

Subject: Response of Iceland to alert published on 18 October 2017 on the Council of Europe Platform – *“Injunction Prohibiting Media from Reporting on the Financial Dealings of Iceland Prime Minister Bjarni Benediktsson”*

The Reykjavik District Court on 2 February 2018 issued a judgment in the case of Glitnir Holdco v Reykjavik Media and Stundin (case nr. E-3434/2017) concerning an injunction issued by the Reykjavik District Commissioner in October 2017 prohibiting the media outlets from reporting on the financial dealings of Glitnir Holdco's clients, including Bjarni Benediktsson, former Prime Minister of Iceland. The Reykjavik District Court rejected the injunction on the basis that the reporting did not interfere with the right to privacy owing to the fact that the information concerned a Prime Minister who had through his duties subjected himself to a certain level of public scrutiny. Furthermore, the nature of the information contained in the reporting was deemed to be of particular relevance to the public debate in a democratic society. It is noteworthy that the Court relies on Article 10 of the European Convention of Human Rights and refers to relevant jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights when determining whether the restriction to freedom of expression was necessary in a democratic society. The fact that the injunction was requested 12 days before parliamentary elections was also considered to be of relevance by the Court. In this regard, the Court affirmed that the right to free and democratic elections is closely related to the right to freedom of expression, both form the foundations of a democratic society.

It must be stated that the judgment may still be appealed by Glitnir Hold co., in which case the injunction will remain in effect for another year until it has been considered by the appeals court.