



Statement of the Permanent Representative of Iceland, Guðni Bragason, at the OSCE Permanent Council 7 March 2019 on the presentation of the ODIHR Annual Report 2018.

While aligning with the statement of the European Union, allow me to say few words in national capacity.

I thank the Director of ODIHR for the comprehensive Annual Report on activities in 2018, a year in which the Office was confronted with many challenges.

The Report demonstrates the multifaceted tasks of the ODIHR and the difficult surroundings in which ODIHR has to operate.

The Report also shows the professionalism of the Director and staff of ODIHR.

I like to mention but few important issues:

The OSCE participating states should do their utmost to enable ODIHR to carry out its tasks, and thus strengthen the OSCE Human Dimension.

In this respect the annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting is of special importance.

Election monitoring is one of the most effective tools of our organization to strengthen democracy and the rule of law in the participating states.

The protection of vulnerable groups in the society, such as women and the Roma and Sinti, is an important task. We especially welcome the references to persons with disabilities who are probably one of the most vulnerable groups in every society, and frequently victims of intolerance and discrimination.

This year, 2019, will probably be equally challenging as the last one. We should rise to that challenge and make it successful one for ODIHR.