



**Address by President of Iceland
Guðni Th. Jóhannesson
at the 4th Summit of Head of State and Government
of the Council of Europe**

**Reykjavík
16 May 2023**

Kæru vinir, your excellencies.

Welcome to Iceland, welcome to the Reykjavík Summit. I hope your stay here will be fruitful.

You have come to a peaceful country. We are far away from conflicts and wars. We are far away from Russia's brutal invasion and atrocities in Ukraine. Still, we know that our peace and security depend on the peace and security of others. If the rest of Europe is not secure, we are not secure.

I want to thank all those who have organized this important event. I also express words of gratitude for the Council of Europe, our common forum where all states have an equal voice. We Icelanders know that we could never survive on our own on this island. In a globalized world, independence and interdependence are closely connected.

Dear friends: Together we must advance our fundamental interests and principles. Together, we must resist and reject the so-called strongmen who use military might to oppress others, bullies who instil fear and hatred at home and abroad. There is nothing strong about that. Instead, let us work for strong democracies, with strong respect for human rights, freedom and diversity. Let us work for a strong rule of law, not the law of the strong, for that is no law, only force and ferocity.

In these challenging times, we Icelanders are honoured to see Europe unite around our values here in Reykjavík. May this summit benefit us all. I wish you good luck in the task ahead and a safe return journey. Please convey the good greetings of the people of Iceland to everyone in your home countries. Thank you, *takk fyrir*.