



**Statement of Ambassador Kristín A. Árnadóttir,
Permanent Representative of Iceland
at the 1404th Special Permanent Council Meeting,
Vienna, 12 January 2023.**

Thank you Mr. Chair,

Iceland fully aligns with the statement of the European Union. I would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

Your Excellency, Foreign Minister Bujar Osmani, I thank you for sharing the priorities and programme of the North Macedonian OSCE Chairpersonship for the year of 2023.

I offer my sincere congratulations to North Macedonia and yourself, Minister Osmani, on assuming this important role. It is clear that North Macedonia takes over the Chairpersonship of the OSCE during the most challenging and severe security crisis that our region has faced in decades. A mere year ago, none of us would have believed that the Russian Federation would launch its full-scale invasion and illegal, brutal and unjustified war against Ukraine, which violates the most fundamental commitments and goals of this organization and international law.

Russia's war undermines security in all three dimensions and gravely jeopardizes trust and cooperation in our organization and region. We call on the Russian

Federation to cease its senseless war and shoulder its responsibility as one of 57 participating States of this organization.

Minister Osmani, Excellency,

We share your vision that restoring respect for international law and OSCE commitments and the resolution of Russia's war against Ukraine and all protracted conflicts in our region, must remain at the top of our agenda. We strongly believe that diplomacy must prevail.

North Macedonia takes on this great responsibility for the sake of us all, for peace, stability, and prosperity. Your programme and vision for your Chairpersonship rightfully reminds us all, that at the end of the day, our work is about people, human beings, to prevent wars and human suffering.

The mainstreaming of gender and the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms is a priority for Iceland, both at home and abroad, including in the work of the OSCE. Iceland will fully support and welcome your focus on gender equality and women's empowerment. It is and must continue to be an integral part of our work in all dimensions, structures, and field missions. The full implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda is an important and necessary step to advance comprehensive security in our region.

The situation is bleak, but we cannot compromise our values. We, the participating States must continue to make concerted efforts, to achieve and ensure sustainable and lasting peace, security, and prosperity in our region for all.

Minister Osmani, let me assure you of Iceland's commitment to collaborate closely and constructively with you and your able team in Vienna this coming year. Defending the values, principles, and commitments our organization stands for is urgent. We will do our utmost to support and promote your goals and visions. I wish you, your team in Vienna and at home in Skopje, every success.

I thank you.