



## **Statement of Iceland at the Political Directors Meeting, Rome 8th October, 2018.**

I like to thank the Italian Chairmanship for calling this meeting here in Rome. I believe it will be an important milestone on the way to the OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting in Milano.

Allow me to add, that we appreciate the effort that the Italian Chairmanship has brought to its difficult task, as demonstrated by the skilful handling of matters regarding the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, held in Warsaw this fall, against some odds.

We appreciate the Chair's suggestions of possible deliverable Decisions, Statements and Declarations. It is of importance that the Ministerial Council addresses, through such decisions, all the most important issues in the OSCE area. Our complex security environment calls for us to uphold the OSCE values and the principles from Helsinki.

Iceland a strong international system based on international law, including humanitarian and human rights law. Maintaining a strong European Security Architecture, of which the OSCE is a major component, is of great importance.

The OSCE and its institutions have played a key role in addressing the various protracted conflicts in the OSCE area, the most challenging being the one in the Ukraine. This is based on the principle that borders in our area can not and should not be changed at gunpoint. We reiterate our support for the sovereignty of the Ukraine and call upon all sides to fully implement the Minsk agreements.

OSCE participating countries adhere to the principles of democracy, human rights, free speech, religious freedom, independent media and judiciary, all of which are enshrined in the fundamental charters of the United Nations and other multi-national organizations, such as ours. Nevertheless, we witness that these values are threatened. Therefore a constant vigilance is needed in order to protect democratic institutions and the fundamental freedoms and resist those who intend to wreck our societies through terrorism, organized and transnational crime and illegal activities across borders.

We support the Structured Dialogue wholeheartedly. It is essential for the future security of the OSCE area to foster confidence and mutual trust. There is a need to rebuild the damaged arms control instruments, our predecessors worked so hard to achieve, and provide for confidence-building measures.

We appreciate the work programme of the Belgian Chair, which has highlighted in the discussion focus on new kind of warfare, such as hybrid warfare. Regularly, we witness attacks on infrastructure or even multi-national organizations. These attacks demonstrate how vulnerable our system can be, as well the determination of some forces to master the new kind of warfare.

We welcome the focus on Digital transformation and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. This has to do with our security, increased web and information security, the security of our financial system and stability and the fight against corruption, terrorist financing and money laundering. We therefore welcome a Ministerial Declaration on the Security Implications of the Digital Transformation.

These issues are also vital for Human Capacity Development, and for the security of our societies, and are closely linked to policies on

innovation and public-private initiatives. We therefore welcome a Ministerial Council decision on Human Capital Development.

At the Ministerial Council meeting we would like to see strong messages on various Human Dimension issues, such as the rights of women, the protection of children and vulnerable groups in the society, as well as the safety of journalists who sometimes risk their lives in promoting unbiased and fair public debate. We support a decision on the freedom of religion and combatting persecution of religious groups.

In conclusion, we hope that the Milano Ministerial Meeting will rise to present challenges and give a clear signal through a strong overall political declaration on the situation in the OSCE area.