



Statement of Ambassador Guðni Bragason, Permanent Representative of Iceland, at the 1288th Permanent Council Meeting, under item 2 „Moscow Mechanism“, Vienna, 5 November 2020.

Mr Chairman,

Iceland aligns with the statement by the Ambassador of Denmark, delivered on behalf of the participating States invoking the Moscow Mechanism. Few words in my own capacity:

We urge authorities in Belarus to adhere to the fundamental principles of human rights, free election, freedom of assembly and free speech and media, to name but few of the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris, which anniversaries we commemorate this year.

We regret that the Belarussian authorities have not cooperated with the author of the Report under the Moscow Mechanism on Alleged Human Rights Violations in Belarus, Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Benedek.

The Report demonstrates a blatant and systematic use of violence against peaceful demonstrators, unjustified arrests, torture and ill-treatment of people in detention, gender-based violence, and all this in the midst of the OSCE area.

We call on Belarus to cooperate on the Report's many recommendations, including on the rights of the people in Belarus to freedom, fair judicial processes, guaranteeing access to the internet and halting impunity of perpetrators.

We call on Belarus to engage in a meaningful dialogue and foster a new climate of respect for human rights and democracy in Belarus.

The Report is a powerful document. Its content will be heard by the international community.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.