



**OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting in Stockholm, 2–3 December 2021**  
**Statement by H.E. Ms. Thórdís Kolbrún R. Gylfadóttir,**  
**Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland**

Madame Chairperson, dear colleagues,

I congratulate you, Madame Chairperson, for your capable leadership during your term in office.

Your steadfast commitment and resilience have been exemplary, especially during this trying year in which our organization has faced real difficulties in carrying out its mandate – with our jointly agreed commitments and principles challenged on many fronts.

It is in times like these that we should look back to the foundation of our work – the Helsinki Final Act – which created this unique and inclusive forum to promote stability of frontiers, peaceful settlement of disputes, and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We must not lose sight of these collective objectives – they are just as relevant now, as they were back in 1975.

Madame Chairperson,

Promoting security and stability in the OSCE region is at the heart of this organization's mission. As participating states, we all hold the responsibility of upholding these commitments.

Current efforts to destabilize our region are therefore deeply troubling, with the situation in both Belarus and the Ukraine being of significant concern. Elsewhere, in Nagorno-Karabakh and in Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions, we

are witnessing ongoing tensions too, demonstrating how fragile the security situation is and how important it is not to undermine it.

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 likewise call on Belarus to stop human rights abuses within its borders and to refrain from orchestrating further threats to neighbouring states.

The advancement of human rights and democracy are likewise central to OSCE's mandate, with the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and its Human Dimension Implementation Meetings (HDIM) playing a key role.

We were therefore very disappointed that despite laudable efforts by you, Madam Chairperson, the convening of the meeting was blocked this year. It is critical that the HDIM will be back on the agenda next year, providing the much-needed space for genuine and open dialogue with civil society in our region.

Promoting the Women, Peace and Security agenda is essential in this regard. Iceland attaches great importance to the promotion of women's rights across all OSCE's dimensions, including countering all forms of violence against women.

Madame Chairperson,

Looking ahead, it is critical that we continue to reinforce the core values enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and take forward our joint agenda on security and safety, economy and environment, and democracy and human rights.

I call on all participating states to recommit to our vision of a safe and secure future and to collaborate constructively with the Polish Chairpersonship in the coming year.

I thank you.