



**Statement of Ambassador Kristín A. Árnadóttir, Permanent Representative of Iceland, at the 1350th Special Permanent Council Meeting, Vienna, 13 January 2022.**

**Mr. Chair,**

While Iceland aligns with the EU statement, I would like to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

Let me begin by congratulating Poland and yourself, Minister Rau, on assuming the OSCE Chairpersonship. I assure you of Iceland's commitment to collaborate constructively with your Chairpersonship in the coming year.

At this first meeting of the year, it is critical that we all demonstrate our intention to work together to advance our joint agenda on security and safety, economy and environment, and democracy and human rights.

This is particularly important now when our region is facing challenges on so many fronts.

Finding peaceful solutions to conflicts in our region is of utmost priority. All Participating States must fully comply with the OSCE commitments that are prescribed in fundamental agreements, including the Helsinki Final Act and the Istanbul Charter.

Also, we must make the most of and put into practice the OSCE instruments we have at our disposal. We need to improve the quality of our debates and strive to be more constructive, cooperative, and solution oriented. Diplomacy must prevail, and so must respect for international law.

We remain deeply concerned about the security situation in and around Ukraine. We reiterate our full support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders and territorial waters. And we reiterate our call on Russia to de-escalate the situation and withdraw its troops and equipment from Ukraine's border. A diplomatic path of resolving the situation must be pursued.

The actions of the Belarusian authorities remain deeply concerning. We call on Lukashenku to stop human rights abuses within the Belarusian borders and to stop orchestrating further threats to neighboring states.

Let me emphasize that the promotion of the Women, Peace and Security agenda is critical for success in addressing and finding solutions in our quest for enriched and peaceful societies. Advancing women's rights is one of our priorities and needs to be reflected across all OSCE's dimensions, including the importance of countering all forms of violence against women.

Mr. Chair,

Our region is facing serious challenges.

In times like these, it is critical that we all work together to help unleash further the full potential of this unique organization to jointly advance our common goal of a safe and secure future.

**Thank you Mr. Chair.**