



Address of Guðni Bragason, the Permanent Representative of Iceland, at the 8th Meeting of the IWG of the Structured Dialogue on the Current and Future Challenges and Risks to Security in the OSCE-Area).

Session II: Counter-terrorism.

Mr Chairman.

We welcome the inclusion of this topic in the Structured Dialogue. Terrorists strike with the aim of causing fear, undermining security and democratic societies, the rule of law and our fundamental values of freedom and human rights.

The struggle against terrorism is fought on many battlefields, on the national level and not least through international cooperation.

The OSCE provides us with a good forum for developing strategy against terrorism, as well as identifying and addressing the root causes of terrorism. This matter is dealt with within all three dimensions of the organization, and guided by the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council, in accordance with the OSCE Consolidated Framework for the Fight against Terrorism, as well as the work of the OSCE's Transnational Threats Department's Action against Terrorism Unit.

We welcome the Ministerial Decision from Milano 2018 on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and Stockpiling of Conventional Ammunition (SCA).

We welcome the OSCE focus on measures against money laundering, illegal transactions over borders, illegal trade in arms, including SALW, and financing of terrorism, as well as the question of the return of foreign terrorist fighters and their families. The OSCE fights xenophobia, intolerance and religious persecution, and has an important role in preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism (VERLT).

The present basis for counter-terrorist measures in Iceland is the National Security Policy (2016) which covers foreign affairs, defense, and public safety, and provides for the operations of a National Security Council overseeing the execution of the policy and the promotion of effective discussion on security and defense issues. The Council makes regular assessments of the state of national security.

The National Commissioner for Police issues regularly Terrorist Threat Assessments (the last one 2017) which addresses the threat from terrorist organizations, individuals and groups. The Police Commissioner issued in 2017 new guidelines regarding the investigation of terrorist crimes.

Underway in the Althingi is the ratification of international agreements on the matter.

At the international level, Iceland cooperates with partners in the North Atlantic Alliance and through international police cooperation, such as Interpol and Europol, as well as within the Schengen regime.

Mr Chairman.

Counter-terrorism is a multi-faceted issue. In a discussion at the Human Rights Council in Geneva on 1st March, Iceland highlighted the fourth pillar of the UN Global Counter-terrorism Strategy which focuses on measures to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis for the fight against terrorism.

In this context, Iceland raised concerns about the widespread misuse of counter-terrorism legislation to silence human rights defenders, including women and LGBTI rights defenders. Effective counter-terrorism strategy should strengthen, not weaken, civil society.

Thank you Mr Chairman.