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**OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Warsaw, 22 September - 3 October 2014**

**EU Statement for Working Sessions 8 and 9:
Violence against women and children**

Mr/Ms Moderator,

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union.

Equality between women and men is at the core of the human rights agenda for the European Union. Indeed, it is one of the founding values of the EU and a human right reflected in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Furthermore, the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy sets up a list of actions for the protection of women's rights and for the protection against gender-based violence. The EU adopted also on 8 December 2008 specific EU guidelines on violence against women and girls and combating all forms of discrimination against them. These guidelines set out the European Union's operational objectives and intervention tools for its external action in this matter.

This year marked the tenth anniversary of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Swiss Chairmanship, the Secretariat and ODIHR for organizing the Gender Equality Review Conference on this occasion, and recall that one of the sessions of the Review Conference was devoted to combating violence against women, which inarguably remains the most widespread human rights violation of our time. According to a recent report by the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency, "Violence against women: an EU-wide survey", one in every three women (33 per cent or 62 million women) across the 28 EU Member States has suffered physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15. An estimated 500,000 women and girls in the EU alone have suffered from female genital mutilation, while an additional 180,000 are at risk each year.



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The EU has taken note of the Chairmanship's conclusions of the Gender Equality Review Conference and is ready to actively work with the OSCE to enhance our common efforts in combating and eradicating violence against women. We emphasize the need to fully implement MC.DEC/15/05 on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women.

The EU strongly supports the promotion of gender equality within the OSCE and in this regard, we would like to make four main recommendations to more effectively tackle violence against women:

- 1) Continue the mainstreaming of gender issues in OSCE policies and activities, with a focus on violence against women;
- 2) Strengthen the initiatives to tackle violence against women and girls, focusing particularly on those forms of gender-based violence that are most prevalent, such as domestic violence.
- 3) Engage men and boys in gender equality promotion activities and encourage awareness-raising on importance of ending violence against women and girls among them;
- 4) Raise awareness of the fact that human trafficking in all its forms is taking place in our own countries. States must fully implement the international commitments they have made to combat human trafficking. These forms of contemporary slavery must be adequately addressed.

This year we have reached an important milestone, as the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, also known as the Istanbul Convention officially entered into force on



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August 1st. The convention is a powerful tool to comprehensively tackle this form of human rights violation, which is perpetrated against millions of women and girls across Europe. We encourage all Participating States to ratify the convention. Ratifying and implementing the Convention is not a question of states granting special rights to women and girls – it is about remedying existing injustices and preventing further violations of their human rights. The Council of Europe has once again proven itself as a pioneer in the creation of legally binding international standards, especially on human rights. We would also like to mention the high-level conference organized by the UK in London last June, which brought together dignitaries and experts from all over the world to share their views on contributing to ending sexual violence in conflict. This year it is also 20 years since the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 which marked a milestone for women's health and reproductive rights. The full implementation of those rights is a key also to prevent sexual violence.

2015 will mark a unique opportunity to put gender equality and women's empowerment on the global agenda. Next year will not only be the 15th anniversary of the UN Security Council's Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, but also the year in which we adopt the new post-2015 development framework. We expect the post-2015 development framework to focus on the rights and the empowerment of women and girls, on gender equality and on preventing and combating violence against women as essential preconditions for equitable and inclusive sustainable development. We would also like to reiterate that the EU remains committed to the UNSC-resolution 1325 and related resolutions in this regard.

Thank you

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY,



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members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA, MONACO and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.