

Major General Jean Fred Berger paid courtesy visit to Mayor of Stavanger - Joint Warfare Centre

Written by Inci Kucukaksoy, JWC PAO
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French Army Major General Jean Fred Berger, the newly appointed Commander Joint Warfare Centre, paid a courtesy visit to the Honorable Mayor of Stavanger, Mr Leif Johan Sevland, on Tuesday 21 June 2011. This was Major General Berger's first official visit since he assumed command of the Joint Warfare Centre on 17 June 2011.

During his goodwill visit, the General paid tribute to the importance of the distinctive partnership between NATO and Norway, underlining his desire to raise this strategic relationship to a qualitatively new level.

"We are very fortunate to have such a successful partnership with our Norwegian hosts," said Major General Berger. "I am very thankful to live, work and train in this beautiful city of Stavanger. I am very thankful for your unwavering friendship and continued support of our military mission here. With more than 1,000 military personnel, civilian employees and their family members, who bring with them a plethora of individual customs and cultural traditions, I believe that we are one of the significant communities in Stavanger. And I would like to broaden and further strengthen the existing cooperation and integration between our gracious Norwegian hosts and the Joint Warfare Centre."

The Mayor welcomed this message and said he encouraged innovative ways to take the

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relationship between the Centre and the City to new levels of interaction and mutual benefit. Mr Leif Johan Sevland noted with appreciation Norway's defence cooperation with NATO, adding that the Alliance has been providing the best guarantee of peace for more than sixty years and was still carrying on successfully. He stated that the Joint Warfare Centre was very valuable not only to NATO, but also to Stavanger. Mr Sevland then went on to highlight Stavanger's multiethnic and multicultural identity, which, he said, is stronger than that of any other Norwegian city, and he commended the growth and diversity that the NATO community brings to the city and its dynamic economy; both tied together by families, education, investments and jobs. The Mayor noted that Stavanger is the capital of Norway's oil and gas sector, the main economic hubs of the city, and that in recent years it has also emerged as an international cultural city. The Mayor furthermore pointed out that Stavanger continues to grow despite the economic pressure from the financial crisis and offers one of the highest qualities of life in the world as well as an impressive cultural heritage. "In summary, Stavanger is a vibrant city to live, work, visit and do business in," the Mayor said.

Both officials agreed to take a step towards the execution of a letter of intent with a view to officially introducing a variety of bilateral as well as multilateral schemes and socio-cultural activities in Jåttå, Ulsnes or in Stavanger, such as exhibitions, seminars, international days and other events that will facilitate exchange of information, foster cross-cultural understanding and promote deep, enduring ties between the NATO community and the city of Stavanger. Such projects, it was said, would pave the way for a better understanding of the Joint Warfare Centre's mission. They both agreed there is a unique opportunity to work together in the future, share benefits of living together and unite efforts to create a common vision and constant dialogue between both organizations as great community partners in Stavanger.

At the end of the visit, the Mayor presented Major General Berger a book about Stavanger, which the General positively received.