



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY  
TO THE OSCE

**STATEMENT ON NORWEGIAN EXERCISE COLD RESPONSE  
2026**

As delivered by Military Adviser Colonel Bjørn Gaute Herlyng at the  
1132nd Forum for Security Cooperation,  
Vienna, 25 March 2026

Thank you, Madame Chair/Merci, madame la présidente.

In accordance with previous announcements through Annual Exchange of Information in line with the Vienna Document commitments, notifications and a statement in this Forum, the Norwegian winter exercise COLD RESPONSE 2026 (CORE26) was conducted from 9 to 19 March 2026. This was the largest military exercise in Norway in 2026.

Exercise COLD RESPONSE 26 aimed at preserving and further developing tactical military skills and affiliated joint functions within the framework of the Norwegian Defence Plan Arctic Guard and the priorities of the Norwegian Chief of Defence, aligned with NATO's defence and deterrence concept. COLD RESPONSE 26 is also included in NATO's activity Arctic Sentry. For the Norwegian armed forces, civilian partners and allies to be able to defend Norway, it is vital that we exercise together in Norway, also under winter conditions. As part of the exercise, many parts of Norway's Total Defence conducted a major health preparedness exercise, where several evacuation capabilities were rehearsed. Health preparedness is an important part of both national and collective security,

In total COLD RESPONSE 26 gathered 32 500 participants from fourteen allied nations. As notified, the main exercise area was in Northern Norway, but with a portion in Finland.

As usual for such a large exercise, state leaders and high-ranking politicians and officers from several participating states used the opportunity to meet and observe the exercise. This included visits by the German Chancellor Merz and Norwegian Prime Minister Støre to Space Port Andøya, by Canadian Prime Minister Carney to meet the two and with all their Nordic colleagues, and by NATO General Secretary Mark Rutte.

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Exercise COLD RESPONSE 26 has also been utilized to support the further development of NATO's Forward Land Forces Finland. It will be the 9th FLF in NATO and is an important part of NATO's enhanced deterrence and defence posture in the High North. By exercising large-scale movement of forces from Sweden to Northern Finland, COLD RESPONSE 26 has also demonstrated future elements of the FLF employment.

The exercise included participation by several nations that have expressed their intention to contribute to the further development of FLF Finland. This includes Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Italy, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Sweden will provide the core of the multinational battlegroup for FLF Finland, based in Boden (Northern Sweden). The permanent Multinational Staff Element for FLF Finland will be established in Rovaniemi. FLF Finland is progressing rapidly, and the intention is that it will be established before the NATO Summit in Ankara this summer.

Norway emphasises openness and transparency regarding larger military exercises, and for COLD RESPONSE 2026, Norway voluntarily invited international observers in accordance with the Vienna Document. Officers from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova and Serbia conducted voluntary observation of the exercise 12-14 March 2026. The observers have ensured that the exercise is carried out according to the stated plans for the exercise.

Upon the completion of COLD RESPONSE 2026, all participating troops and equipment have redeployed and returned to their designated peacetime locations or are in the process of doing so.

Thank you, Madame Chair.