



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Opening of the Symposium & Launch of the Publication:
Bringing Security Home: Combating Violence against Women in the
OSCE Region
A Compilation of Good Practices

Opening remarks by Mr. Dionyssios Kyvetos
Deputy Head of Mission / CiO Representative

8 June 2009, 9 a.m., Ratsaal

Ambassadors,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I represent the Chairmanship-in-Office and open this Symposium to launch a new Publication on Effective Approaches to Combating Violence against Women in the OSCE area.

We are particularly proud to be supporters and one of the donors of this particular project.

The Greek Chairmanship set itself two priorities at the beginning of the year: enhancing Gender Equality and combating Violence against Women. We are committed to the principles that underlie the cross-dimensional nature of gender issues, which are and will continue to constitute the traditional pillars of the OSCE.

Violence against women is not only a human dimension issue but also concerns the politico-military dimension and the economic dimension. Violence against women places an enormous financial burden on a country and also exacts a serious human toll. Violence against women is linked to gender-based inequalities. This means that ending gender-based violence requires changing cultural concepts and deeply-rooted attitudes and practices that discriminate against women and girls. We must ensure that all those who respond to violence against women are sensitized and have the capacity to provide comprehensive and integrated responses.

At the OSCE, we have a framework that constitutes the modus operandi of our programmes – the Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality adopted by decision 14/04 in December 2004 as well as the Ministerial Council Decision number 15/2005 including paragraph 44c on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women. So, the question for the OSCE is not “whether..” but “how to” fulfil our commitments.

In view of the still dramatic situation of violence against women across all countries including in our region, we must intensify our efforts to end gender based violence. We should take action not only through legislative and policy measures but also by implementing comprehensive steps as well as widespread awareness-raising campaigns. Our gathering here today is a demonstration of and testimony to such efforts.

The publication to be presented today, which is a compilation of good practices of effective approaches to combating violence against women in the OSCE area, should assist us and guide us in our path and struggle to end violence against women. I strongly encourage you to use this guide and share it with your colleagues, partners and counterparts.

Such exchange of information on good practices is a vital tool if policymaking is to be strategic and based on tested and solid approaches.

The international community, the UN and the OSCE call for improved data collection and increased knowledge of practical responses in order to empower women's advocates and reduce violence against women. The Symposium today is a step in this direction. We are all here to share and learn from one another and unite our efforts with the hope that together we can bring positive change and have a lasting impact on the situation of women in the OSCE area and eventually globally.

Finally, let me conclude by wishing that the deliberations and discussions in this symposium will assist and guide us forward in our efforts both at the OSCE and at the national level.

Continued dedication, persistence and compassion are key to ending violence against women.

Thank you