



## **Chairmanship's gender-sensitive approach is important for the promotion of gender equality at the OSCE**

**Statement by Ambassador Andrej Benedejčič, Permanent Representative of Slovenia, in response to the address by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy, at the 1171<sup>st</sup> Special Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council, Vienna, 11 January 2018**

*Mr. Chairperson,*

It goes without saying that Slovenia subscribes to the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union. However, I would also like to make a couple of points in my capacity as the Chairperson of the OSCE MenEngage Network.

*Mr. Minister,*

The Network in question is part of the global MenEngage Alliance, which was launched in 2004 with the aim of fostering the engagement of men and boys in the promotion of gender equality. Here, in Vienna, the Network was established at the initiative of the OSCE Senior Gender Adviser in 2012. The goal was to promote women's rights in the knowledge that they are inextricably linked to security.

I have been chairing the Network for the past year and a half and have both organized and also actively participated in a number of gender-related events. I can therefore say that the picture is mixed. On the one hand, there is a lot of understanding within the OSCE of why gender mainstreaming is important. On the other hand, gender equality is still perceived by many as a women's issue. More work thus needs to be done, especially in awareness raising.

Let me therefore refer to the program of the Italian OSCE Chairmanship lying in front of us. I welcome your intention to practice a gender-sensitive approach and to mainstream a gender perspective into all initiatives. I am equally pleased that the implementation of the OSCE Gender Action Plan will also be high on your agenda. All of this will importantly help those of us who are involved in the promotion of gender equality at the OSCE in our work.

Finally, let me also welcome the announced focus of the Italian OSCE Chairmanship on the Euro-Mediterranean region. Speaking now as the Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the OSCE, I would like to say that the forthcoming Slovenian Chairmanship of the Forum for Security Co-operation, which will take place in the middle of the year, looks forward to working with our Italian colleagues on this issue.

*Thank you.*