

*Council of Europe*  
*The Secretary General*

Strasbourg, 25 January 2016

Dear Prime Minister,

The handling of the refugees who cross the border from the Russian Federation and into Northern Norway raises several issues related to Norway's commitments contained in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The same issues arise in regard to the Norwegian government's proposed guidelines for its future refugee-policy.

The ECHR's standards and the highly relevant case-law of the European Court of Human Rights constitute an important guide for all member States which want to reform and develop their policies in this area.

All the member States of the Council of Europe face today significant challenges as regards the follow-up and implementation of relevant ECHR commitments and the case-law and its action and policies, when facing an overwhelming number of refugees and migrants. I have therefore appointed the Secretary General's Special Representative on Refugees and Migration who will be available to advise and assist member States. He will be able to draw upon the vast judicial expertise of the Council of Europe, based on the ECHR and the case-law of the Strasbourg Court.

I am pleased to offer the Norwegian Government his expertise when preparing and developing new guidelines and new policies as regards refugees and migrants.

Sincerely yours,



Thorbjorn Jagland

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Prime Minister of Norway

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