



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council N°1079 Vienna, 26 November 2015

EU Statement on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

Ahead of the occasion of the International Day for the elimination of violence against women, we join our voices to put an end to violence against women and girls. This violence constitutes a blatant violation of human rights and gender discrimination that blights every country in Europe and worldwide.

We strongly condemn all forms of violence against women and girls.

The figures are alarming: one in three women in the European Union has experienced some form of gender-based violence in their lives. Too many girls are married or mutilated in childhood within our borders and beyond. In many countries, over half of murdered women are killed by an intimate partner, a relative or family member, in their own homes. They are also very vulnerable to all forms of violence in conflict areas and during humanitarian crises.

This year, we should pay special attention to the growing numbers of women seeking refuge or asylum in the European Union. Some have been raped, beaten or sexually exploited during their journey, while others flee gender-based violence in their home countries. They are arriving in Europe in need of gender-sensitive support, which we must provide.

Combating all forms of violence against women and girls remains a key priority for the European Union, both within and outside EU borders. The EU's Victims' Rights Directive, which recognises the specific needs of victims of gender-based violence, entered into force in 16 November.

Another form of violence that targets most specifically women and girls is sexual violence in conflict. This type of violence is not limited to particular types of conflict or to certain regions and has its own set of challenges – such as investigating crimes during conflict situations. As we are celebrating the 15th anniversary of the UN Security Council's milestone Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, the European Union and the international community must intensify their efforts to eliminate all such forms of sexual violence, support its victims and bring the perpetrators to justice.

It is against this background that the European Union has advocated for including both violence against women and women's participation in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in the Addendum to the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality which is under discussion in view of the Ministerial Council in Belgrade.

The European Union is firmly committed to strengthen its efforts in order to make gender-based violence a problem of the past.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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