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DECISION No. 14/04
2004 OSCE ACTION PLAN FOR THE
PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY

The Ministerial Council,

Recalling that at the OSCE Istanbul Summit in 1999, the Heads of State or Government declared that “The full and equal exercise by women of their human rights is essential to achieve a more peaceful, prosperous and democratic OSCE area. We are committed to making equality between men and women an integral part of our policies, both at the level of our States and within the Organization,”¹

Recalling the 2000 Action Plan for Gender Issues² which was established “in order to ensure that the OSCE commitments concerning equality in rights and equality of opportunity for women and men are taken into account by participating States and in the practical work of OSCE institutions and field mission,”

Recognizing that equal rights of women and men and the protection of their human rights are essential to peace, sustainable democracy, economic development and therefore to security and stability in the OSCE region,

Recalling the Beijing Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly in 2000, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”,

Recalling UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)³, which calls for full and equal participation of women in decision making with regard to conflict prevention as well as in post-conflict reconstruction, and stressing the importance of their full and equal participation and involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security,

1 Charter for European Security, paragraph 23.

2 PC.DEC/353 of 1 June 2000.

3 Adopted by the Security Council at its 4213th meeting, on 31 October 2000.

Mindful of the need to appropriately reflect a gender perspective in the activities conducted under the auspices of the OSCE, and for participating States to take all necessary measures to encourage gender awareness raising and to promote equality in rights and full and equal participation of women and men in society, the aim being to promote the practice of gender equality and gender-mainstreaming⁴ in the OSCE area, which is essential to comprehensive security,

Stressing the need for the OSCE to develop further and strengthen a continuous and sustainable gender-mainstreaming process, to promote a gender-sensitive and professional working environment and management culture, and efforts towards gender balance in staffing in particular on a professional level, in accordance with the OSCE Staff Regulations,

Decides to endorse the 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality adopted by the Permanent Council in its Decision No. 638 on 2 December 2004, and annexed to this Decision.

4 “Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.” See Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-Second Session, Supplement No. 3 (A/52/3/Rev.1), chapter IV, paragraph 4.

2004 OSCE ACTION PLAN FOR THE PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY

“The peace and welfare of the world require maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields.”¹”

1. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, and the rule of law is at the core of the OSCE’s comprehensive concept of security. The Charter for European Security adopted at the OSCE Istanbul Summit declares that: “The full and equal exercise by women of their human rights is essential to achieve a more peaceful, prosperous and democratic OSCE area. We are committed to making equality between men and women an integral part of our policies, both at the level of our States and within the Organization.”

2. As a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, the OSCE is a key instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in its region. In the OSCE area, it has become increasingly evident that security, democracy, and prosperity are closely linked. Economic liberty, social justice, and environmental responsibility are indispensable for prosperity. For the Organization to carry out its tasks and achieve its goals it is crucial that, in co-operation with participating States, it invests in its human capital.

3. Effective gender-mainstreaming² with the goal of achieving gender equality, is important if full use is to be made of the human capital in the OSCE area. Gender equality contributes to comprehensive security, which is a goal of OSCE activities in all three dimensions. Gender-mainstreaming is a way of contributing to attaining this goal. The gender perspective should therefore be taken into account in the Organization’s activities, projects and programmes, in order for the Organization to achieve gender equality within its own operations as well as in the participating States. It is the joint responsibility of the participating States, the Chairman-in-Office, the Secretary General, and the Heads of institutions and missions to promote equality between women and men as an integral element of policies and practices of the OSCE. In this effort it shall be borne in mind that if gender equality is to become a reality in any area and at any level of society, both men and women will benefit from such a change.

1 United Nations General Assembly resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979 (CEDAW).

2 “Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.” See Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-Second Session, Supplement No. 3 (A/52/3/Rev.1), chapter IV, paragraph 4.

I. GENERAL CONTEXT

Status of implementation of the 2000 Action Plan

4. The 2000 OSCE Action Plan for Gender Issues³ called for increased efforts to achieve equal treatment of women and men within the Organization in all areas, including personnel recruitment, and the inclusion of a gender perspective in the activities of the Organization. It succeeded in raising awareness of the need to promote gender equality within the OSCE through the activities by the Secretariat, institutions and field operations, and by participating States.

There are nevertheless shortcomings in the implementation of the 2000 Action Plan, especially in the fields of training, management, and recruitment, and in the overall practice of gender-mainstreaming throughout the OSCE as well as within participating States.

5. The 2000 Gender Action Plan stipulated that opportunities for women in the OSCE should be enhanced and a professional working environment should be promoted. The Chairman-in-Office, participating States and the Secretariat were asked to take positive action to promote and appoint women candidates in the OSCE's institutions and also in the field activities, and all participating States were called upon to make substantial efforts to nominate women, particularly at management level.

Representation of women in the OSCE continues, however, to be low, in particular at senior and policy-making levels, and has in fact decreased in recent years. There is a continuing lack of representation or under-representation of women from certain countries, in particular from participating States with economies in transition. Statistics indicate that women candidates may have less chance of being employed by the Organization than men⁴. The biannual statistics and annual reports issued by the Secretary General on the implementation of the 2000 Action Plan for Gender Issues have not been addressed by the Permanent Council, and the implementation of the 2000 Action Plan has not been adequately monitored.

6. Another priority set in the 2000 Gender Action Plan was that all new mission staff should receive training on gender issues, and that OSCE institutions were to incorporate a gender perspective in their staff training. General training on gender awareness has been

3 Decision No. 353 by the Permanent Council on 1 June 2000 (PC.DEC/353/00).

4 Gender-Disaggregated Statistics of the OSCE Secretariat, institutions and missions, SEC.GAL/208/03, 21 November 2003. Concerning post-table posts, women make up 44 per cent of the general service level staff, on the professional level the overall representation is 25 per cent and has in fact decreased over the last years. Of all the candidates who applied for fixed-term posts in the period of January 2003 to September 2003 (9,566) 69 per cent were men and 31 per cent women; in the same period, however, of all selected candidates (50) 72 per cent were men and only 28 per cent were women. For the 34 vacancies issued for P-posts, women constituted 33 per cent of applicants, 23 per cent of interviewed candidates and 12 per cent of selected candidates. Of all nominated candidates for secondment in the first six months of 2003 (2,135), 30 per cent (641) were women and 70 per cent (1,494) were men. However, only 10 per cent (62) of these women were deployed to Missions, while 18 per cent (272) of the nominated men were accepted and deployed.

implemented and efforts have been made to provide for a professional working environment. Since 2000, every mission has nominated a mediator and annual training has been organized for these persons by the Secretariat. Nevertheless, training and sensitization of managers on gender issues, and on the responsibilities of all staff within their tasks and subject areas in this regard, has not produced the expected results, nor has the goal of a professional environment yet been attained.

7. The 2000 Gender Action Plan furthermore stipulated that a comprehensive framework would be established for gender-mainstreaming projects, and that data and research materials on gender issues would be analysed and used in the design of new programmes.

This process has not been developed with due continuity. Moreover, gender advisers and focal points have not been sufficiently involved in the development of new policies and programmes.

8. Gender-mainstreaming requires consistent, systematic, attention to gender perspectives in the activities of the Organization based on a cross-dimensional approach, and also adequate monitoring and review mechanisms. A new and strengthened Action Plan is called for, setting out goals and clearly assigned accountabilities, in order to reinforce the dedicated efforts of participating States to implement their commitments.

II. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

9. The 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality aims to set out the priorities of the OSCE in promoting gender equality, in the Organization and in all participating States, and to ensure the monitoring of its implementation.

In order to achieve these goals, the plan will address the activities, policies, projects and programmes of the Organization concerning gender-mainstreaming, as well as assistance by the OSCE to participating States in promoting gender equality. Such assistance could be directed at the implementation of international commitments in the gender area, as well as the development of national programmes and policies.

10. The following objectives will be given priority:

(a) Within the OSCE:

- Providing specific training programmes for OSCE staff on gender awareness and sensitization to gender equality in their daily work, and programmes to strengthen efforts to ensure consistent gender-mainstreaming in policies and programmes, as well as review and assessment mechanisms;
- Promoting a professional and gender-sensitive management culture and working environment;
- Applying strengthened and innovative recruitment strategies in the OSCE to promote equal opportunities for all, and to ensure that well-qualified women

are identified and attracted, in conformity with the Staff Regulations, reference PC.DEC/550/Corr.1 of 27 June 2003, the aim being to increase the number of women working in the OSCE at senior levels;

- Encouraging participating States to submit more female candidates for positions in the OSCE, in particular at senior and policy-making levels⁵, the aim being to achieve a continuous improvement in the ratio between men and women at all levels;
- Achieving the effective gender-mainstreaming of OSCE activities and policies, as well as of the activities and policies of participating States.

(b) To assist the participating States in:

- Defining priority areas for OSCE structures to assist OSCE States in implementing their respective commitments;
- Outlining some best practices for the promotion of the equality of women and men in participating States;
- Highlighting and promoting the role of women in conflict prevention and peace reconstruction processes;
- Providing a framework structure to ensure that gender issues, including the implementation of this Action Plan, are regularly discussed and reviewed.

III. PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE OSCE

(A) Gender-mainstreaming the structures and working environment, and gender-mainstreaming in recruitment

Training

11. In order to achieve the objectives outlined in this Action Plan, the OSCE shall expand existing training opportunities and institute new training programmes in accordance with the OSCE training strategy for 2005–2007⁶ and the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings⁷. In this context, the General Orientation Programme at the Secretariat, the

5 P-5 and above.

6 SEC.GAL/118/04/Rev.5, 27 July 2004.

7 MC.DEC/2/03 Annex, p.12, Awareness-raising. 8.4.: “The OSCE Training Co-ordinator, the Senior Adviser on Gender Issues and the Senior Security Co-ordinator will continue to use the induction course to develop and implement staff training on gender issues, trafficking in human beings and on relevant regulations and guidelines, in co-operation with the ODIHR, and to organize special workshops in the field. Heads of field operations will ensure that attendance at such training courses will be compulsory for all staff.”

Human Dimension Induction Course at the ODIHR and additional induction courses or workshops in the field shall contain two specifically tailored modules, as appropriate:

- The first module shall deal with the training of all OSCE officials in gender awareness and mainstreaming a gender perspective in their everyday work. This module, appropriately tailored to each staff category in order to meet their specific needs, shall explain the principle of gender equality, the tools that exist to achieve this goal, and the reasons why it is important for the Organization to mainstream a gender perspective in its activities. The module shall be action-oriented and interactive and include information regarding tasks and responsibilities described in this Action Plan as well as in relevant provisions, in particular those regarding accountability of all staff. All categories of staff shall be included in such training. Training can also be provided in the field if necessary, to ensure that locally-hired staff are able to attend.
 - (a) Specific modules on combating domestic violence and trafficking in human beings will be included in training programmes, in particular those designed for police and border monitors.
 - (b) Heads of institutions and missions and Directors, shall exercise leadership in facilitating staff training, to ensure equal opportunities for both women and men to participate. They will also receive information on OSCE policies concerning gender issues, in particular complaint procedures.
 - The second module shall address the gender-mainstreaming of OSCE programmes, projects, and technical co-operation activities in order to ensure consistent integration of a gender equality perspective. This means reviewing and enacting policies and measures specifically for the purpose of achieving equality by actively taking gender perspectives into account at the planning, reporting, implementation and evaluation stages.
12. Review and assessment provisions shall be included in all training programmes in order to measure their effectiveness at regular intervals.
13. The OSCE Training Co-ordinator is tasked to design and implement the staff training dimension of this action plan in close co-operation with gender units and gender focal points in the Organization and supported by the network of focal points responsible for training.

Management

14. The Secretary General, and Heads of institutions and missions shall exercise strong and active leadership in building sustainable gender awareness in the Organization and shall intensify their efforts towards achieving a gender-sensitive and professional working environment and management culture. Such a working environment shall also be promoted by all OSCE officials, in particular by staff in a supervisory role. When management positions are being filled, importance should be attached to finding people who demonstrate gender-sensitive attitudes and understanding of the importance of an inclusive corporate culture. The Director for the Department of Human Resources shall be responsible for reviewing and if necessary strengthening the policy of the OSCE against harassment, including sexual harassment. He/she will disseminate information and raise staff awareness of

the problem of harassment in working life and of the measures available to combat and prevent it, and will encourage victims to come forward with their complaints.

15. Performance appraisals of managers will include an evaluation of their sensitivity to gender equality. For this purpose a gender-equality scoreboard, containing details of measures that can be compared across all services, shall be developed by the Department of Human Resources.

16. The OSCE's organizational regulations, rules, directives, and instructions shall be reviewed by participating States and/or the Secretariat, to incorporate gender-mainstreaming aspects, when called for.

17. Heads of institutions, heads of missions and directors in the Secretariat will chair regular meetings with staff to review the integration of and consideration to be paid to gender aspects in the work of their respective structure and to encourage all staff to gender-mainstream their work.

18. The Secretariat and ODIHR will continue to engage in the active exchange of information on gender-sensitive management policies with relevant international, intergovernmental and regional organizations. In particular the Secretariat will intensify interaction with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly on gender equality. The Secretariat, institutions and missions will make this Action Plan visible.

Recruitment

19. Recruitment in the OSCE shall be based on a transparent process, subject to open competition among nationals of participating States, thereby securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity.

20. On recruitment, Regulation 3.01 of the OSCE Staff Regulations shall be fully implemented, including the principle of recruiting staff from all OSCE Participating States on a fair basis.

21. Participating States are encouraged to submit more women candidates for positions in the OSCE, in particular in higher-level positions where women are underrepresented; measures to this end shall include the identification of additional national recruitment sources, and the establishment of networks with professional organizations that will assist in seeking suitable candidates. More nationals of participating States, notably women from participating States with economies in transition, should be made aware of the OSCE vacancies and encouraged to make applications.

22. Participating States are to be encouraged to develop rosters of potential women candidates with a special emphasis on fields of expertise in which women are underrepresented.

23. The Chairman-in-Office and the Secretariat will be proactive in promoting the nomination of women candidates, in particular in higher-level positions, taking into account the OSCE Staff Regulations.

24. The Secretariat shall strengthen the wording of the statement in its vacancy notices encouraging women to apply.
25. The Secretariat will furthermore enhance its human resource planning in order to inform participating States as early as possible of upcoming vacancies, in order for them to be given sufficient time to search for and present qualified female candidates.
26. The Chairman-in-Office, the Secretary General, heads of institutions, and heads of missions shall seek to improve the ratio of men and women at all levels on a continuous basis. This, including the statistics on women candidates selected, will be reviewed in the annual evaluation report on gender issues in the OSCE to be presented by the Secretary General in accordance with paragraph 47 below.
27. The Department of Human Resources shall conduct regular gender-mainstreamed reviews of recruitment procedures and job specifications, in order to identify possible prejudices and obstacles against female applicants, and if necessary revise the procedures as appropriate.
28. The Department of Human Resources will seek to ensure that in recruitment for management posts, applicants of both sexes are invited for interview where possible, and that a gender-balanced shortlist is drawn up as appropriate. The shortlist of candidates invited for interview should contain information about the number of men and women who actually applied for the job.
29. Interview panels should, where possible, be gender-balanced.
30. The Department of Human Resources in the Secretariat will convene an annual co-ordination meeting with delegations and training/recruitment experts from capitals, to share information on profiles and skills in demand, and best practice on pre-mission training. These meetings will also discuss efforts to achieve gender balance in recruitment.
31. The Secretariat shall continue to prepare annual statistics showing the current distribution of women and men by category of posts at each level. These statistics will include institutions and missions as well as each Department and Unit in the Secretariat, and will be annexed to the Secretary General's annual evaluation report on gender issues referred to in paragraph 47 below.

(B) Mainstreaming a gender perspective into OSCE activities, policies, programmes and projects.

32. Participating States, the Secretariat, institutions and missions shall ensure that a gender perspective is integrated into OSCE activities, programmes and projects. The aim shall be to promote the practice of gender equality in the OSCE area, which is essential to comprehensive security; they shall focus in particular on women's empowerment and the participation of women as well as men in public, political and economic life in the context of democratic and economic processes in participating States. The gender-mainstreaming process shall also aim at overcoming negative stereotypes and at changing perceptions, as

well as developing attitudes conducive to bringing about equality between women and men in all participating States.

33. Gender advisers in the Secretariat, institutions, and field operations shall be involved at an early stage when new directives, rules and regulations are being developed. In their regular reports to the Permanent Council, missions and institutions shall inform the Council on progress in their gender-mainstreaming efforts where appropriate, and also on problems, when they arise.

34. The Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC), and in particular the Project Co-ordinating Cell (PCC) will assist in ensuring that gender-equity analyses are made of new projects being developed by missions, institutions, and units in the Secretariat, and of existing projects when they are being evaluated.

35. The Secretariat and the institutions, when developing projects and programmes for participating States which are not hosting OSCE missions, shall take a gender perspective into account.

36. Gender-mainstreaming of OSCE activities, policies, projects and programmes in the politico-military dimension shall also take into account obligations embodied in Security Council resolution 1325 calling for increased participation of women in, *inter alia*, conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction processes.

37. The participating States, assisted by the Chairmanship, the Secretary General and heads of institutions, shall ensure that the planning of OSCE conferences and seminars across all three dimensions will take the gender aspect into account and, as appropriate, include related topics.

38. Institutions and missions working on gender issues should, in order to make tangible progress on gender-mainstreaming in OSCE activities, projects and programmes, develop concrete follow-up mechanisms in co-operation with participating States.

39. Missions will, where appropriate, establish internal gender working groups led by the gender focal point to design gender-mainstreaming strategies, monitor their implementation and enhance the visibility of their gender-related activities. It is the responsibility of the heads of mission to position gender focal points on a sufficiently high level and to make sure that they enjoy full access to senior management.

40. The Press and Public Information Section of the Secretariat, institutions and missions will encourage gender-balanced reporting, and highlight, as appropriate, meetings, seminars, special events, reports, case stories and developments related to the implementation of OSCE commitments on gender equality.

IV. PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN PARTICIPATING STATES

41. Participating States, individually and collectively, bear the primary responsibility and are accountable to their citizens for the implementation of their commitments on equality of rights and equal opportunities for women and men. They have committed themselves to making equality between women and men an integral part of policies both at State level and within the Organization. They will ensure the full use of the appropriate OSCE fora for reviewing the implementation of OSCE commitments on equality between women and men.

42. Participating States are therefore recommended to:

- Ensure that the Organization develops policies which effectively promote gender equality and that new proposals and initiatives take a gender perspective into account;
- Establish or strengthen existing mechanisms for ensuring gender equality, *inter alia* by making available the services of an impartial and independent person or body, such as an Ombudsman/Human Rights Commissioner, to address gender related discrimination against individual citizens;
- Adhere to and fully implement the international standards and commitments they have undertaken concerning equality, non-discrimination and women's and girls' rights;
- Comply with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), if they are parties, or, if they have not already done so, consider ratifying or acceding to this Convention. States that have ratified or acceded to this Convention with reservations will consider withdrawing them. States parties to the CEDAW are also called upon to consider ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women;
- If they are parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and/or the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), report regularly and on time to the respective bodies, and include women's organizations in the preparation of their reports;
- Take further action where necessary in order to ensure a safe environment for their citizens and the right to equal protection under the law, notably by increasing activities aimed at eliminating all forms of violence against women, including trafficking in human beings⁸, and encourage those who have not already done so to ratify and implement the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children;
- Support national and international efforts to bring to justice those who have perpetrated crimes against women which under applicable rules of international law

8 Reference is made to the Permanent Council Decision No. 557 of 24 July 2003 on the adoption of the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings.

are recognized as war crimes or crimes against humanity, and ensure that existing national legislation on violence against women is enforced, and that new legislation is drafted where necessary;

- As recommended in the Guidelines on International Protection on Gender-Related Persecution within the context of Article 1A (2) of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and/or its 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, introduce procedural practices, if States have not already done so, that ensure that proper consideration is given to women claimants in refugee status determination procedures and that the range of claims of gender-related persecution are accorded due recognition;
- Draw on the experience of the OSCE to develop cross-dimensional gender equality policies and strategies, and include in the follow-up to such policies, *inter alia*, the utilization of gender analysis and monitoring mechanisms to assess the impact of gender policies and strategies, so that constraints on their full implementation may be identified and addressed.

V. SUPPORTING OSCE PARTICIPATING STATES IN IMPLEMENTING RELEVANT COMMITMENTS TO PROMOTING EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN

Areas of special interest to all OSCE participating States

43. The following priority areas are laid down as a basis for the OSCE Secretariat, institutions and missions to use when developing plans and programmes to assist participating States, upon their request, in implementing relevant commitments. All OSCE structures should endeavour to respect these priorities, as appropriate within their mandates. Countries not hosting missions are also urged to make full use of the expertise of the OSCE structures to assist them in promoting gender equality, as there is no country where full equality has been reached.

44. Priorities

(a) Developing projects in OSCE States not hosting missions

- In countries without missions, the ODIHR will identify projects to support measures in the areas of prevention of violence against women, promotion of women in the public, political, and economic spheres, and support for national gender-mainstreaming.

(b) Ensuring non-discriminatory legal and policy frameworks

- The ODIHR, in co-operation with other international organizations and relevant national bodies and institutions, will assist OSCE participating States in complying with international instruments for the promotion of gender equality and women's rights, and in reviewing legislation to ensure appropriate

legal guarantees for the promotion of gender equality in accordance with OSCE and other commitments;

- The ODIHR will assist in the development and implementation of specific programmes and activities to promote women's rights, to increase the role of women at all levels of decision-making, and to promote equality between women and men throughout the OSCE area, particularly through education in gender awareness;
- The ODIHR will assist in the implementation and assessment of national strategies and action plans on measures to promote gender equality and gender-mainstreaming;
- The OSCE Secretariat, institutions and field operations will also assist the participating States in implementing the relevant provisions and recommendations contained in the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, and the OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE Area.

(c) Preventing violence against women⁹

- OSCE structures will continue to assist participating States in developing programmes and activities aimed at the prevention of all forms of gender-based violence¹⁰;
- OSCE structures will assist participating States with legislative initiatives to prevent violence against women, and will foster institution-building, strengthen co-ordination between government institutions and civil society, and raise awareness of the problem in general;
- OSCE structures will, in co-operation with participating States, address the gender dimension of proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW). SALW proliferation exacerbates violence against women, and a gender perspective should thus be taken into account in related endeavours;
- The Strategic Police Matters Unit (SPMU) will enhance its project development to assist participating States in reacting to sexual violence offences and in including such elements as special investigation techniques,

9 Article 2(b) of the United Nations Declaration on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women states: "Violence against women shall be understood to encompass but not be limited to, the following: [...] physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution."

10 The United Nations resolution on "Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action" (A/RES/S-23/3) of 16 November 2000, states (paragraph 59): "Gender-based violence, such as battering and other domestic violence, sexual abuse, sexual slavery and exploitation, international trafficking in women and children, forced prostitution and sexual harassment... are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person..."

and interview skills designated for use with victims of sexual assault including children, and information on referral mechanisms for victim assistance, in the police training curriculum;

- The Office of the Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA), and the Anti-Trafficking Assistance Unit (ATAU), while addressing underlying causes of trafficking in human beings, shall in co-ordination with relevant OSCE institutions and structures, assist participating States in tackling the lack of opportunities for women, female unemployment, and other gender aspects of trafficking, including the demand side of sexual and other forms of exploitation;
- The Action against Terrorism Unit (ATU) will upon request take action on the issue of the exploitation of women by terrorists to serve their own ends and propagate extremist ideologies;
- As negative gender stereotypes contribute to the persistence of violence against women, OSCE programmes, projects, and activities should aim at women's empowerment.

(d) Ensuring equal opportunity for participation of women in political and public life

- The ODIHR will assist participating States in developing effective measures to bring about the equal participation of women in democratic processes and will assist in developing best practices for their implementation;
- The ODIHR and the OSCE field operations will assist, as appropriate, in building up local capacities and expertise on gender issues as well as networks linking community leaders and politicians;
- The ODIHR will continue to assist participating States in promoting women's political participation. It will continue, as a part of its Election Observation Mission, to monitor and report on women's participation in electoral processes. When possible, additionally, the ODIHR will commission and publish reports specifically analysing the situation of women in electoral processes;
- The High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) will address specific issues relating to the participation in public and private life of women belonging to national minorities and, in policies and projects developed by his/her office, take steps necessary to counter the double discrimination suffered by these women, as appropriate within the context of his/her conflict prevention mandate;
- The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFOM) will be alert to allegations of serious intolerance towards women and incitement to gender discrimination in or by the media in participating States in accordance with Chapter 6 of the mandate of the RFOM. The Representative will inform the participating States of such cases in his/her regular reports.

- (e) Encouraging women's participation in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict reconstruction
- OSCE structures will, as appropriate within their mandate, promote the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on the role of women in, *inter alia*, the prevention of conflicts and post-conflict reconstruction;
 - OSCE structures will, as appropriate, assist participating States in developing programmes and projects aimed at bringing about equal opportunities for women to participate in efforts for the promotion of peace and security, including those conducted at grass-roots and regional levels. The empowerment of women in the political-military dimension is also essential to comprehensive security.
- (f) Promoting equal opportunity for women in the economic sphere
- The OCEEA will take initiatives to increase awareness of women's rights in the economic sphere as described in paragraph 40.6 of the Moscow Document and, as appropriate, develop projects to implement the same;
 - The OCEEA should take a gender perspective into account when implementing its tasks as outlined in the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension, adopted by the Ministerial Council in Maastricht in 2003, and the Document of the Bonn Conference on Economic Co-operation in Europe;
 - The OCEEA will upon request assist participating States in formulating their economic policies on the basis of the principles set forth in the Bonn Document and the OSCE Strategy for the Economic and Environmental Dimension. In this respect the OSCE should continue and strengthen its co-operation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and other organizations;
 - The OCEEA will, together with participating States and missions, analyse obstacles preventing women from fulfilling their potential in the economic sphere, and develop projects that will enhance the role of women in economic activities and ensure that they are not discriminated against in this field, notably regarding access to and control over such economic and financial resources as loans, property and inheritance rights;
 - The OCEEA and, as appropriate, missions should promote the development of women's entrepreneurial and other work-related skills by supporting training, retraining and special education facilities, and promoting the education and training of women and men in non-traditional subjects and jobs;
 - The OCEEA will encourage international donor organizations and lending institutions to support projects designed to enhance the role of women in economic activities or to ensure equality in employment. Projects on

employment issues should highlight the principle that maternity and paternity arrangements are a key element in promoting equal opportunities and responsibility-sharing between women and men;

- OSCE structures will assist participating States in ensuring that girls and boys, as well as women and men, have equal opportunities to receive education and training.

(g) Building national mechanisms for the advancement of women

- The ODIHR will continue to provide know-how and support for the building-up of democratic institutions for advancing gender equality, such as Ombudsman's offices at local and national levels, as appropriate;
- The ODIHR will facilitate dialogue and co-operation between civil society, media and government in promoting gender-mainstreaming.

(h) The Parliamentary Assembly is encouraged to:

- Continue to have on its agenda the issue of equal opportunities for men and women in national parliaments as well as within the OSCE and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, having mainstreamed the discussion of gender equality in the agenda of the Assembly's Plenary Meetings;
- Further develop the current network of women parliamentarians through the work of the OSCE PA Special Representative on the Gender Issue, in order to promote the participation of women in political and public life at both the national and international levels;
- Ensure, with the assistance of the Special Representative, that it continues to put forward recommendations with regard to gender equality in its annual Declarations;
- Continue to produce, through the Gender Unit at the OSCE PA Secretariat, reports on the status of women in the OSCE area and seek to raise awareness by making such material available to all participating parliaments.

VI. GENERAL FOLLOW-UP

45. The Secretary General, heads of missions and heads of institutions, shall be accountable to the Permanent Council for the implementation of the relevant parts of this Action Plan, in accordance with their respective responsibilities.

46. The Secretary General shall before 1 October 2005, develop a plan for the implementation of measures for achieving the overall aims of this Action Plan. Heads of institutions shall also develop their own separate implementation plans by that date. These plans shall include concrete measures for implementing the 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, measures concerning training programmes on

gender-mainstreaming of the work of OSCE officials, measures for cross-dimensional gender-mainstreaming in OSCE policies, projects and programmes, and finally management and recruitment strategies, aimed at achieving gender balance at all levels.

47. The Secretary General shall report on progress in work on gender issues in the Annual Report for 2004. The Secretary General shall thereafter present an annual evaluation report on gender issues in the OSCE. This report will be presented to the Permanent Council in June each year starting in 2006. These evaluation reports will contain contributions from Departments, and from institutions and missions, on developments related to gender equality and gender-mainstreaming in the OSCE structures, including information on the plans dealt with in paragraph 46 above. They will include analysis of achievements in light of the requirements of this Action Plan.

48. Starting in June 2006, the Permanent Council will, on the basis of the Secretary General's annual evaluation report on gender issues, hold an annual discussion especially devoted to gender issues, covering the review and if necessary the updating of policies and strategies on gender-mainstreaming and the promotion of gender equality. This discussion should also monitor implementation of this Action Plan.

49. The need to include in co-operation with host countries a gender perspective in the mandate of the respective missions may be considered as and when appropriate.

50. The next revision of the 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality will take place when the Permanent Council so decides.

51. The implementation of this Action Plan requires provision of adequate resources.