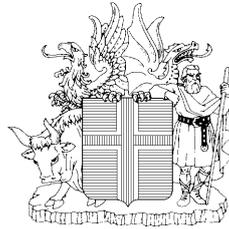


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**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Kristín A. Árnadóttir. 1395th Permanent Council, 20 October 2022. Iceland in response to the report by Matteo Mecacci, the Director of ODIHR**

Thank you Mr Chair.

While Iceland aligns with the statement of the European Union, allow me to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

Let me join colleagues in thanking the Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Matteo Mecacci, for the address and for outlining the significant functions and activities of ODIHR during the challenging year which now passes.

You have highlighted the integral role of ODIHR in supporting the participating States in the implementation of their commitments. We applaud ODIHR management and staff for their professionalism and tireless work to keep the human dimension strong and flourishing.

Democracy, rule of law and human rights are fundamental elements upon which peace and prosperity can be built and maintained, within and between States. Election monitoring is one of the most effective tools of our organization to strengthen and support democracy and rule of law in the participating States.

The OSCE participating States must do their utmost to support and enable ODIHR to carry out its task and mandate. It is more important now than ever before that we stand united in the protection of our common values and implementation of our OSCE commitments.

The annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting is in this respect of central value and importance. The Warsaw Human Dimension Conference was successful and fruitful, and we are extremely grateful for the efforts by the Polish Chairpersonship and ODIHR and exchanges with civil society. We still join colleagues in emphasising that HDIM must take place next year.

Effective integration of gender perspectives within all dimensions and work of the OSCE and its institutions, including ODIHR, is essential for the organisation's ability to contribute to and strengthen comprehensive security in the OSCE region.

My country has a long-standing commitment to promoting gender equality and women's full enjoyment of human rights. ODIHR's work on gender equality remains important and we would like to express our support for the new Gender Mainstreaming Strategy being adopted for 2022-2026.

Mr Chair, Director,

As highlighted by your address, the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine and the humanitarian crisis caused by it have completely altered the situation in our region. The guarantee of human rights of fundamental freedoms has been agreed upon by all participating States. Nevertheless, every day the Russian Federation continues to violate its OSCE commitments and international human rights law, including the most fundamental right to life.

We share your emphasis that the devastation and destruction caused by Russia's military aggression must stop, as well as the recognition that it is a necessity to ensure accountability for all crimes and violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. In this respect, we commend ODIHR's efforts on the documentation of violations of human rights as well as the support given to other accountability and justice efforts. We welcome your response to the invasion with the Ukraine Monitoring Initiative and await the follow-up report.

Allow me to assure you of my country's continued support and I wish you and your staff continued success in your efforts.

I thank you.