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OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING 2007

EU Statement for the Working Session 11: Gender Aspects of Security II

1st October, Warsaw

Madam Chair,

The EU welcomes the opportunity offered by today's sessions for a comprehensive and constructive discussion of gender aspects of security. We attach great importance to the mainstreaming of gender in all areas of work of OSCE. Much has been promised and some things have been achieved in this field. However much remains to be done.

The adoption of the current Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality in 2004 was an important achievement of the organisation. Its full and effective implementation would be an even more important one. The annual report of the Secretary General on implementation of the Action Plan provides a snapshot of implementation efforts within OSCE structures. While the most recent report indicated that progress had been made in many areas there are still areas for improvement. We look forward to continued commitment and effort by the Secretary General and all those holding positions of leadership in the organisation to ensure that the Action Plan is given the fullest possible effect. Participating states also have responsibilities to implement the Action Plan. While many participating States have fully implemented their commitments or taken important steps in the direction of doing so, there are still States or regions where women are denied the full enjoyment of their political, social and economic rights. The sharing of experiences would be one way to assist those States which have most progress to make in improving the lives of their women citizens.

The full enjoyment of their rights by women is closely linked to the degree of equality between men and women in society. Regrettably it remains the case that the participation of women in political and governance structures in much of the OSCE area is low. This in turn has an impact on women's access to employment opportunities, education and indeed on violence against women. It is a responsibility of all participating States to ensure that their citizens enjoy their full rights in accordance with OSCE commitments. Where inequality between the sexes remains a persistent problem participating States should look to OSCE structures for assistance in developing effective policy responses.

The danger to security which violence against women represents was recognised by the Ministerial Council in its decision 15 of 2005. This important Decision commits the participating States to take all necessary measures to promote and protect the full enjoyment of the human rights of women and to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women and girls. In many participating States impressive progress has been made, but in many other States much remains to be done. Once again the Institutions and Field Presences of the OSCE represent a readily available resource for those States in meeting their commitments.

Madam Chair,

The adoption of Ministerial Council Decision 14 of 2005 was a major step as Ministers acknowledged and endorsed the relevance of the wide ranging provisions of Security Council Resolution 1325 to the work of the OSCE. A number of participating States, both within and outside the EU, have adopted national action plans, or other measures, for the implementation of Resolution 1325. This is very much to be commended and should be considered by all participating states. Those participating States which have adopted action plans might also share their experience of best practises with the full OSCE membership.

Of course implementation of Ministerial Council decisions is not merely for participating States. Commitment is required from the Secretariat, Institutions and Field Presences. In this context we encourage Field Presences to develop more activities aimed at encouraging women's participation in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-

conflict reconstruction. The preparation by the Conflict Prevention Centre of a handbook for Field Presences on integrating a gender perspective is a welcome step. We would urge all Field Presences to give priority to this element of the Gender Action Plan, for example through involving women's NGOs as discussion partners where OSCE is involved in the resolution of conflicts.

The EU is also somewhat concerned that gender aspects of security are sometimes seen as more relevant to some dimensions than to others. This is not the case. The mainstreaming of a gender perspective is just as important in the Political-Military dimension as in the Human or Economic-Environmental dimensions. The changing nature of contemporary conflict, "War among the People" as one distinguished commentator has described it, means that the burden of conflict and of post-conflict lawlessness and insecurity falls increasingly on civilian populations and particularly women. Attempts to address threats to stability and security in a meaningful way must incorporate a gender perspective in all aspects. We can perhaps learn through sharing experience with other international organisations such as the UN, the Council of Europe and NATO, which are also committed to the implementation of Resolution 1325 in their activities.

Madam Chair,

I have touched briefly on a few of the more important issues which will be discussed today. Member States will also share their experiences and practises in what I am sure will be an enriching and lively exchange. Thank you.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia^{*}, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

^{*} Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.