



Statement of Ms. Jóna Sólveig Elínardóttir, Director International Security and Defence Co-operation Department, Ministry for Foreign Affairs Iceland, at the IWG Structured Dialogue, Cluster V „The Issue of Hybrid“, Vienna, 5 June 2020.

Mr. Chairman.

I would like to thank you for including hybrid threats in the Structured Dialogue. It is a multifaceted issue and certainly not easy to define, but in our opinion in line with the Hamburg Mandate of discussing „current and future challenges and risks to security”.

The OSCE with its concept of comprehensive security is a proper forum to address hybrid threats and all attempts to create uncertainty in the society and undermine trust and faith in the rule of law and democracy.

The COVID-19 situation has brought to light how vulnerable our societies are, and how little it takes to disrupt infrastructure, communications, travel, supply chains and food security. We have also seen the situation being manipulated for a blatant media disinformation campaigns.

Needless to say, for countries with a relatively small infrastructure, communication systems, energy network and financial systems, hybrid threats and cyber security are of real concern.

The Government has made a concentrated effort to address the issue of hybrid threats, such as through introduction of relevant laws and regulations in order to underpin responses to threats.

A special effort has been made to increase public awareness of the matter and a discussion, engaging universities, the media, political parties, ministries, communication companies and agencies and relevant institutions and bodies, such as the Data Protection Authority, charged with protecting personal data, and the Regulatory Commission for Media Services, and several such agencies which have a role to play.

This “whole of society” approach is led by the Icelandic National Security Council, chaired by the Prime Minister. Iceland participates in international cooperation with its neighbors and allies on these matters. We are thus sharpening our tools to respond to attacks and strengthening our ability to prepare for, deter and defend against hybrid and cyber attacks that seek to undermine our security and societies.