



OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting in Hamburg, 8-9 December 2016

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Gréta Gunnarsdóttir
Permanent Representative to the OSCE

Mr. Chair,

Iceland wants to maintain a strong European Security Architecture, based on the principles of international law, including human rights law and humanitarian law. The OSCE is a major component of the Architecture due its broad membership and its notion of comprehensive security.

We believe in dialogue and fully understand the necessity of compromise. We feel, however, that consensus should never be achieved at the expense of our existing commitments, and fundamental freedoms. Human rights are not negotiable.

We cannot look past the violations of international law committed with the illegal annexation of Crimea, which we continue to strongly condemn. We reiterate our support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine and call upon Russia to do likewise. We call upon all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk Agreements and honor their commitments in full.

Mr. Chair,

Iceland commends the efforts of Germany to move the arms control agenda forward. This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Reagan-Gorbachev Summit in Reykjavík starting a dialogue, later resulting in wide reaching arms control agreements. We should strive to find ways to rekindle the Reykjavík spirit.

Mr. Chair,

All across our region, we see rising levels of xenophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, and other intolerance and discrimination against other minorities. We must counter this disturbing development and foster respect among our fellow countrymen and women for the principles we have worked so hard to develop at the international level, including at the OSCE.

In light of history, we know the threat violations of human rights pose to security. Complacency is not an option. We need to focus on implementing our commitments and, where possible, strengthen them. We also need to redouble our efforts to conclude appointments for the OSCE human rights offices and institutions.

Finally, Mr. Chair, we would like to express our willingness to work with the incoming Chair to strengthen the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and other OSCE commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment. With the rise of populism and misogyny we risk going backwards. We need to fight back and ensure continued progress for women and girls in our region.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.
