

OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting in Vienna, 7-8 Dec. 2017

Statement by H.E. Mr. Guðlaugur Þór Þórðarson
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland

Mr. Chair,

In today's security environment we find ourselves in a conflicting situation between principles and pragmatic solutions. We have different narratives on the past and departing views on the future.

But this increased complexity and intensity of our security environment is precisely why we need to uphold the OSCE values and the principles from Helsinki.

Iceland has an invested interest in maintaining a strong international system based on international law, including international humanitarian law 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, which Iceland strongly supports, have played a commendable role in addressing the conflict in and around Ukraine.

Borders in Europe cannot and should not be changed at gunpoint.

We reiterate our support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. We call upon Russia to do the same, and on all sides to fully implement the Minsk Agreements.

Mr. Chair,

Iceland welcomes and fully supports the structured dialogue. It is essential for the future security of Europe and the OSCE area to restore confidence and mutual trust between partners, particularly between NATO and Russia.

Here, we fully recognize the need to rebuild the damaged arms control instruments and provide for confidence-building measures, including through roadmaps and guidelines.

Terrorism and violent extremism, including hate crimes, also require our fullest attention. Nobody is immune from these threats and we must co-operate in our fight against them.

In that regard it is important to see the human dimension of the OSCE, notably the excellent work of ODIHR, as a tool to foster mutual respect and understanding among people – also as a preventive measure.

Finally, Mr. Chair,

When it comes to achieving sustainable peace in the region we need to ensure the inclusion of women.

I want to express our willingness to work with the incoming chair on strengthening the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and other OSCE commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment.

I wish Italy every success in chairing the OSCE in 2018, and thank Austria for the hospitality here in Vienna and a successful chairmanship this year.

Thank you.