



OSCE Ministerial Council in Tirana, 3-4 December 2020.

**Statement by H. E. Martin Eyjólfsson, Permanent Secretary of State,
on behalf of H.E. Guðlaugur Þór Þórðarson, Foreign Minister of Iceland.**

Mr. Chairperson.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed our lives and our way of thinking and brought new challenges to democratic values, human rights, and multilateralism. I commend the Albanian Chair for its capable leadership during difficult times. Looking ahead, we cannot ignore that the security situation in the OSCE-area remains uncertain.

The Helsinki Final act, which we commemorate this year, serves as the foundation for our work. The commitments made in Helsinki resulted in creating the unique and inclusive forum of 57 OSCE participating States, seeking comprehensive security through dialogue in all three dimensions.

For decades, the OSCE has effectively contributed to the Conventional Arms Control and Confidence and Security Building Measures. We must fully adhere to our arms control commitments and obligations and seek to preserve, strengthen, and modernize these measures.

Iceland is among the majority of participating States supporting a modernization proposal for the **Vienna Document**. The Vienna Document and the **Treaty on Open Skies** cannot be implemented selectively. We also call on all participating States to implement the **Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe** and to comply with the letter and spirit of all obligations and commitments.

Our societies are exposed to **hybrid threats**, cyber-attacks and disinformation campaigns, originating from state and non-state actors. No single state can confront these threats alone. We value the **Structured Dialogue** as an opportunity to renew a meaningful exchange of ideas to build trust, addressing risk reduction and threat perceptions.

Mr. Chairperson.

The war in **Nagorno-Karabakh** has demonstrated that frozen conflicts can turn into a full-scale war in a short time with dire consequences for civilians. We welcome the cease-fire between Armenia and Azerbaijan and support the efforts of the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group to achieve a lasting peace.

Let me restate Iceland's support for **Georgia's** sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, and express hope for a comprehensive and lasting political settlement regarding **Transdnестria**.

We reiterate our full support for **Ukraine's** sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders and territorial waters and call on Russia to return control of Crimea to Ukraine. We stress the importance of ensuring the safety of the **OSCE Special Monitoring Mission** and its unhindered access throughout the entire territory of Ukraine.

This year we mark the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (**Thirteen-Twenty-five**) on women, peace, and security, and reiterate our strong commitment to its full implementation.

Mr. Chairperson.

As an invoking state of the Moscow Mechanism, Iceland calls on **Belarussian** authorities to follow the recommendations of Dr. Benedek's report and to engage with the OSCE Chair in facilitating an inclusive dialogue in the country.

I strongly condemn recent terrorist attacks in the OSCE area, including in Austria and France. Iceland stands in solidarity with the affected communities. While we strive to protect the freedom of religion or belief, these attacks are a stark reminder that religion can never justify terror or violence.

The comprehensive security concept of the OSCE supports the reaching of the **Sustainable Development Goals**, with its emphasis on human rights and protecting the environment. We are committed to fundamental freedoms of all people in the OSCE area, especially of vulnerable groups, to the equal rights of men and women and to the rights of LGBT-people.

Mr. Chairperson.

While it is regrettable that participating States were unable to extend the mandate of the previous **Secretary General and Heads of Institutions** earlier in the year, I offer my praise to the competent professionals who managed these position in the interim and wish incoming appointees every success upon assuming their new duties.

Allow me to conclude by expressing our full support for the up-coming Swedish Chairmanship.

Thank you.