



**Message from  
the President of Iceland,  
Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson,  
on  
the 50th Anniversary  
of the Hungarian Revolution**

The struggle of people for democracy and civil rights was one of the driving forces in historical development during the last century and laid the foundation for the social framework that most nations of the world now enjoy.

A few events were of crucial importance in this process and became symbols of hope and dreams.

The revolution in Hungary fifty years ago was one of those events. Unique in the history of Europe and of the world, it pointed the way towards the transformation that has now taken place. It sowed the seeds of freedom, and the harvest has proved abundant.

Those historic days half a century ago were dedicated to the struggle for democracy and the revolt of a people against dictatorship and oppression, but they were also days that showed how a foreign power can ruthlessly wield its military might to suppress an entire nation.

We who were young then can recall those days clearly. Those events had a deep impact in the life of my nation, far away in the North Atlantic. We gave a warm welcome to the Hungarian refugees who came to our shores and were to set their mark on our society and moral consciousness.

The Hungarian Revolution had a significant influence on my generation, rising like a monument in the struggle for democracy and moulding our awareness, our commitment and the way we sensed the march of history.

Many a hero played his or her part in those days: everyday Hungarian heroes – workers and students, farmers and artists – a cross-section of the nation.

We honour the memories of them all on this anniversary, in gratitude for their struggle and their selfless courage. At the same time, we rejoice in the

fact that Europe now enjoys a broader measure of democracy than at any time in its history.

On behalf of the Icelandic nation, I send my best wishes and congratulations to our Hungarian friends.