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**Buantoscáireacht na hÉireann
don Eagraíocht um Comhoibriú agus Slándáil san Eoraip**
Permanent Mission of Ireland to the
Organisation for Security and Co-Operation in Europe

Rotenturmstrasse 16-18
1010 Vienna
Austria

Address to the Permanent Council by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe

National Statement – Ireland

Mr Chair,

Ireland fully aligns with the statement made by the European Union and I make the following remarks in my national capacity.

I would like to update the Permanent Council on Ireland's priorities for our Presidency of the Council of Europe, a position we are privileged to hold for the seventh time. 2022 marks 50 years of our membership of the EU, as well as our fourth term on the Security Council. Ireland believes firmly that multilateralism matters, and matters to all of us.

Let me start by thanking you, Secretary General, for the excellent co-operation with your office, and for your own personal engagement at the highest levels in Ireland. I also thank Italy and Iceland for their support as Troika members.

We are deeply committed to taking forward work on the values and principles which we hold dear.



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Those values and principles have been violated by Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Let me repeat, we condemn Russia's actions in the strongest possible terms, and are appalled as we watch the impact of those actions unfold in Ukraine and across the world.

In the Council of Europe – as indeed at the OSCE - all have committed to protecting human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. In this context, the overarching goal of Ireland's six-month Presidency term is to renew and refocus on what we call the “the conscience of Europe”.

To that end, we will pursue three clear and complementary priorities:

First, as a founding state, we will work to reaffirm ‘Our Founding Freedoms’, reinforcing human rights protection for civilians across Europe, above all in areas of conflict, through the effective functioning of the European Court of Human Rights.

Second, on the theme of ‘Hear our Voices’ we will draw from our national experience, including with citizens’ assemblies, to promote participatory democracy and engage young people in the democratic process.



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Finally, framed around the concept of ‘Fáilte’, the Irish word for welcome, and reflecting the transformation our society has undergone, we will work to foster a Europe of welcome, inclusion, and diversity.

These themes will be woven through the events we will host as well as in meetings of the Committee of Ministers.

To support our Presidency priorities, we plan to make additional voluntary contributions to the Council this year, channelled, in particular, to the Action Plan for Ukraine, the new Human Rights Trust Fund, and the effective functioning of the Court.

As states, it is imperative that we work with, and learn from, each other in order to protect the rights and freedoms of all, including all those who have sought shelter with us. There is great urgency to our work, given the external context: we now face the largest refugee crisis, in the midst of the greatest act of aggression that Europe has witnessed since the Second World War.

In 1949, Ireland asked that “the pursuit of peace” be added to the preamble to the Council of Europe Statute. And it’s “the pursuit of



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peace”, and accountability for its violation, which occupies our minds most today. We have said it before: those responsible for war crimes and atrocities must be held to account: there can, and will be, no impunity.

Russia’s aggression has brought into sharp focus the role of the Council of Europe in promoting and protecting human rights, democracy and the rule of law across the continent and the Council of Europe is now refocussing on ensuring the most effective possible support for Ukraine and its people.

Ireland will, through our Presidency of the Council of Europe, and with you Secretary General, work to meet the challenges that face all of us, and to ensure that we remain true to the values that epitomise this critically important multilateral institution.

Thank you.