive Mechanism as required by Article 17 of the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture (OPCAT).

I am pleased to inform you that the *Storting* (Norwegian parliament) designated the Parliamentary Ombudsman for Public Administration as Norway's NPM on 21 June 2013, prior to Norway's ratification of the OPCAT on 27 June 2013. This was done by amending the Parliamentary Ombudsman Act. The amendments entered into force on 1 July 2013, one of them being the insertion of the following new section into the Act:

Section 3a. National preventive mechanism

The Ombudsman is the national preventive mechanism as described in Article 3 of the Optional Protocol of 18 December 2002 to the UN Convention of 10 December 1984 against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The Ombudsman shall establish an advisory committee for its functions as the national preventive mechanism.

Amendments to the *Storting's* Instructions to the Ombudsman, including special rules relating to the Ombudsman as national preventive mechanism, also entered into force on 1 July 2013. Furthermore, the Ombudsman has been provided with additional resources from 2013 in order to carry out its new functions as the NPM.

*Ms Mari Amos
SPT Member and Europe Focal Point
Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture
Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva*

This process started in June 2011, when an inter-ministerial working group was appointed with a mandate to propose which body or bodies should be set up or designated as national preventive mechanism(s) and to draw up a report assessing the consequences of possible Norwegian ratification of the OPCAT. The working group took into account the SPT guidelines on national preventive mechanisms. It also consulted the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (Norway's national human rights institution) and relevant national NGOs, and held meetings with the Association for the Prevention of Torture and the Danish NPM before submitting its report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In its report, the working group proposed the designation of the Parliamentary Ombudsman as Norway's NPM, assisted by an advisory committee. The Ombudsman had indicated his willingness to take on the functions of an NPM if requested to do so, and was represented at relevant stages of the working group's deliberations. The working group's report was circulated for general review to places of detention, relevant public bodies and NGOs before the Government submitted propositions to the Storting requesting its consent to ratification of the OPCAT and proposing the designation of the Parliamentary Ombudsman as Norway's NPM and amendments to the Parliamentary Ombudsman Act.

The Norwegian Government looks forward to fruitful cooperation with the SPT. The Ministry of Justice and Public Security is the Government's OPCAT contact point.

Please find enclosed contact information for the Ombudsman and the Ministry of Justice and Public Security. A revised English translation of the Parliamentary Ombudsman Act will be forwarded to the Committee as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,



Steffen Kongstad
Ambassador
Permanent Representative