



Statement by Ambassador Kristín A. Árnadóttir, Permanent Representative of Iceland, at the 1373rd Permanent Council Meeting, Vienna, 12 May 2022

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

Russia's war has had devastating consequences for Ukraine and the whole of Ukraine's population. It has caused a humanitarian catastrophe along with mass destruction and suffering within Ukraine and the largest displacement crisis we have witnessed in Europe for almost eight decades. It has also endangered security across the OSCE region and the whole world, including food and energy security. And it has undermined trust and challenged the international rule of law.

With all this in mind, we must not forget that wars and crises have a disproportionate impact on women and girls and exacerbate pre-existing inequalities. The war in Ukraine is no exception.

We are horrified by the reports of the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war by Russian soldiers and the steady increase in human trafficking and exploitation.

I would therefore like to echo Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid's remarks in her important address at the conference of Georgetown Institute for WPS last Tuesday. She stressed that the comprehensive security approach of the OSCE includes human security where the full implementation of the WPS agenda must be a top priority, on all levels, and in all contexts.

Women are not only victims and caretakers. They are leaders, peacebuilders, changemakers and human rights defenders. They are sustaining their communities, documenting war crimes, and have a central role to play in building a peaceful and sustainable future.

Nonetheless, women, their voices, contributions and needs tend to be overlooked and forgotten.

We commend and encourage continued emphasis by the Secretariat and all relevant actors to put the WPS agenda at the heart of all efforts related to peace and security, and humanitarian activities.

Mr. Chair,

Let me stress the following:

Iceland is fully committed to the European Security Architecture which is grounded in respect for the principles of International Law, including International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law.

We express our full support to all international accountability mechanisms and efforts. It is our firm belief that the only means of resolving disputes in the international systems is through peaceful means and diplomacy, carried out in good faith and guided by international law and practice.

We reiterate our call on Russia to withdraw its troops, stop the unjustified and unnecessary military aggression, and abide by our most fundamental OSCE commitments and foundational principles of international law, including respect for the prohibition on the use of force contained in the UN Charter.

We are extremely concerned over the continued non-compliance and disregard of OSCE commitments and international law by Belarus, Russia's co-aggressor. The lack of transparency is saddening and frightening and we strongly encourage Belarus to engage in good faith and respect our common commitments.

We will continue to strongly condemn this brutal war of choice by Russia and we reiterate our unwavering support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine and demand that Russia to do the same.

And finally, allow me to close with a brief remark with regard to the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty. Ever since its entry into force, Iceland has been party to the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR which aims at the abolition of the death penalty.

Iceland is fully committed to universal abolition of the death penalty in line with our firm and steadfast commitment to the protection of human dignity and rights.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.