



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Review Conference Warsaw, 6 October 2010

EU Statement – Session 8: Tolerance and non-discrimination II (1)

Dear Mr. Moderator

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

At the outset, let me underline how important it is that the EU and the OSCE pay special attention to gender equality and its promotion.

The OSCE recognises that full and true equality, including equality in political and economic life, between women and men is essential to achieving security, prosperity and sustainable democracy. The EU recognises the equality between women and men as a fundamental right, a common value of the EU, and a necessary condition for the achievement of the EU objectives of growth, employment and social cohesion. Although different in wording, these principles reflect a common goal - democratic, stable and inclusive societies for all. We also welcome the creation in February 2010 of a post of UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the setting up a new UN Entity for Gender Equality and the

Empowerment of Women, those help to bring more attention and action on this critical issue.

A large body of European legislative texts is dedicated to equality between women and men. However, the legislation alone is not sufficient to achieve the desired results. The question of better implementation always persists. The EU countries combine equal treatment legislation with specific initiatives and gender mainstreaming, the integration of equality between women and men into all EU policies and activities.

The OSCE adopted its Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality in 2004, and we hereby welcome the recent presentation of the Secretary General's comprehensive Annual Evaluation Report on the implementation of the Action Plan. The OSCE has made advances in its policies of gender mainstreaming, as recommended in the annual evaluation report of the last year. The EU would also like to stress the importance of including gender perspective in OSCE activities, projects and programmes in all three dimensions. We also commend the work of the Secretariat and its Gender Section, ODIHR, field missions and gender focal points, and call upon them to continue their cohesive efforts to achieve the equality of rights and equal opportunities for women and men.

In this regard we find it noteworthy that over the last year the proportion of women professionals in OSCE higher management for the first time reached 30%, largely due to increase in seconded personnel. The number of projects that have incorporated gender perspective has increased and that, too, is to be commended. Although progress has been made in the

implementation of the Gender Action Plan, further efforts should be made to achieve a full gender balance.

The EU is worried by the notion in the Secretary General's report that the number of formal complaints regarding gender-based harassment or discrimination may not provide a complete picture of the status of the professional working environment in the OSCE. Therefore we take note of the recommendation to conduct, in close cooperation with the Gender Section, a staff survey to understand the scope of the problems and to strengthen the mechanism to capture and address all complaints.

The EU has adopted a roadmap for equality between women and men for the period 2006-2010 and this year marks the assessment of the roadmap. Both the European Commission and the European Parliament have noted progress brought about by increasing importance to gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment, but still much remains to be done to put the political commitments into practice to address the gender pay gap and the fact that women are still under-represented in political and economic decision-making positions in Member States. Both institutions have called for strengthening the gender dimension in all parts of the new "Europe 2020" strategy, including specific actions and targets.

Both the OSCE Action Plan of 2004 and the Ministerial Council Decision on Women in Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management, and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation (2005) cite United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, which 10th anniversary we celebrate this year. The implementation of this resolution has also been at the core of EU

activities. A conference "Women, Peace and Security: From Resolution to Action" organised by the EU in Geneva in September has been devoted to this Resolution; and we note that next year a conference "On the Implementation of UNSCR 1325: OSCE Contribution" will take place. We would also like to recall the input concerning the inclusion of women's perspectives in security dialogues and strategies from the OSCE roundtables in the FSC and the Security Committee and the 2010 High-Level Tripartite Meeting. A conference was also organized by EU and Belgium on 9th September for the 10 years of this Resolution.

The EU has undertaken to promote the role of women in peace building and to enhance the implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889 on women, peace and security in its external actions. 9 EU Member States have adopted and several countries are preparing their national action plans and strategies, as called for by the Security Council and ODIHR's Human Rights, Women and Security programme.

Preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence is an integral part of achieving equality between women and men and a key activity for the ODIHR, and we welcome their ongoing work with training programmes for the law enforcement bodies. The EU adopted its guidelines on violence against women and girls in 2008. The Stockholm Programme, approved by the European Council in December 2009, which sets out the priorities for the next five years in the area of freedom, security and justice, establishes a framework for tackling many of the issues related to violence against women. This year the EU Council has adopted conclusions on

improving prevention to tackle violence against women and conclusions on the eradication of violence against women.

The EU reiterates the three indivisible aims of combating violence against women: prevention of violence, protection and support of victims and prosecution of the perpetrators of such violence. Participating States must investigate acts of violence against women thoroughly, impartially and seriously.

The EU has called for joint actions by public authorities, institutions, and society in general, as well as for integral and multidisciplinary approach through national strategies for the eradication of violence against women, and an European Strategy for preventing and combating violence against women by establishing a general framework of common principles and appropriate instruments; for the active involvement of men, with a view to challenging perceived stereotypes and gender roles; and for the international approach in the exchange of knowledge, policies and best practices with other countries.

We consider that all the initiatives mentioned are equally relevant for the successful implementation of the gender equality principle in the OSCE. We reaffirm the European Union's commitment to work closely with all the OSCE structures and Participating States to achieve our common goal of equal rights and opportunities for women and men.

Thank you for your attention.

The candidate countries TURKEY, CROATIA*, the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA* and ICELAND**, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO and SERBIA, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ARMENIA, AZERBAIJAN, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

*Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

** Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and the European Economic Area.