



Statement of Ambassador Guðni Bragason, Permanent Representative of Iceland, at the 1278th Special Permanent Council Meeting, Vienna, 28 August 2020.

Mr Chairman,

I would like to thank the OSCE Chairman, Prime Minister Edi Rama for his presentation and assessment of the situation in Belarus, and reiterate Iceland's full support of the Chair's endeavours to establish a dialogue with authorities in Belarus.

Iceland has grave concerns regarding the alarming developments taking place in Belarus, following the presidential elections on 9th of August. The elections did not comply with internationally recognised standards and monitoring of democratic elections.

Iceland participated in a joint statement by the Nordic and the Baltic Foreign Ministers on 11th August that called "upon the Belarusian Government to immediately engage in genuine political dialogue with the opposition in order to avoid further use of violence".

It is alarming that the authorities in Belarus, a participating State of the OSCE, have used violence against protesters and tried with force and imprisonments to silence regime opponents, - and thus contravened the fundamental commitments of participating States of the OSCE.

Finally Mr Chairman,

Iceland calls for Belarus to uphold our commitments to free speech, the right of peaceful assembly, freedom of the media, protection of civil society and human rights defenders, release of prisoners, and to engage in an open and constructive dialogue.