



Statement of the Permanent Representative of Iceland at the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Upholding the Principles of Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, incl. Promotion and Protection of Freedom of Religion and Belief, 1-2 April 2019, Hofburg Vienna

Madame Chair.

I thank the organizers for holding this conference which takes place at a time, - regrettably -, when intolerance and discrimination seem to be on the rise. We want our message on the matter to be clear:

Iceland is committed to fight intolerance, xenophobia and discrimination, including racial discrimination. The Icelandic Constitution prohibits discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief.

Provisions in the General Penal Code specifically safeguard against such discrimination. In addition, The Penal Code makes it clear that any kind of attack or incitement against a person or a group of persons based on their nationality, ethnicity, race or religion is not tolerated.

Unfortunately, there seems to be an increase in such incitements around the world, also in the OSCE area. But this is not only true for racism and xenophobia, we also see increased intolerance and attacks being directed at those that fight for gender equality, as well as those who fight for the rights of LGBTI persons.

Respect for the dignity and the equal and inalienable rights, as well as the fundamental freedoms, is the foundation of inclusivity, justice and peace in the world. Discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance represent the very opposite of the UN Charter, the Human Rights Declaration and of the purposes of the OSCE.

We believe persecution of people based on their religion or belief should never be condoned. This, Iceland has repeatedly stated during its tenure at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.