



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°958
Vienna, 21 October 2020**

EU Statement on UNSCR 1325

Madam Chairperson, the European Union and its Member States welcome the distinguished panelists and thank them for their valuable insights which are proof that Women do play a crucial role in the Peace and Security Agenda. On 31 October 2000, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325, the foundation of what has become the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Today, 20 years later, this document still upholds its relevance.

The promotion of equality between women and men is a fundamental value of the EU and we remain a frontrunner in the global arena in engaging, empowering, protecting, and supporting women and girls to achieve peace and security. The WPS Agenda broadens the scope of traditional security by highlighting the importance of the gender dimension in peace and security. It focuses not only on protecting women and girls from conflict-related violence, including sexual and gender based violence, but also emphasizes the need for women to participate meaningfully and equally in peace and security related decision-making processes. Gender equality must be embedded in peace and security issues as gender perspectives are an integral part of these. In addition, it states that addressing the gender-related root causes of violence and protecting all women's and girls' rights is critical for conflict prevention.

It is of greatest importance that the OSCE continues to enable and stand up for women's full, meaningful and equal participation in all forms of conflict prevention, not just those related to women or gender-related matters. The EU recognizes gen-

der equality and women's empowerment as a prerequisite for dealing with the conflict cycle, including conflict resolution, mediation, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and post-conflict reconstruction, including demobilization, disarmament, reintegration and security sector reform. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic illustrates the need for gender-sensitive crisis response mechanisms even more.

Madam Chairperson, in your concept note, you rightly point to the several initiatives that are already taken within the OSCE. The two pre-recorded intervention of 2 **OSCE Scholarship for Peace & Security** alumni show us how young women can and must be involved in shaping the WPS agenda and hence tackling the under-representation of women in decision-making processes in fields such as arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, which are crucial parts of conflict prevention and resolution.

The EU and its Member States recognize the added value of the annual questionnaire of the **OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security** and continue to encourage participating States to provide voluntary information on Women, Peace and Security.

Only last week, during the 2nd Biannual Meeting to Assess the Document on **SALW/SCA**, gender was an important element throughout the discussions. Gender mainstreaming contributes to ensuring that the negative impact on women and children of excessive and destabilizing accumulation, illicit trafficking and uncontrolled spread of SALW and SCA is successfully dealt with.

Finally, you highlight the benefits of the **Women in the first Dimension Network** as a platform, by women and for women, to enhance gender equality and women's participation in the politico-military dimension of the OSCE and increase the visibility of female professionals in the security sector. Women's leadership is crucial in all policy areas related to peace and security. We are convinced that WPS is not only a women's issue. Only when boys and men also engage as positive agents for change, addressing gender stereotypes and societal exclusion mechanisms, real and structural

progress can and will be made in closing the gender gap. The MenEngage network tries to achieve exactly that. Together, these networks put the WPS Agenda into practice within the OSCE community.

On this 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, we can complement ourselves on the efforts made to implement the WPS Agenda and the above mentioned success stories, but at the same time, we should remain ambitious: there is still much work to be done. Continued and robust engagement, including at the OSCE senior level, enhancing women's meaningful participation and the systematic integration of the gender perspective throughout all policy areas is an unfinished task and all of us must continue to work on this. For example, the ambition of establishing an **OSCE wide Regional Action Plan that addresses our specific regional dimension of the WPS Agenda and its implementation**, is still on the table. Maybe today is a good day to pick up this thread and bring this plan forward?

We call on the OSCE and its participating States to continue their efforts to ensure equality of women and men at all levels, with the aim to achieve a gender balance in all the OSCE structures and field missions, and especially at senior and decision-making levels. We must continue our efforts to identify and remove all barriers to women's and men's equal participation in the sector of peace and security. Equal opportunity and representation are a matter of democracy and inclusive security. We further underline the role of the participating States on this matter in relation to the seconded positions in the OSCE. Furthermore, we encourage strengthening the ties to, and working closer with civil society, local, regional and international civil society organizations, grassroots activists and women's rights organizations.

We remain convinced that a strengthened commitment to WPS, to carrying out gender analysis and to integrate a gender perspective, as well as to women's participation in all OSCE activities would contribute to the OSCE comprehensive security approach and thereby strengthen the organization. With this in mind, the EU and its Member States stand ready to support your efforts to make this important topic a priority for the upcoming Ministerial Council.

In conclusion, we call on the OSCE and the participating States to amplify our efforts on the implementation of the WPS agenda. After 20 years it is high time that we close the implementation gap.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.