



Statement of H.E. Ambassador Mr. Thórdur Aegir Óskarsson, Special Envoy for Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, Ministry for Foreign Affairs Iceland, at the Annual Security Review Conference, Vienna, 25-27 June 2019.

Mr. Moderator, Distinguished Panelists,

Iceland welcomes the discussions in this session on the challenges and opportunities in conventional arms control and CSBMs. The key note speakers are also be thanked for their important contributions.

This discussion is also timely as we are meeting at a critical juncture when some of the key agreements that have underpinned the global disarmament efforts since the end of the Cold War are being put to test by glaring examples of non-compliance and new security challenges.

In the Euro – Atlantic area the importance of meaningful arms control must be measured against the ongoing conflict in the Ukraine and Russia’s annexation of Crimea.

Iceland is far from alone in the view that there is an urgent need to apply more energy, more creative thinking and even more resources to the disarmament and arms control efforts, not only when it comes to conventional weapons, but also weapons of mass destruction, emerging technologies and hybrid threats.

The OSCE has for decades contributed effectively to the common and cooperative security in the Euro – Atlantic area through its CSBM mechanisms. This platform is solid basis for further development in that regard. The modernisation of the Vienna Document, strengthening of the Open Skies agreement and the Structured Dialogue offer strong hope for constructive advancement in the CBMS in order to meet new security challenges.

These CSBMs will continue to have their importance in this picture and their importance has even grown in the face of deteriorating security situation in our region as well as globally, but such mechanisms will never fully substitute for solid arms control and disarmament agreements.

Sadly this has to be measured against the paralyzed CFE Treaty, a treaty created under the umbrella of the OSCE, a treaty that used to be and should be a proud achievement in the field of conventional arms control. We urge Russia to resume implementation of the Treaty and thereby contributing greatly to stability and security in the OSCE area.

In his opening statement Chairman in Office reminded us „that there is also a whole world outside Vienna“ that must not be forgotten in the deliberations of our principles and commitments. To his examples from the world outside Vienna I would add global the arms control and disarmament regime. Iceland would like to see the OSCE reach out and create stronger links to international arms control efforts with the view to supplement these activities as regards the OSCE area, as our agreed measures in the field of small and light weapons show. The issue of non – proliferation in conventional arms should be at the core of our agenda.

Last but not least let me emphasize the importance of ensuring the implementation of gender balance in all aspects of the OSCE’s work on conventional arms control and confidence building measures. I say this with full respect to our very capable panel and moderator.

I thank you.