



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1024 Vienna, 6 November 2014

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#### **EU Statement in Response to the Presentations by the Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office for Gender Issues, Ms June Zeitlin, and the OSCE Senior Adviser on Gender Issues, Ambassador Miroslava Beham**

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The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome the Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office on Gender Issues, Ms June Zeitlin and the OSCE Senior Adviser on Gender Issues, Ambassador Miroslava Beham to the Permanent Council. We thank both speakers for their interesting reports and we express our support for their important work.

The EU continues to strongly support efforts to promote gender equality within the OSCE. Equality between women and men is a major objective for us. It is one of the founding values of the EU and a fundamental right reflected in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Furthermore, gender equality is highlighted in the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy.

The OSCE as a regional security organisation and with its comprehensive concept of security is in a unique position to advance gender equality. We concur with our speakers that the 10th anniversary of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality provides us with an excellent opportunity to further strengthen our work towards achieving gender equality. The EU fully supports having an addendum to the Action Plan on Gender Equality and we hope a robust document that re-enforces and builds upon existing OSCE commitments will be agreed at the Basel Ministerial Council.

We wish to thank Ms Zeitlin for consistently drawing our attention to issues where our efforts towards achieving gender equality need to be redoubled. We

commend her for continuing to place focus on the importance of comprehensively preventing and combating violence against women within the OSCE area. Violence against women is the most wide-spread human rights violation of our time and we need to enhance our common efforts to eradicate it. We would like to thank Ms Zeitlin for her valuable support in these efforts. We have been in particular pleased to hear that she continues to actively promote the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention and to pay particular attention to vulnerable groups.

We thank Ambassador Beham for presenting the Gender Section's work to the Permanent Council. We concur with the Ambassador that the first dimension should continue to be an important priority area in the gender equality work of the OSCE. We appreciate efforts in this respect, including activities on gender responsive mediation and supporting the participating States on the national implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Like Ambassador Beham, we are convinced that the UNSCR 1325 needs to be implemented in a holistic and comprehensive manner and the OSCE as a regional security organisation has an important role to play. We therefore support the adoption of an OSCE-Wide Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

Furthermore, we commend Ambassador Beham for actively highlighting the need to integrate a gender perspective within the OSCE work in Ukraine. We encourage further efforts such as the capacity building for gender mainstreaming in the Special Monitoring Mission.

Both Ms Zeitlin and Ms Beham discussed the need to further strengthen the OSCE efforts for gender equality. Ms Beham in particular elaborated on the ongoing measures to enhance gender mainstreaming within the organisation. The EU remains committed to actively engaging in the work to ensure that a gender perspective is integrated in the policy, planning and decision making processes as well as in the programmatic work of the OSCE from the beginning. In this respect, we support measures for a strong and sustainable institutionalisation of gender issues in the OSCE, including a gender equality network of the participating States, regular Gender Equality Review Conferences as well as all necessary measures to ensure that a gender perspective is integrated and

mainstreamed in the policy and operational work of the OSCE, such as modernising the gender structure of the secretariat.

In conclusion, we wish to thank Ms Zeitlin and Ms Beham for their statements and their important work. In particular, we would like to express our thanks to Ms Zeitlin for her dedicated work of three years as the CiO Special Representative. We wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, ICELAND+, SERBIA\* 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, MONACO and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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

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