



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1525 Vienna, 19 June 2025

EU Statement on the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict

1. On the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, the European Union solemnly reaffirms its commitment to preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence, and holding perpetrators accountable.
2. Sexual violence in conflict remains one of the most egregious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. It is used as a tactic of war and repression, aimed at terrorising civilians, destroying communities, and destabilising societies. It affects women, girls, men, and boys, leaving deep physical and psychological scars that last long after the guns fall silent.
3. In 2023, United Nations-verified cases of conflict-related sexual violence increased by 50 per cent compared to 2022. Such brutal violations of international humanitarian law continue to occur in the OSCE area as well, including those regularly perpetrated as part of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.
4. I quote the March 2025 report by the International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine: "Russian authorities have systematically used sexual violence as a form of torture against male detainees. This report details additional cases of war crimes of rape and sexual violence, committed as a form of torture, against female detainees." Furthermore, the December 2024 report by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) reinforces this conclusion,

identifying three Russian authorities as perpetrators: “Since February 2022, OHCHR has documented 370 cases of sexual violence (against 252 men, 106 women, 10 girls, and 2 boys) perpetrated by members of the Russian Armed Forces, law enforcement authorities, and penitentiary services.”

5. We strongly condemn all forms of sexual and gender-based violence and reiterate our steadfast commitment to upholding international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and to ending impunity for international crimes. We call on participating States to conduct effective investigations into these crimes, bring perpetrators to justice, ensure accountability, and provide all victims with safe and unhindered access to justice, adequate redress, and reparations. We commend the tireless efforts and contributions of civil society and human rights defenders to this end.
6. This grave situation underscores the urgent need to implement the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda to prevent and protect against sexual and gender-based violence. The OSCE has an important role to play in this regard. We commend ODIHR, the field missions, and the Secretariat for their continued engagement, and call on all participating States to increase their efforts to fully implement all OSCE commitments supporting the implementation of the WPS agenda. In this context, we welcome Finland’s Chairpersonship’s OSCE-wide Roadmap on WPS, launched during the CiO Gender conference in May this year. The Roadmap outlines concrete, tangible actions that participating States can undertake on a voluntary basis to advance the implementation of the WPS agenda.
7. The EU reaffirms its position of zero tolerance towards sexual and gender-based violence. The EU-wide Directive on Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Directive, adopted a year ago, criminalises physical as well as psychological violence, including sexual violence, both offline and online. The law also requires all EU Member States to criminalise female genital mutilation and forced marriage as stand-alone crimes.

8. We call on the international community to redouble its efforts to eliminate all forms of sexual and gender-based violence, including when used as a strategy or tactic of war.

Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.