

## **Introduction. Open meeting with political parties March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013.**

Góðan daginn, veriði öll velkomin. Hello everybody, thank you for coming ,we are glad to see you all here today. Buenos días.

Við berum mikla virðingu fyrir öllum tungumálum, sérstaklega íslensku sem er tungumál þessa lands. En þar sem meirihluti fólks af erlendum uppruna skilur ensku frekar en íslensku, við ákváðum að halda fundinn á ensku af því að tilgangurinn er að skilja betur það sem verður sagt.

Íslenskri þýðingu verður varpað á skjá fyrir þá sem skilja íslensku betur.

The aim of this meeting is to get to know the vision of the different political parties regarding immigrants and multicultural issues in Iceland.

The multicultural council of Reyjavík does not belong to any political party, we are a voluntary service with the support of the city of Reykjavík that seeks to contribute to the development of well-informed interactions and harmonious relationships between Icelandic culture and the different cultures of immigrants.

We believe that in order to contribute to the creation of a healthy multicultural Icelandic society, it is important that immigrants and the multicultural society in general, receive relevant information about the political actuality in Iceland.

Some of us have the right to vote in the parliamentary elections for the congress of Iceland that will be held in April, but even those who don't have the right to vote can participate in political debate, because only through dialogue and discussion can we guaranty the spirit of democracy.

Even though immigrants may have very different political opinions, the governmental policy on immigration and multiculturalism affects us all.

Many of us come from countries where democracy is still in early stages of development or practically non existent at all. Some of us come from countries where expressing political opinions can be dangerous. But here in Iceland we have the right and the responsibility to criticize and express our opinions without fear.

Therefore, I would like to invite you all to lead the change, to use your experience and knowledge, your different backgrounds, to make our Icelandic society an example of understanding, cooperation and compromise with a prosperous future, where a mature society would be able to sustain a quality of life for all its members.

The multicultural council aims to publish a document (with translations) about this meeting and anonymous questions, opinions and suggestions. In the entrance will be a box for collecting your ideas.

Thank you.

Juan Camilo Roman Estrada