

HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING
22 September to 3 October 2014
Warsaw, Poland

Rapporteur's report
Thursday, 25 September 2014

Working session 7: Tolerance and non-discrimination I, including equality of opportunity for women and men and the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality

Rapporteur: Ms. Anna Koikkalainen, Permanent Delegation of Finland to the OSCE

No. of statements:

Delegations: 15

Civil Society: 8

OSCE Inst./Int'l Org: 2

Rights of Reply: 4

Working session 7 focused on the equality of opportunity for women and men and the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality.

First deputy director of ODIHR, Ms Beatriz Balbin noted in her introductory remarks that women continue to be under-represented in public institutions in many OSCE participating States. Furthermore, women's rights continue to be undermined in the name of political expediency, tradition and economic necessity. Ms Balbin briefly introduced ODIHR's ongoing efforts aiming to enhance women's participation in all aspects of democratic governance as well as in the security sector. She highlighted the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality and underlined the need to improve gender mainstreaming within the OSCE.

The Moderator, Ambassador Miroslava Beham, Senior Advisor on Gender Issues of the OSCE, called for joint efforts and joint solutions to advance gender equality. She urged participating States to consider the draft Ministerial Council Decision on the Addendum to the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality. *The Introducer, Ms Wanda Nowicka, Deputy Speaker of the Polish Sejm* briefly introduced the deliberations on gender equality issues in the Polish parliament. She referred to the ongoing work of the United Nations in evaluating achievements as regards the Beijing Platform for Action, including women's political participation, economic rights as well as combating violence against women. Ms Nowicka called for effective

implementation of gender mainstreaming and highlighted in particular the need to advance women's political participation.

In the discussion it was widely stated that the OSCE needed to step up its work towards gender equality, including by offering improved tools to support participating States in their national efforts. Several delegations underlined the need to improve the implementation of the OSCE 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality. Many delegations welcomed the proposal by the Swiss Chairmanship-in-Office for an Addendum to the Action Plan.

Protection and promotion of the human rights of women and girls was regarded as a prerequisite for democracy, stability and sustainable development. Several participants underlined the crucial importance of advancing women's political participation. In this respect, many delegations shared information on their national measures, including on the introduction of quotas.

Several delegations underscored the need for a better involvement of women in conflict prevention and resolution efforts. A number of participants noted the upcoming 15th anniversary of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and highlighted the need for a comprehensive implementation of the resolution within the OSCE. Many delegations urged the participating States to adopt an OSCE-Wide Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

Numerous participants called for redoubling of efforts to eradicate violence against women. In this respect, the key importance of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, also known as the Istanbul Convention, was underscored.

Several participants underlined the need to pay particular attention to vulnerable groups, such as Roma, Sinti and traveler women and girls, immigrant women, HIV positive women or women prisoners. It was stated that women belonging to these groups often face multiple forms of discrimination.

Access to quality education was widely considered to be of key importance in empowering women and girls. Many participants also underlined the need to tackle discrimination in employment. A few delegations presented their national measures in this regard. One delegation called for the inclusion of economic, social and cultural rights in the OSCE gender equality work.

Many participants highlighted the need to engage men and boys in the efforts of combatting discrimination against women and girls. Furthermore, it was considered important to tackle gender stereotypes.

Recommendations to the participating States:

- To take meaningful steps to recognize and address the barriers that women and girls continue to face and ongoing inequality between women and men;
- To introduce measures that will result in increased representation of women in political and public life and, as relevant, seek support from ODIHR and other OSCE structures in this regard;
- To adopt an OSCE-Wide Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security;
- To adopt an Addendum to the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality;
- To enhance efforts to eradicate violence against women, including by ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.

Recommendations to the OSCE institutions, executive structures and field operations:

- To ensure that the rights of women and girls are promoted, protected and fully and effectively integrated into the work of OSCE structures;
- To ensure strong and sustainable institutionalization of gender issues in the OSCE, including by facilitating a gender equality network of the participating States, convening regular Gender Equality Review Conferences as well as taking all necessary measures to ensure that a gender perspective is integrated and mainstreamed in the policy and operational work of the OSCE;
- To improve by concrete measures the implementation of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality and report on the progress made;
- To continue providing assistance to the participating States in matters relating to gender equality.