



Statement of Ireland

45th session of the Human Rights Council

Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on human rights

14 September 2020

Madam President,

Ireland aligns with the statement of the EU and thanks the High Commissioner for her update today.

Ireland is committed to ensuring that measures taken to respond to COVID-19 do not violate human rights nor deepen pre-existing inequalities. We firmly believe that only by protecting and respecting human rights can we ensure a successful public health response.

Madame High Commissioner,

We share the concerns you have expressed around emergency measures being used as a pretext to violate human rights. Any restrictions must be necessary, proportionate and applied in a non-discriminatory manner. Civic space is crucial in times of emergency and attempts to limit freedom of expression and the work of human rights defenders and journalists are unacceptable. We believe that civil society must play a central role in the response and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ireland appreciates the guidance received from your Office in ensuring that human rights are at the heart of our response efforts and we encourage all States to follow this.

Madam High Commissioner, you have placed a significant focus on digital rights in the Covid era. How can we ensure that the positive impacts of digital technologies are not outweighed by the risks to our human rights?

Thank you.