



SUPPLEMENTARY HUMAN DIMENSION MEETING

**“Promoting Gender Balance and Participation of Women
in Political and Public Life”**

**6-7 May 2010
Vienna, Austria**

FINAL REPORT

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I. SUMMARY

The first Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting in 2010 was devoted to the “Promotion of Gender Balance and Participation of Women in Political and Public Life.” It was held in Vienna on 6-7 May 2010. A total of 227 participants were in attendance. This included 126 delegates from 47 OSCE participating States and 6 delegates from the OSCE Partners for Co-operation. There were also representatives of 59 non-governmental and international organizations as well as 10 OSCE Field Operations in attendance.

The main objective of the meeting was to discuss how to promote gender equality and improve the gender balance at the decision-making levels. The meeting provided an opportunity to consider the current situation regarding gender equality and women empowerment in the OSCE region, and to share good practices in the following areas:

- Promoting gender equality in the OSCE region – progress achieved and challenges ahead (Session I);
- Empowering women as political party members and as elected officials (Session II); and
- Ensuring gender balance and women’s effective participation in public life (Session III).

The meeting was opened by the Director of ODIHR, Ambassador Janez Lenarčič, who outlined the general trends of women’s participation in the OSCE region, noting that the last decades have witnessed gender equality being put on the centre stage of national policies and international efforts. The focus has largely been on eliminating formal barriers to women’s representation as well as on combating various forms of gender-based violence. As a result, many OSCE participating States have adopted ground-breaking laws and policies to ensure equality between women and men. Nevertheless, progress has remained protracted and uneven across the region. The percentage of women MPs in the OSCE region ranges widely, from as low as 6% to as high as 45%.

In his opening remarks, Ambassador Lenarčič noted that the OSCE participating States have emphasized in their commitments that “full and true equality between men and women is a fundamental aspect of a just and democratic society based on the rule of law.” Ambassador Lenarčič specifically referred to the 2009 Ministerial Council Decision on Promoting Gender Balance and Participation of Women in Political and Public Life. This new commitment addresses the low level of participation by women in decision-making structures across the OSCE region and calls on participating States to undertake concrete measures to promote gender balance in all legislative, judicial, and executive bodies, especially at the decision-making levels.

The Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting was also opened by the representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, H.E. Gulshara Abdykalikova, Minister of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Chair of the National Commission for Women’s Affairs, Family and Demographic Policy. The Minister presented a comprehensive overview of Kazakhstan’s efforts to ensure greater gender balance in all branches of government and to improve the legal framework for the protection of equal rights and opportunities among women and men. The importance of the OSCE institutions in providing expertise, access to comparative knowledge, and analysis of results and lessons learned was particularly stressed.

The key-note speaker, Ms. Elza Pais, Secretary of State for Equality of Portugal, noted that equality of rights and opportunities between women and men is a fundamental principle of democracy. Moreover, the global challenges of development and poverty reduction cannot be met if decisive progress is not made towards ensuring gender equality. The speaker proceeded to review issues that Portugal and the other EU countries have identified as key barriers to achieving de-facto equality: gender pay-gaps, direct and indirect forms of discrimination against women at the workplace, and

various forms of violence against women. In order to address these challenges, Portugal has developed five major Action Plans: the Gender Equality Action Plan, the Action Plan against Domestic Violence, the Action Plan against Female Genital Mutilation, the Action Plan against Human Trafficking, and the Action Plan on the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

High-level state officials mandated to promote gender equality, members of parliament, and leading civil society experts served as introducers and moderators during the sessions, outlining both major achievements and obstacles within individual participating States and in the OSCE region as a whole. The discussions focused on a range of critical issues, such as the development of effective gender equality and anti-discrimination laws, the establishment of national mechanisms for the advancement of women, and the adoption and implementation of specific measures to achieve gender balance in political parties as well as in the legislative, judicial, and executive bodies. In addition, participants presented examples of effective initiatives to combat gender-based discrimination in employment, to eliminate gender-based stereotypes in education and the media, and to promote better reconciliation between the professional and private/family responsibilities of women and men.

II. SYNOPSIS OF SESSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report summarizes the discussions held in the course of the three thematic sessions and presents the recommendations proposed by the participants of the meeting. The debates and recommendations covered a broad range of issues and were directed towards a variety of actors, particularly the OSCE participating States, OSCE institutions and field operations as well as international organizations, political parties and civil society. The recommendations have no official status and are not based on consensus. The inclusion of a recommendation in this report does not suggest that it reflects the views or policies of the OSCE. Nevertheless, they provide useful markers on the progress made and measures still needed to further promote gender equality and women's participation in political and public life as well as to effectively combat violence against women.

SESSION I: Promoting Gender Equality in the OSCE Region – Progress Achieved and Challenges ahead

Moderator: Dr. Nadezda Shvedova, Co-Founder, Women's Forum, Russian Federation

Introducer: Ms. Mette Kongslem, Director, EurAsia Research and Strategy, Norway

A number of participants reported on the broad trends and challenges in promoting gender equality in the OSCE region. The participants also reviewed the achievements and priorities for legal regulation and policy development on gender equality and non-discrimination, state mechanisms for promoting equality, strategies and national action plans.

The moderator, Dr. Nadezda Shvedova, noted that the implementation of the OSCE commitments in the field of gender equality remains uneven and incomplete. This is often due to the lack of political will to enforce legal and policy instruments for gender equality. A significant gap between the rhetoric and reality of gender equality was observed.

The introducer, Ms. Mette Kongslem, outlined the main policy challenges in promoting equal rights and opportunities for women and men. She noted that positive developments have taken place in some OSCE participating States, including legal reforms for the elimination of gender-based discrimination in employment, particularly in governance structures, and measures taken to combat

gender-based violence. Nevertheless, women continue to occupy positions in low-paid sectors of national economies, and they do not participate significantly in the decision-making bodies in either the public or private sector.

The introducer complimented the OSCE Secretary General and all OSCE institutions as well as field operations for their continued efforts to regularly review the implementation of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality. She suggested that participating States consider the need for supplementing the Action Plan with quantitative targets, time-bound objectives, and monitoring mechanisms.

The discussion, which followed the introducer's presentation, enabled participants from Azerbaijan, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Spain, Tajikistan, the United Kingdom, the United States, Uzbekistan, and two OSCE Partners for Co-operation (Algeria and Morocco) to share best practices and exchange information on their efforts to promote gender equality.

A large number of participants emphasized that the state mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality across the OSCE participating States have accumulated considerable experience in strengthening legal frameworks and monitoring compliance. These institutions serve as watchdogs within governments, and for them to perform this function effectively, it is essential that they be accorded high-level status within the structures of state administration and be provided with adequate levels of human and financial resources.

The development of effective national action plans for gender equality was presented as a critical milestone in the efforts to promote gender equality. However, in many instances, action plans have remained mere declarations of intent, not being viewed as binding documents by the government agencies and lacking adequate enforcement and financing mechanisms.

Participants noted that the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security should be translated into increased efforts to ensure that women's role in securing peace and stability be recognized and strengthened. In line with their commitments, participating States must ensure that women take part in the decision-making processes on security policy and that their needs, priorities and views are integrated into risk-assessment strategies as well as in conflict prevention and reconciliation processes.

Participants stressed that violence against women is an extreme form of oppression in today's society. They urged the OSCE participating States to take measures to combat the root causes of gender-based violence and ensure that perpetrators of such acts be brought to justice.

A delegate from the Spanish Ministry of Equality shared recent achievements in promoting gender equality, highlighting the establishment of the Ministry's Institute for Women in 2008, following the adoption of the Equal Opportunities Act in 2007. These measures were coupled with efforts to ensure gender balance in the cabinet of ministers and among senior government positions. Legal reforms aimed at combating violence against women are also ongoing, mainly based on the 2004 Act on Combating Violence against Women. The Act sets a high standard for best practices in this field and includes measures to ensure the full implementation of its provisions through training of law-enforcement and medical professionals.

A number of participants from Kazakhstan highlighted the importance of strengthening the OSCE's efforts to promote the implementation of existing commitments in the field of gender equality and also called for the appointment of a Special Representative on Gender Equality.

Representatives of civil society organizations in Kyrgyzstan noted that, while the country has some of the most advanced legislation on gender equality in the Central Asian region, the implementation of the laws is seriously lagging behind. Special attention was called to ensuring the equal participation of women and men in governance bodies and implementing gender-based assessments of draft legislation. The need for investing in programmes that aim to empower women economically and ensure their access to quality education and their equal remuneration for equal work was also highlighted.

A delegate from the General Secretariat for Gender Equality of Greece pointed to the need to continue efforts to prioritize gender equality policies; the proper prioritization being critical to the protection and promotion of human rights as well as to sustainable social and economic development. Despite the fiscal crisis in Greece, the delegate noted that the government was committed to promoting gender equality policies, particularly because women often face the effects of economic recessions most severely. The representative of Greece also noted that, in order for women to overcome barriers to participation in political affairs and access to high political careers, political systems need to be transparent and accountable and must enjoy public trust and confidence.

Representatives from the United Kingdom, United States, Ireland, and Russia outlined recent advances in promoting equal rights and opportunities among women and men in their countries. The United Kingdom UK Equality Act of 2010 provides a new legislative framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. In the field of women's political participation, it was noted that the government took steps to enable more women to enter Parliament by allowing political parties to extend the use of women-only shortlists until year 2030. The Act also obliges public agencies with more than 150 employees to publish their gender pay-gaps. Further measures include setting a target for public appointments at 50% of women in all agencies. The efforts of the United Kingdom to secure progress in providing equal employment opportunities in public and private spheres were strengthened through the introduction of flexible working arrangements, including for parents with children until 16 years of age. The situation in the private sector requires further efforts, given that there are gaps of over 55% in pay and 80% in performance benefits between women and men. Given the persistence of these pay-gaps, private companies with more than 250 employees are now also required to publish reports on disparities between women and men.

Recommendations to OSCE participating States:

- OSCE participating States should strengthen the mandates of the Offices of Ombudspersons, National Human Rights Institutions or other specialized bodies, providing them with specific mandates and resources to monitor and report on gender equality and women's rights as well as to submit proposals to governments for the improvement of legal and policy instruments on gender equality;
- OSCE participating States need to take steps to increase awareness among political parties about national and international commitments related to balanced participation of women and men in political life and governance structures;
- OSCE participating States should consider the need to supplement the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality with new instruments such as quantitative targets, time-bound objectives, and monitoring mechanisms;
- OSCE participating States must work towards ensuring that women have equal access to decision-making on security policy and that their needs are integrated into the risk-assessment strategies as well as in conflict prevention and reconciliation processes.

Recommendations to OSCE Institutions and Field Operations:

- Participants highlighted the importance of strengthening the efforts of the OSCE in promoting the implementation of existing commitments on gender equality and women's participation in politics, and called for the appointment of a Special Representative on Gender Equality;
- Participants recommended the development of assistance initiatives to monitor the implementation of OSCE commitments on women's political participation;
- Participants called on ODIHR to develop recommendations and guidelines for gender-sensitive budgeting;
- Participants called on all OSCE Institutions and Field Operations to ensure that qualified women are appointed to leadership positions within the Organization in all fields of work, particularly in the politico-military dimension.

SESSION II: Empowering Women as Political Party Members and as Elected Officials

Moderator: **Ms. Lenita Freidenvall**, Researcher, Women in Politics Research Centre, University of Stockholm, Sweden

Introducers: **Ms. Aitkul Samakova**, Member of Parliament, Chair of the Social Affairs Council of the Nur-Otan Faction in the Majlis of Parliament, Republic of Kazakhstan
Prof. Dr. Werner Zögernitz, President of the Institute for Parliamentarism and Democracy Questions, Austria

Working Session II discussed issues related to political participation of women and presented strategies for addressing specific barriers faced by women as voters, candidates, and elected officials.

The moderator, Ms. Lenita Freidenvall, provided an outline of the current level of women's participation in legislative branches of government. The average share of women in national parliaments in the OSCE region is 21.8 %. However, some participating States are facing serious challenges in this regard, with parliaments including as few as 6% women. The moderator noted that there is a need to work towards transforming the procedures and practices within political parties, for the purpose of making them equally accessible to both women and men. Various forms of gender-based quotas were presented as effective and 'fast-track' measures to break cycles of under-participation of women; however, the need for combining quota provisions with effective sanctions for non-compliance, in order to ensure their effective application, was also emphasized.

Ms. Aitkul Samakova, the introducer of the session, outlined the efforts of Kazakhstan and other OSCE participating States in support of women's political empowerment and increased participation. Various initiatives of the legislative and executive branches of government in Kazakhstan, designed to protect and promote women's human rights and integrate gender-equality objectives in all social and economic development programmes, were presented. The OSCE was praised for its support in the development of two new laws in Kazakhstan: the Law on Equal Rights and Opportunities between Women and Men, and the Law on Combating Domestic Violence, adopted in 2009. As a representative of the governing Nur-Otan Faction, the introducer outlined intra-party measures to promote participation of women in political life, including the establishment of the Women's Political Caucus. The Alliance for Women, a broad-based association of political party members and 18 NGOs working towards women's social and economic empowerment in Kazakhstan, was presented.

Prof. Dr. Werner Zögernitz, President of the Institute for Parliamentarism and Democracy Questions in Austria, reviewed current trends in women's political participation in Member States of the European Union. He noted that in most EU countries women do not participate at sufficient levels in parliaments, cabinet posts, and executive jobs at the national, regional, and local levels. The Institute for Parliamentarism has recently published two in-depth studies on women's political participation, detailing the trends at European, national, and municipal levels. One of the key conclusions of the studies is that the presence of a critical mass of female legislators leads to more developed and orderly parliamentary procedures, fewer open verbal confrontations among members of parliaments, an overall improved image of politicians among the public, and a notable increase in 'women-friendly' laws. A set of possible strategies for increasing women's participation in political and public life was presented, including a detailed account of binding quotas, various non-quota measures, parliamentary procedures fostering women's participation, and women caucuses in the parliaments.

Participants in the session emphasized that political parties act as gatekeepers of women's political participation; however, party membership and decision-making procedures are often discriminatory against women. A number of delegates outlined the root causes of women's inability to participate fully in political parties. These include direct and indirect barriers, such as gender-based stereotypes that portray women as unfit for politics, lack of internal party democracy and pluralism, non-transparent decision-making regarding candidate nomination and promotion procedures, the high costs of campaign financing, unequal access to party resources as well as a lack of interest on behalf of candidates and political parties in promoting gender-sensitive policy objectives.

The discussion included a review of the positive impact of both binding and voluntary quotas on the level of women's participation in legislative bodies. The introduction and implementation of such measures was examined as particularly challenging in the participating States that do not have legal provisions for quotas. An observation was made that almost all participating States that have reached or surpassed a 30% level of women's participation in legislatures, employ some type of quota measures. In the majority of such cases, the participating States apply these measures under systems of proportional representation. With a majoritarian electoral system and single mandate electoral districts, positive results have been achieved through the use of women-only shortlists and the 'twinning' methodology, i.e. presenting one female candidate for a single-seat district and a male candidate for a different single-seat district.

Specific experiences of Armenia, Belgium, Denmark, France, Kyrgyzstan, and the United Kingdom were considered, particularly relating to their practices of binding and/or voluntary quotas. In all of these cases, participants noted that quota provisions were the key to progress in women's participation. Representatives from Greece, Moldova, Poland, and Ukraine noted that, while women's rights activists and civil society organizations supported the introduction of binding quotas in their countries, a significant part of the political spectrum viewed them as discriminatory, resulting in them not being adopted in the parliaments.

In exploring remedies to the barriers to women's political participation, a large number of participants agreed that political parties need to view gender equality issues as closely linked to social justice and fair and equitable governance. Therefore, parties should be structured as institutions in line with the overarching principles of democracy. Participants called on all stakeholders to consider reviewing laws governing elections, political parties, and public broadcasting as well as other laws and working procedures relevant to the political parties, with the aim of establishing stronger safeguards for preventing discrimination against women.

Participants commented on the fact that a strong public demand for greater equality between women and men is a key determinant of the political will and interest among parties to promote

participation of women in politics. Participants agreed that media outlets sometimes contribute to and perpetuate gender-based stereotypes towards women, weakening the perception of women as leaders and damaging the public demand for increased levels of women's political participation. In response to this negative phenomenon, the participants recommended that women's advocates and media professionals should co-operate in the development of codes of conduct for the media as well as the guidelines for ensuring gender-sensitive media coverage of election campaigns. Participants also stressed that, in addition to the efforts of media professionals, a larger societal change and a shift in public perceptions are crucial in eliminating gender-based stereotypes, ultimately affecting both women and men.

A number of participants underscored the importance of coalition building and networking among politicians, within parties, and across party lines. While experience sharing and strategy building among gender equality activists often bring together only women, these coalitions and caucuses need to reach out and include male members of parties, legislatures, and executive governments. Such coalitions can be decisive in mobilizing support in legislatures for passing important equality laws and ensuring that implementation across various government bodies is gaining ground.

Recommendations to the OSCE participating States:

- OSCE participating States should use the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality more proactively, emphasizing the important role to be played by political parties in terms of the implementation of the commitments undertaken by their governments;
- OSCE participating States should raise the awareness of relevant stakeholders on gender-based quotas, aiming at quotas not being viewed as discriminatory measures, but rather as means to levelling the playing field for women in politics. Quotas should serve to initiate the transformation to higher-level participation of women in political and public life, with an eventual phasing out of the quota provisions once balanced participation has been achieved;
- OSCE participating States should ensure that gender-based quotas are accompanied by specific measures for their actual implementation, including provisions on ranking orders on candidate lists as well as effective sanctions for non-compliance;
- OSCE participating States should consider quotas as a part of a wider, comprehensive set of measures addressing issues of structural discrimination and women's unequal access to political decision-making. Quotas should be viewed as part of overall reforms towards higher rates of retention of women in politics, including accessible and affordable childcare services, parenthood benefits as well as incentives for better reconciliation of professional and private lives between women and men, including flexible working conditions and gender-sensitive practices in political organizations;
- OSCE participating States should support strategies for the establishment of alliances of women and men, to jointly promote gender equality and women's political participation;
- OSCE participating States should develop codes of conduct for the media and guidelines for ensuring gender-sensitive media coverage of election campaigns, crucial for the elimination of gender-based stereotypes and for ensuring equal political participation of both women and men.

Recommendations to the OSCE Institutions and Field Operations:

- ODIHR should actively promote co-operation and experience-sharing among participating States and non-state actors to improve women's political participation;
- ODIHR should continue to assist the OSCE participating States in implementing reforms aimed at enabling women to actively participate in the electoral processes, including both registering as voters and running for office.

- OSCE should continue to undertake important assistance initiatives to monitor the implementation of OSCE commitments on women's political participation, particularly in terms of monitoring progress towards a gender balance in decision-making processes and governance structures.

Recommendations to NGOs, international organizations, and other actors:

- Participants called on political party leaders to assume greater responsibility for accommodating women candidates on the party lists and in executive positions;
- Participants encouraged cooperation between political parties, electoral authorities, and NGOs working on civic and electoral education programs to increase women's participation in politics.
- Participants encouraged women politicians to cooperate on promoting increased women's participation across party lines, particularly emphasizing the role of influential leaders who can effectively work on advancing women in politics.

SESSION III: Ensuring Gender Balance and Women's Effective Participation in Public life

Moderator: Ms. Damira Sartbaeva, Regional Programme Director, UNIFEM Regional Office for the Commonwealth of Independent States

Introducer: Ms. Rusudan Kervalishvili, Deputy Chair of the Parliament of Georgia, Chair of the Gender Equality Advisory Council of Parliament.

This Section discussed priority action areas related to women's rights and opportunities in the public and private sector, including employment opportunities, promotion and pay-gaps between women and men, access and quality of education, and rights-awareness. The urgency of eliminating multiple discrimination and barriers to participation in public life of women from under-privileged communities was mentioned by a number of participants. The need for ensuring women's access to education was also emphasized, particularly referring to ethnic minority and internally displaced women, Roma and Sinti, migrant women, women in rural areas, women with disabilities, and women with HIV. Cross-cutting themes of gender-based stereotypes and discrimination in the public and private spheres formed an integral part of the discussions.

The moderator, Ms. Damira Sartbaeva, emphasized the need to translate political and legal commitments into measurable actions, including the harmonization of gender equality laws with the labour and family codes and other relevant laws. The moderator outlined the main UNIFEM activities focused on increasing the participation of women in political and public life, and called for the identification of strategies to facilitate the implementation of the OSCE Ministerial Council Decision 7/09 on promoting women's participation in political and public life. Participants were encouraged to consider and recommend concrete strategies for ensuring a better sharing of household and care-taking responsibilities among women and men, which would provide women with more opportunities to actively participate in public life.

The introducer, Ms. Rusudan Kervalishvili, reviewed several legal and policy initiatives adopted in Georgia, to encourage employment and training opportunities for women in the public sector. However, a significant pay-gap between women and men was also emphasized. The new labour code of Georgia, adopted in 2006 and aimed at business development and investment promotion, was observed as lacking mechanisms for adequate protection of the interests and rights of workers, ultimately resulting in women facing serious barriers to re-enter the labour market after maternity leave. This challenge was highlighted by a number of participants, who pointed out that maternity

benefits are often considered as very expensive by employers (particularly the private sector employers), resulting in a discriminatory recruitment of women and men.

The issue of pay-gaps between women and men was also addressed during the discussions and the need for measures leading to balanced sharing of child-care and other family responsibilities repeatedly emphasized. A number of participants focused on the vital link between gender equality in public life and equality in the private sphere, particularly in parenthood. Participants emphasized that progress in promoting equal opportunities for women and men in political and public life is highly dependent on the availability of comprehensive family-support policies, such as affordable and accessible childcare facilities, parental benefits, flexible work schedules, working environments that allow for better reconciliation of professional and personal/family life, and equal remuneration for equal work for both women and men.

Representatives of Roma-rights organizations expressed the view that Roma women are absent from the decision-making levels of governments in almost all OSCE participating States. At the European level, one Roma woman has been elected to the European Parliament. Therefore, it has proven very difficult for civil society activists to develop effective solutions or to lobby for social and economic policies to be more inclusive of Roma women.

A participant from Armenia shared information about efforts to integrate gender-equality issues in high-schools and higher-education institutions, particularly in political science, civic education, and other fields of the humanities – an initiative supported by ODIHR – and recommended that similar efforts be undertaken in other settings where stereotypes in the education system pose a particular challenge.

Representatives of Estonia and Italy presented a number of positive measures undertaken by their governments to implement special support programmes to increase women's effective participation in public life. These include provision of accessible and affordable child care centres, financing for families to procure child care, work from home, and distance learning programs for families with child care responsibilities and during the maternity and paternity periods. In Estonia, a network of decision-makers from public, private, and non-profit sectors has been established to address problems of gender pay-gaps and discrimination at the workplace. It was also noted that the Ministry of Labour of Estonia has trained gender equality consultants, who serve on a daily basis as advisors on gender equality issues to different ministries.

Recommendations to OSCE participating States:

- OSCE participating States should aim at translating their political and legal commitments on gender equality and women's participation in public life into measurable actions, through the harmonization of gender equality laws with the labour and family codes as well as through the adoption of relevant National Strategies and Action Plans;
- OSCE participating States should introduce targeted measures to close gaps in remuneration for equal work between women and men, particularly through identification, public reporting, and remedial measures;
- OSCE participating States should support strategies for the provision of equal opportunities for women and men in political and public life, through comprehensive family-support policies, such as affordable and accessible childcare facilities, parental benefits, flexible work schedules, and working environments that allow for better reconciliation of professional and private lives by both women and men;
- OSCE participating States should design specific measures targeted at eliminating multiple discrimination and barriers to participation in public life of women from under-privileged communities. They should strengthen their efforts aimed toward ensuring women's access to

- education, particularly for ethnic minority and internally displaced women, Roma and Sinti, migrant women, women in rural areas, women with disabilities, and women with HIV;
- OSCE participating States are encouraged to work on school textbooks to change deeply-entrenched gender-based stereotypes and eliminate prejudices against girls and women;
 - OSCE participating States should aim at eliminating discriminatory attitudes towards women who choose to stay home and do not seek active involvement in public life; their contributions to society should be valued equally to those who choose to assume employment outside the household.

Recommendations to the OSCE Institutions and Field Operations:

- OSCE should consider providing its assistance and expertise in the establishment of an OSCE-wide network of organizations and individual politicians working for the promotion of gender equality. Such a network could contribute to a systematic exchange of practices in legal and policy reforms on gender equality as well as to sharing of experiences among women candidates running for elected offices;
- ODIHR and the OSCE Field Operations should strengthen their efforts to facilitate dialogue among government authorities, political parties and civil society on gender equality and women's effective participation in public life, including measures and mechanisms for the its implementation of the related OSCE commitments;
- OSCE should continue to support women's resource centres and women's rights organizations, particularly assisting their efforts in eliminating barriers to women's effective participation in public life.

In closing, Ambassador Lenarčič thanked the Chairperson-in-Office for selecting the topic of promoting gender balance and women's participation in political and public life as a priority of the human dimension agenda for year 2010. Ambassador Lenarčič praised all the participants, in particular the keynote speaker, moderators, introducers and the civil society representatives for their contributions to the discussion. He noted that the participation at the meeting was high in numbers and quality and discussions very substantive. He stressed the key conclusions of the meeting:

- Unequal relations in the domestic setting and unequal distribution of resources and roles in the private spheres often determine women's exclusion from the public sphere. Therefore, gender equality policies need to be comprehensive in their reach - promoting equality of rights and opportunities for both women and men in the public and private spheres;
- Strengthened institutional mechanisms, with adequate financial and human resources, are crucial to the promotion of gender equality and advancement of women as well as to effective integration of gender aspects into all spheres of state policies;
- Women can emerge as strong political actors only by strengthening their positions as decision-makers within political parties and fully integrating themselves into party structures and processes. This is only possible when political parties and their leaders understand the underlying reasons for women's under-participation, comprehend the political gains from creating greater opportunities for the advancement of women, and have clear and feasible strategies for pursuing integration and equality.

Summarizing the meeting, Ambassador Lenarčič stressed the need to provide for the concrete follow-up to the recommendations of the sessions and to ensure continued implementation of the OSCE commitments on gender equality. Finally, Ambassador Lenarčič called for active co-operation and intensified joint efforts of the international community, governmental structures, political actors and civil society in promoting women's participation in political and public life.



Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting

**Promotion of Gender Balance and Participation of
Women in Political and Public Life**

**6-7 May, 2010
Hofburg, Vienna**

AGENDA

Day 1 **6 May, 2010**

15:00 – 16:00 **OPENING SESSION**

Opening remarks

Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office

H.E. Gulshara Abdykalikova, Minister of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Chair of the Commission for Women’s Affairs, Family and Demographic Policy

Ambassador Janez Lenarčič, Director of the OSCE/ODIHR

Keynote speech

Ms. Elza Pais, Secretary of State for Equality, Portugal

Technical information by the OSCE/ODIHR

16:00-18:00 **Session I: Promoting gender equality in the OSCE region –
Progress achieved and challenges ahead**

Introducer: **Ms. Mette Kongslem**, Director, EurAsia Research and Strategy

Moderator: **Dr. Nadezda Shvedova**, Co-Founder of “Women’s Forum,” Russian Federation

Discussion

Reception

Day 2

7 May, 2010

10:00 – 12:00

Session II: Empowering women as political party members and as elected officials

Introducer: **Ms. Aitkul Samakova**, Member of Parliament, Chair of the Social Affairs Council of the Nur-Otan Faction in the Majlis of Parliament, Republic of Kazakhstan

Prof. Dr. Werner Zögernitz, President of the Institute for Parliamentarism and Democracy Questions, Austria

Moderator: **Ms. Lenita Freidenvall**, Researcher, Women in Politics Research Centre, University of Stockholm

Discussion

12:00-14:00

Lunch break

14:00-16:00

Session III: Ensuring gender balance and women's effective participation in public life

Introducer: **Ms. Rusudan Kervalishvili**, Deputy Chair of Parliament of Georgia, Chair of the Gender Equality Advisory Council of Parliament.

Moderator: **Ms. Damira Sartbaeva**, Regional Programme Director, UNIFEM Regional Office for the Commonwealth of Independent States

Discussion

16:00 – 16:30

Break

16:30 – 17:30

CLOSING SESSION

Reports by the Session Moderators; Comments from the floor

Closing Remarks

Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office

Ambassador Janez Lenarčič, Director of the OSCE/ODIHR



Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting

Promotion of Gender Balance and Participation of Women in Political and Public Life

6-7 May 2010

Hofburg, Vienna

ANNOTATED AGENDA

Background

OSCE commitments related to gender equality and women's participation in political and public life have evolved greatly in the 35 years since the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act, when participating States committed themselves to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to sex. As early as in 1991, participating States gathered at the Moscow Meeting on the Human Dimension underscored that “full and true equality between men and women is a fundamental aspect of a just and democratic society based on the rule of law”¹ and affirmed their goal of not only achieving *de jure* but also *de facto* equality. Through another landmark document, the Charter for European Security, adopted at the Istanbul Summit of 1999, participating States reaffirmed the essential role of gender equality for achieving a more peaceful, prosperous and democratic OSCE region, and underlined the need to pursue gender equality objectives both at the level of participating States and within the Organization.²

The 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality further synthesized and consolidated the existing commitments and, among other areas of work, prioritised the objective of ensuring equal opportunity for participation of women in political and public life. In parallel, key international legal instruments and policy documents on non-discrimination based on sex, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights the United Nations Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Beijing Platform for Action, have been adopted³.

While the importance of achievements should not be underestimated, concrete advances in the status of women throughout the OSCE region have been limited. The current OSCE-wide rate of women' representation in parliaments stands at less than 22 percent, while it was just over 15 percent in year 2000. Furthermore, the increase in average figures over the last decade is largely due

¹ Paragraph 40, Document of the Moscow Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE, Moscow, 1991. The full text of the Moscow Document of the CSCE can be viewed at the following address: http://www.osce.org/documents/odhr/1991/10/13995_en.pdf

² Paragraph 23, Charter of the European Security, Istanbul Summit, 1999. The full text of the Moscow Document of the CSCE can be viewed at the following address: http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1999/11/4050_en.pdf

³ In 1990, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, a subsidiary body of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, adopted the recommendation to member states to achieve the target of 30 % women in leadership positions in governments, political parties, trade unions, professional and other representative groups by 1995.

to significant gains in a limited number of participating States. Progress remains uneven across the region.

The Athens Ministerial Conference, held in December 2009, adopted the Decision on Women's Participation in Political and Public Life, which provides renewed momentum to address these challenges and specific directions for future work in this field. This new commitment underlines the need to address the continued under-representation of women in decision-making structures across the OSCE region and calls on participating States to undertake specific measures to promote gender balance in all legislative, judicial and executive bodies, especially emphasizing the need for gender balance at the decision-making levels.

Focusing on implementation, this Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting will assess achievements, gaps and challenges, while outlining actions for moving forward. Having adopted the right legislation is only one element of what should be a broader strategy encompassing various types of measures. The objective of the meeting is to discuss the role of capacity-building measures and gender-sensitive institutional policies for increasing women's participation in political and public life.

Day 1 6 May 2010

15:00 – 16:00 OPENING SESSION

16:00 – 18:00 Session 1: Promoting gender equality in the OSCE region – progress achieved and challenges ahead

OSCE participating States have committed themselves to giving effect to the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination as enshrined in their constitutions and legislation. In order to promote gender-balance and to increase participation of women in political and public life, additional measures need to be taken to identify and eliminate underlying causes of women's under-representation. Specifically, Athens MC Decision on Women's Participation in Political and Public Life calls on participating States to "consider possible legislative measures, which would facilitate a more balanced participation of women and men in political and public life and especially in decision-making".⁴ Furthermore, as a critical step for ensuring gender balance in traditionally male-dominated professional fields, the Decision calls on participating States "to create equal opportunities within the security services, including the armed forces, where relevant, to allow for balanced recruitment, retention and promotion of men and women".⁵

This first session will offer the opportunity for a broad exchange of views on legal and policy instruments and approaches adopted by participating States to foster balanced participation of women and men in political and public life. The discussion will focus on a range of critical issues such as development of effective gender equality and anti-discrimination laws and building national mechanisms for the advancement of women as well as the adoption and implementation of specific measures to achieve the goal of gender balance in all legislative, judicial and executive bodies, including security services, such as police services.

The following issues could be considered during the discussion:

- What lessons learnt and good practice can be drawn from the implementation of gender equality and anti-discrimination laws and policy instruments?

⁴ Paragraph 2, Ministerial Council Decision 7/09, Athens Ministerial Council Meeting, 2 December 2009. The full text of the Decision can be viewed at the following address: http://www.osce.org/documents/cio/2009/12/41865_en.pdf

⁵ Ibid, para. 4.

- What measures have participating States taken to establish effective national mechanisms for the advancement of women and to provide these bodies with adequate financial and human resources?
- What examples of good practice can be identified and promoted in terms of providing real opportunities for women to influence the agendas, institutions and processes of decision-making (moving beyond simply increasing the number of women in different positions)?
- What examples of good practice can be identified and promoted for creating equal opportunities within the security services, including in armed forces (allowing for balanced recruitment, retention and promotion of men and women)?
- How are participating States measuring national-level progress in promoting gender-equality in political and public life?

Day 2

7 May 2010

10:00 – 12:00

Session II: Empowering women as political party members and as elected officials

Political parties can be seen as gatekeepers of women's political participation. According to internationally adopted commitments and standards, the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of gender applies to political parties both in terms of the membership of executive and decision-making bodies and as candidates on the ballot. In addition, internal party pluralism and transparency in decision-making are key factors which influence women's opportunities to gain nomination and support from their parties for elected offices. A wide range of legislative and voluntary measures have been put in place in many OSCE participating States, such as financial assistance and training for women candidates within political parties, gender-sensitive candidate selection and nomination procedures and setting gender-based targets and quotas for the composition of elected and appointed public bodies.

This session will discuss general trends and challenges in the implementation of measures to promote women's participation in political and public life and examples of good practice at national and local levels.

The following issues could be considered during the discussion:

- Which barriers stand in the way of women taking part in the political process? In particular, are there any legal obstacles to women's equal participation as voters, candidates, or elected leaders?
- If opportunities are equal, are women taking advantage of them, and if not, why not? For example, are rates of illiteracy, unemployment, or poverty higher among women? Are there other political or societal barriers to women's participation?
- What methods can be used to ensure that women are given equal opportunities to compete in elections? What steps should be taken to ensure gender-sensitivity in candidate selection and nomination processes?

- What measures can political parties use to ease burdens of the high costs of campaign financing for women candidates?
- What campaign and outreach techniques can political parties take to promote the electoral prospects of women as candidates?
- What steps should be taken by parties, non-partisan civil society organizations and governmental entities to encourage the greatest possible participation of women as voters? How can parties increase the role of women as political party functionaries, campaign workers as well as candidates?
- What are the lessons learnt in the use of gender-based quotas for candidate lists? What are the successful examples of the use of gender-based quotas resulting in an increased number of women in decision-making bodies? How can results achieved through gender-based quotas be made sustainable?
- What steps can parties take to promote internal democracy and transparency in decision-making?
- What are the effective forms of networking and coalition building for promoting the increased participation and representation of women in political life?
- What are the lessons learnt from the work of women's caucuses in parliaments, institutional and/or informal meetings between MPs, the civil sector and government institutions?

12:00 – 13:00 Lunch

14:00 – 16:00 **Session III: Ensuring gender balance and women's effective participation in public life**

Women's participation in public life across the OSCE region faces several challenges, including gender-based stereotypes regarding the role of women in society, and the so-called 'glass ceiling' - low numbers of women in leadership positions in the public and private sectors, over-concentration of women in certain professional fields, provision of unequal pay for equal work, and challenges in reconciling professional and private/family lives. In addition, women of immigrant and minority communities often face multiple forms of discrimination in various fields of public life.

This session will discuss recurrent challenges for ensuring gender balance at all levels of public life, and will identify areas where further improvements are necessary in order to create an enabling environment for women to enter and pursue effective careers in the public sphere. Particular issues to be discussed include good practices and effective solutions to gender-based discrimination in the employment sphere, combating gender-based stereotypes in education and the media, and efforts to promote a better reconciliation of professional and private/family responsibilities by women and men.

The following issues could be considered during the session:

- What are the good practices in eliminating gender-based stereotypes and public perceptions which prevent women from reaching their full potential in public life?

- What are the effective strategies for promoting gender equality in the work-place and combating gender-based discrimination in the employment sphere?
- What particular steps should governmental, private sector and civil society organizations take to ensure that women are given fair and appropriate consideration for appointments to senior position, especially in sectors and in organizations where they have historically been under-represented?
- How can employers and employees organizations promote gender-sensitive working environments?
- What measures are taken by participating States to eliminate gender-based stereotypes from education curricula?
- How can journalists, editors and other media professionals contribute to achieving the objective of gender-equality and gender-balance in public life?
- How can participating States encourage the sharing of work and parental responsibilities between women and men so that women can enjoy equal opportunities to participate effectively in political and public life?

16:00 – 16:30	Break
16:30 – 17:30	CLOSING SESSION
17:30	Close of Day 2

ANNEX III – Introductory Speeches

Ms. Mette Kongshem, Director, EurAsia Research and Strategy, Norway

Introductory Speech for Session I: Promoting gender equality in the OSCE region – Progress achieved and challenges ahead

Madam Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We all acknowledge that nature's greatest survival mechanism is biodiversity. So it is with societies. Diversity in our societies implies that women and men are accorded the same rights and opportunities, the same level playing field for realizing their full potential in public as well as in family life.

No sustainable solution to the most important social, economic and political challenges of our societies can be found without the empowerment and the full participation of women. It is a prerequisite for development. Women can be key drivers of economic progress and social stability when they have the possibility to manifest themselves, i.e. as entrepreneurs.

The participation of women in the social and economic life of any country has a significant and positive impact on growth, on innovation, on a country's competitive edge. A sound gender policy is part and parcel of a sound national economy.

Gender equality has been on the OSCE agenda for a long time. The issue is also being dealt with in the UN and we have important Security Council resolutions which lend vital support to the cause. Positive developments and important achievements are on record in OSCE participating States. But progress is still, as we know, limited and uneven. Gender discrimination still prevails, too many women are either without education, unemployed due to lack of professional skills or outright discrimination, or they occupy positions in low paid sectors of the economy. Violence against women is still a huge problem.

We must therefore push forward with new and strengthened efforts to take on these challenges. We must raise the status of girls and women and invest in their potential through education, economic development and healthcare. Our agenda is ambitious, and so it must be. Men must be fully involved. We must build on partnerships between women and men, partnerships between countries and regions and between national and international organizations. We must share experience, gender policy initiatives and good practices.

This Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting is of utmost importance in that it can provide our work with a much needed boost. I commend the Kazakh Chairmanship for making gender equality one of their priorities. And I am pleased and honoured to have been invited to address this meeting by introducing Session I.

We all agree Madam Chairman that the OSCE is an important player in the global efforts to promote comprehensive security. It is therefore incumbent on this organization to ensure that security embraces both women and men. The OSCE has built an important tool-kit on promoting gender equality. Participating States should make full use of it.

Together we have come a long way. We have passed important milestones. But there is still no cause for celebration. Although the body of international commitments concerning the equality of rights and opportunities and the promotion of women in public and political life has increased in

volume and although a number of gender related legislative and policy initiatives have been and are being undertaken by most participating States, gender equality is far from being realized. So where is action needed? Let me focus on a few aspects.

Even where relevant legislation exists, implementation is often lagging behind. The lack of necessary political focus on implementing existing legislation and on applying the tools which have been adopted to foster progress, limit the effectiveness of that same legislation. It is therefore necessary to invest in implementation.

The main problem we are facing in this regard, I think, is that there still exists an explicit lack of understanding and awareness in the general public of the importance for every country of gender equality. Such a lack of awareness easily leads to a lack of political interest in whether existing tools, commitments and legislation are effectively implemented. We do need more legislative measures; let me be clear on that. We need gender-equality and anti-discrimination legislation, policies and mechanisms providing for equal opportunities across the board which aim at fostering a balanced participation of women and men in political and public life. And we need measures to increase the number of qualified women in decision-making positions.

But governments should at the same time be strongly encouraged to implement what is already in the books. Governments could take action by creating task-forces or other appropriate structures to monitor, promote and evaluate progress in implementation. Such task-forces could i.e. identify and recommend the elimination of underlying causes which are slowing down implementation, with the aim of giving the legislation full effect.

We must enlist politicians, in governments, in parliaments and other leaders, also in private businesses, in universities, who understand the importance of gender equality for social and economic growth. They can help by strengthening awareness of the fact that the country's social and economic progress also depends on enhanced participation both by women and men. They can give the gender project much needed visibility, which again will foster a strengthened awareness-raising in the general public. Appointment of ministers with specific responsibility for gender equality: a responsibility that should be duly reflected in the name of the Ministry – is the key to progress. Women's caucuses in parliaments and in political parties can make an important impact on awareness-raising and on the legislative agenda.

The development of national action plans is a very useful measure to initiate strategic action, identify national priorities and resources which are needed. Such action plans should determine responsibilities and timeframes for monitoring ongoing efforts. By adopting effective national action plans, governments will have taken a decisive step towards the goal of gender balance in their countries.

Gender-based attitudes can often be an important hurdle, and they tend to influence people's perceptions of men and women and cement traditional roles. Such attitudes are nourished by gender-based stereotypes, which in themselves are serious impediments, often restraining women from taking charge of their own lives. Participating States may be encouraged to clean school textbooks and other official documentation of possible stereotypes in order to change perceptions and fight prejudices against women. Societies should focus on women's potential, capabilities and experience.

Many participating states have excellent experience with the work of state mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality, or gender equality ombudsmen. Such offices can be an excellent support for forward looking governments in providing recommendations and proposals for

government action. They can serve as watchdogs to make sure that legislation is implemented the way it was intended, and that cases of gender discrimination are being dealt with.

Because women have been marginalized for hundreds of years, it will take some bold measures to turn the situation around. Despite increasing awareness of gender disparities in the workplace women often lag behind male peers in many areas including pay and opportunities for professional advancement.

Some participating States have instituted a policy of gender-based targets or quotas, and their experience is that this policy can be an effective remedy in order to achieve better balance in the composition of elected and appointed public leaders, as well as in boardrooms, on committees and delegations. Quotas can also be applied in order to aim at gender-balance in hiring and promotion in government administration, including in decision-making positions. Government owned companies are also implementing such measures

The notion of quotas has encountered scepticism and outright opposition. But change does not come all by itself. Bold measures are sometimes necessary; and targeted and affirmative action and legislation has brought encouraging results, giving women needed visibility and profiling their competencies. Some countries have also put in place measures providing for a professional and gender-sensitive management culture through gender action plans in the workplace. Such in-house action plans can contribute to propelling women to management positions.

I have focused on the empowerment of women. But gender equality is about both genders. We can only succeed when men are involved in the gender equality project, when men and women work together towards the same goal. We can only succeed when we focus on men's rights and roles in parenting. In order to facilitate equal opportunities for men and women to participate effectively in political and public life, governments must encourage shared work and parental and other family responsibilities between women and men, and enabling structures to achieve this must be designed.

Gender equality depends in large measure on facilitating a comprehensive family policy: kindergartens, equal pay for equal work, parental benefits for women and men such as the option for reduced working hours and leave of absence for parents with small children. Gender equality is equality in parenthood. Some may counter with the argument that such measures require financial resources from tight budgets. Can a country afford gender equality? I would rather say: can modern societies afford not to put in place such measures? Most industrialized countries are facing a dramatic demographic development, struggling with an aging population and decreasing fertility rates. Countries which have adopted family and gender friendly equality policies have experienced a positive link between such policies, fertility rates and employment rates. Societies need heads and hands, they need women and men.

Ten years ago the Security Council adopted resolution 1325, which i.e. calls for increased participation of women in all phases of conflict prevention, conflict resolution and in building sustainable peace. In the OSCE we have for several years discussed how essential the empowerment of women within the political-military dimension is for comprehensive security. But we have, I regret to say, not advanced much on this score. There seems to exist a build-in resistance to involve women in peace processes, and a lack of understanding of the vital role women can and indeed do play to secure peace and stability.

It is a challenge turning this situation around, but it has to be done. Women must be engaged also in the security services including the armed forces and the police. Under-representation of women in these sectors could be a serious impediment to the creation of a well-functioning and trustworthy security sector capable of providing adequate security for all citizens. Participating States could take a lead in encouraging women to apply for work in the police force through public advertising

campaigns and welcome women at least on a voluntary basis to do military service. With the issue of nuclear disarmament on the international agenda, governments should push for gender mainstreaming in disarmament strategies and non-proliferation regimes. Kazakhstan, with its eminent record on disarmament, is well placed to take the lead.

There is however an unfortunate development also in the OSCE region towards female radicalization. Women, often religious women, constrained by limited opportunities, growing poverty and corruption, are increasingly viewed as a target for recruitment by radical groups which advocate violent extremism and terrorism. These groups thrive on the perception of social injustice, economic crisis and political repression. It is of utmost importance to tackle the root causes and engage women at a high socio-economic risk who may embrace the messages of radical groups. It is of utmost importance that governments are responsive to their needs. Also, in many countries women's lives are routinely endangered. We need strategies to end sexual and gender-based violence. Violence against women is an extreme form of suppression of women in today's society and must be prohibited.

Mr. Chairman, an action-oriented implementation of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality is important. The Secretary General has, as requested in the Action Plan, each year presented an annual evaluation report to the Permanent Council for discussion, covering review and monitoring of implementation and update on policies and strategies. I would like to congratulate the Secretary General with clear and action-oriented reports. Where progress is needed that is clearly spelled out and result-oriented recommendations are made. That is extremely helpful for participating States in their efforts to implement commitments. The OSCE can provide valuable assistance to all participating States in their efforts to move the gender agenda forward. Experienced gender advisors in the OSCE Secretariat, the Institutions and the field operations are ready to roll up their sleeves. But there is a need for well funded projects to make a difference. Increased funding for gender equality projects is called for.

Time may now have come to revise the Action Plan and hopefully include quantitative targets and time-lines and monitoring mechanisms. And maybe time has also come to consider the possibility of a strong and visible hand at a high level in the OSCE to front the broad agenda of gender equality.

This Special Human Dimension Meeting shall focus on implementation while assessing achievements, gaps, challenges and outline ideas and action to move forward on gender equality. How can we do better, which measures have been successful, what can we learn from each other in blending mutual interest and mutual respect between women and men. I look forward to a lively discussion which can inject enthusiasm in our work and let us be strengthened in our resolve to move forward with renewed energy. And remember, we will not be judged by our words but by our actions.

Thank you.

Prof. Dr. Werner Zögernitz, President, Institute for Parliamentarism and Democracy Questions, Austria

Introductory Speech for Session II: Empowering women as political party members and as elected officials

Exzellenzen!
Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren!

I. Einleitung

Aktueller Themenschwerpunkt des „Instituts für Parlamentarismus und Demokratiefragen“ ist die parlamentarische und politische Kultur in Österreich und in anderen demokratischen Staaten.

Da ein fairer Anteil von Frauen in Gesetzgebung, Regierung und Politik im Allgemeinen ein wesentliches Kennzeichen für eine reife Demokratie ist, haben wir uns in den letzten Monaten eingehend mit dem Thema „Frauen in der Politik – im Rahmen der EU“ befasst und 2 diesbezügliche Studien herausgegeben. Sie umfassen also etwa die Hälfte aller OSZE-Staaten.

Die 1. Studie betrifft die europäische und nationale Ebene.
Die 2. Studie hat die Regionen und Kommunen zum Gegenstand.

II. Allgemeine Analyse

Darin zeigt sich, dass die Frauen, die in fast allen EU-Staaten die Bevölkerungsmehrheit bilden, in den meisten Ländern in der Politik unterrepräsentiert sind.

Es gibt weitgehende Diskrepanzen bei der Akzeptanz und Präsenz der Frauen im politischen Leben der EU-Staaten. Unterschiede bestehen sowohl in der politischen Kultur als auch bei anderen Faktoren – wie z.B. den Wahlsystemen –, die für diese Differenzen maßgeblich sind.

Im Einzelnen sind folgende Punkte hervorzuheben:

1. Aufgrund der statistischen Analyse kann man feststellen, dass die meisten Staaten in der EU weit vom – von der UNO festgelegten – Minimalziel, das 30 % für eine wirksamen Repräsentation von Frauen in politischen Entscheidungspositionen beträgt, entfernt sind. Nur wenige Länder haben das 40 %-Ziel, das vom Europarat vorgegeben wird, erreicht.
2. Bei einflussreichen Positionen und führenden politischen Funktionen, wie z.B. Staatsoberhäupter, Regierungschefs, Parlamentspräsidenten und Regierungsmitglieder (sogenannte „Seniorminister“) ist die Unterrepräsentation der Frauen sogar noch stärker.
3. Bei den europäischen Institutionen gibt es wiederum enorme Unterschiede zwischen den verschiedenen Mitgliedsstaaten. Bei Betrachtung der EU-Spitzenposten (z.B. Kommissare) wird deutlich, dass Frauen im Verhältnis zu ihrem Anteil an der Gesamtbevölkerung wiederum signifikant unterrepräsentiert sind. Sie stellen nur 1/3 der Kommissare.
4. Die Studie enthält auch eine Diskussion über die Rolle und Bedeutung von „Quoten“ zur Hebung des Anteils der weiblichen Vertreter in den nationalen Parlamenten. Solche „Quoten“ machen insbesondere dann Sinn, wenn sie mit einer Bevorzugung bei der Reihung auf den Parteilisten kombiniert werden, sodass Frauen eine reelle Chance haben, gewählt zu werden.
5. Bei der Beurteilung der Vorteile von „Quoten“ ist allerdings auch die politische Geschichte und Kultur des jeweiligen Staates zu berücksichtigen. Interessanterweise gibt es nämlich in einigen

Ländern ohne Quotensystem eine hohe Vertretung der Frauen (z.B. in skandinavischen Staaten) in der Politik. In anderen Ländern wiederum, die früher kommunistisch regiert wurden, werden nach einer Studie des Europäischen Parlaments „Quoten“ sogar als undemokratisch und als Relikt der Sowjetherrschaft betrachtet.

6. Darüber hinaus geht die Untersuchung auch auf einige verfassungsmäßige und einfachgesetzliche Bestimmungen in den EU-Staaten ein, wie z.B. auf das sogenannte Parité-Gesetz, das derzeit in Frankreich besteht und sogar in der Verfassung verankert ist.

7. Eine Gemeinschaft kann selbst Einfluss auf Staaten mit geringer Frauenrepräsentation ausüben, um deren Haltung zu ändern. So wurde beispielsweise herausgefunden, dass in einem Land die Meinung der EU-Repräsentanten während der Beitrittsverhandlungen eine bedeutende Rolle spielte, um eine stärkere Mitwirkung der Frauen am politischen Leben zu erreichen.

8. Schließlich ist es auch nicht uninteressant, wie sich eine größere Anzahl von Frauen im politischen Leben auf eine Verbesserung der Situation auswirkt. Dafür ist es grundsätzlich notwendig, zusätzlich zur Erhöhung der Quantität auch qualitative Verbesserungen zu erreichen, wie z.B. die des **Ansehens der Politiker, der Parlamentarier** und der Gesetzgebung im Allgemeinen.

III. Wie sieht nun die aktuelle Repräsentanz der Frauen bei den politischen Spitzenpositionen in den 27 EU-Staaten aus?

Hiezu einige Beispiele:

- o In einem einzigen EU-Land – nämlich in Deutschland – hat eine Frau die Funktion eines Regierungschefs inne (3,7 %).
- o In 20 EU-Staaten (ohne Monarchien) ist der Frauenanteil der gewählten bzw. ernannten Staatspräsidenten 15 % (also 3 von 20).
- o Der Anteil der Frauen an den Regierungsmitgliedern (sog. „Seniorminister“) liegt bei etwa 25 % im Schnitt.
- o 6 der 27 Parlamentspräsidenten (22 %) sind Frauen.
- o Der Frauenanteil in den nationalen Parlamenten liegt im Schnitt nur um 2 bis 3 % über dem OSZE-Durchschnitt insgesamt.
- o Besonders niedrig ist der Prozentsatz der Frauen auch bei den Bürgermeisterinnen; er liegt insgesamt gesehen bei etwa 13 %. Lediglich in 4 EU-Hauptstädten (15 %) übt eine Frau das Amt des Bürgermeisters aus.

IV. Situation in Österreich

Nummehr einige Anmerkungen zur österreichischen Situation, die insgesamt gar nicht so schlecht ist.

- o Immerhin war eine Österreicherin weltweit die erste Vorsitzende einer parlamentarischen Kammer, und zwar bereits im Jahr 1927 im Bundesrat, der allerdings nicht direkt gewählt wird. Die 2. Vorsitzende einer parlamentarischen Kammer stammt übrigens ebenfalls aus Europa, und zwar aus Dänemark (1950).
- o Die Funktion des Nationalratspräsidenten (Speaker) hat in Österreich eine Frau inne (sie ist also 1 von 6 in der EU).
- o Bei den Regierungsmitgliedern ist der weibliche Anteil bei den sogenannten „Seniorenministern“ knapp 43 %.
- o Im Europaparlament liegt Österreich mit 41 % an der 7. Stelle, wobei es bemerkenswert ist, dass bei der letzten Wahl zum Europäischen Parlament der Frauenanteil um 13 % gestiegen ist.
- o Im nationalen Parlament liegt Österreich mit derzeit etwa 28 % leicht über dem EU-Schnitt. Der Anteil war aber bereits höher.

- o Im regionalen Bereich stellt Österreich 1 von 9 Landesvorsitzenden (Landeshauptfrau) und liegt damit bei den 4 föderalistischen Staaten (Deutschland, Spanien, Belgien und Österreich) mit 11 % an der Spitze.
- o Nicht so gut aufgestellt sind die Frauen bei den Bürgermeisterfunktionen. Hier ist Österreich mit etwa 5 % ein EU-Nachzügler. Allerdings werden die Rathäuser in 2 von 9 Hauptstädten von Frauen regiert (22 %).
- o Schließlich hatte Österreich in der Zeit von 2004 bis 2009 eine EU-Kommissarin gestellt, die allerdings in der Zwischenzeit durch einen Mann abgelöst wurde.

V. Wo und warum sind Frauen unterrepräsentiert?

Hiezu einige Bemerkungen:

1. Zunächst ergibt sich eine Unterrepräsentanz der Frauen – wie bereits erwähnt – in hohen Funktionen. Dies bestätigt die These, dass die Chancen für die Frau, eine Funktion zu erhalten, umso schlechter stehen, je mächtiger das betreffende Gremium ist.
2. Weiters spielt das Wahlsystem eine große Rolle (Mehrheitswahlrecht benachteiligt Frauen).
3. Die gendernmäßige Zusammensetzung der nationalen Parlamente hat einen Einfluss auf das Engagement der Frauen für eine politische Karriere im Allgemeinen, also auch in der Kommunalpolitik. Aber das gegenwärtige vielfach negative Image der Politik und des Parlaments in den EU-Staaten sowie Stil und Kultur der Politik schrecken viele Frauen von dieser Tätigkeit ab.
4. Frauen leiden unter Zeitmangel, Finanzen, Ressourcen (Netzwerken) und teils Selbstvertrauen, um ein politisches Leben ins Auge zu fassen. Hier könnten Frauen, die schon in der Politik sind, andere zur Kandidatur ermuntern („mentoring“).
5. Auf Bundesebene ist meistens die Bereitschaft zu Änderungen und neuen Vorschlägen größer als auf den darunter liegenden Ebenen. Außerdem ist in den Gemeinden bzw. Ländern das Durchgriffsrecht der Parteispitze dementsprechend schwächer als auf nationaler Ebene.
6. Zusammenfassend zeigen die statistischen Daten, dass der Frauenanteil in allen Bereichen des politischen Lebens eine steigende Tendenz aufweist.

VI. Welche Strategien bieten sich nunmehr an, die Chancen der Frauen in der Politik zu verbessern?

Grundsätzlich bestehen hiefür aus meiner Sicht 5 Möglichkeiten:

- A) Einführung von Quoten,
- B) Zusätzliche Regelungen zu den Quoten,
- C) Organisation der Parlamentsarbeit
- D) parlamentsinterne Zusammenarbeit der weiblichen Mandatäre und
- E) allgemeine Verbesserungen beim Image der Politik und der Politiker

Nunmehr zu den Details:

Ad A) Einführung von Quoten

Es gibt folgende verschieden Typen von Quoten z.B.

1. verpflichtend mit Sanktionen,
2. verpflichtend ohne Sanktionen und
3. freiwillig

Sie sind weltweit auf verschiedenen legislativen und programmatischen Ebenen verankert und zwar bspw:

1. in der Bundesverfassung;

2. in einfachgesetzlichen Regelungen auf nationaler, regionaler oder lokaler Ebene mit oder ohne Reihungsfestlegungen für die Listen;
3. von den Parteien in ihren Programmen, entweder verpflichtend oder auf freiwilliger Basis - und zwar mit oder ohne Details.

Quoten müssen allerdings sorgfältig eine Diskriminierung von Männern vermeiden, andernfalls würden sie nämlich Gefahr laufen, vom jeweiligen Verfassungsgerichtshof aufgehoben zu werden, was teilweise in Frankreich, in Italien und im Vereinigten Königreich der Fall war.

Derzeit haben 6 EU-Staaten gesetzliche Quoten sowohl für nationale als auch für regionale Wahlen. 15 bzw. 16 haben Parteiquoten. In 5 bzw. 6 Staaten gibt es für beide Ebenen weder gesetzliche noch parteimäßige Quoten.

Die Debatte über die Wirksamkeit und Sinnhaftigkeit von Quoten werden bekanntlich kontroversiell geführt. In vielen Ländern und auch in zahlreichen politischen Parteien werden Quoten zumindest auf programmatischer Ebene als wünschenswert betrachtet.

Ad B) Zusätzliche Regelungen zu den Quoten

Zusätzlich zu den Quoten haben einige europäische Parteien folgende Regelungen getroffen:

1. Schaffung einer Frauenabteilung in der internen Organisation; in der christdemokratischen Partei in Österreich (ÖVP) z.B. gibt es seit ihrer Gründung im Jahre 1945 die Frauenbewegung als fixen Bestandteil der Partei.
2. Einführung spezieller Trainingsmethoden, um Frauen für eine politische Karriere vorzubereiten. Es hat nämlich wenig Sinn, wenn Quoten festgelegt werden, ohne dass Frauen für die politischen Aufgaben ausreichend vorbereitet sind.

Letzteres Schema wird vermehrt in Parteien angewandt, in denen es keine Länderquoten gibt, oder in Ländern mit einem Mehrheitswahlsystem.

Das britische „women2win“ Programm enthält z.B. folgende Maßnahmen:

1. Mentoring und Beratung von erfolgreichen Politikerinnen;
2. Medientraining und Beratung bei öffentlichen Auftritten;
3. Hilfe bei der Einbindung in Netzwerke und bei der Herstellung von Kontakten.

Diese Maßnahmen können auch finanzielle Hilfe z.B. bei der Betreuung der Kinder oder bei der Durchführung von Wahlkämpfen beinhalten.

Ad C) Organisation der Parlamentsarbeit

Wenn man mehr Frauen für die Politik gewinnen will, muss man auch die parlamentarische Organisation entsprechend anpassen. Dies betrifft den parlamentarischen Fahrplan und die Gestaltung der Parlamentsarbeit. Außerdem wären Parlamentsferien und Schulzeiten abzustimmen, eine entsprechende Infrastruktur für die Kinder sicherzustellen und lange Nachtsitzungen zu vermeiden. In einer Debatte über die Modernisierung des britischen Unterhauses (Juni 2002) wurde übrigens angemerkt, dass familienfreundliche Sitzungszeiten nicht nur Frauen, sondern auch Männern helfen würden, die Funktion eines Parlamentariers mit der eines Familienmitgliedes zu vereinen.

Ad D) Parlamentsinterne Zusammenarbeit der weiblichen Mandatäre

In einigen Parlamenten arbeiten die weiblichen Mandatäre parteiübergreifend zusammen, um Fraueninteressen im Bereich der Gesetzgebung zu fördern. Dies ist z.B. in Finnland der Fall.

Ad E) Allgemeine Verbesserungen beim Image der Politik und der Politiker

Vielfach schreckt das Image der Politik und der Politiker Frauen ab, eine politische Funktion zu übernehmen.

Nach Studien ist ferner die Kultur insbesondere z.B. auf kommunaler Ebene eher männlich und somit „Macho“.

Ferner ist der Stil der Konfrontationspolitik, mit der man versucht, Punkte zu sammeln, für viele Frauen nicht attraktiv und Art und Ton der Parlamentsdebatten werden lt. einer Studie der britischen „Fawcett-Society“ als kindisch angesehen, da die Abgeordneten offenbar nicht fähig sind, sachlich zu diskutieren.

Man müsse auch immer in der Öffentlichkeit den Eindruck erwecken, gesund und fit zu sein.

All das schaffe eine eher „harte Kultur“, in der sich Frauen nicht immer wohl fühlen.

VII. Zusammenfassung

Es ist unbestritten, dass es nicht nur auf die Quantität der Frauen in der Politik ankommt, sondern vor allem auf deren Qualifikation. In diesem Zusammenhang könnte man auch die Frage aufwerfen, wie ein höherer Frauenanteil Politik und Gesellschaft verändern würde.

Unsere Forschung zeigt jedenfalls, dass der Frauenanteil in allen politischen Bereichen eine steigende Tendenz aufweist, wenn dies auch nicht immer im gewünschten Tempo der Fall ist.

Ms. Rusudan Kervalishvili, Deputy Chair of the Parliament, Chair of the Gender Equality Advisory Council of Parliament, Georgia

Introductory Speech for Session III: Ensuring gender balance and women's effective participation in public life

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for your invitation. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak to you today and introduce this Session, outlining key challenges in front of us in the field of promoting women's effective participation in public life. I am sure that a set of problems identified in Georgia very closely resemble those that are found in other OSCE participating States, because one this is obvious – discrimination on the grounds of sex and gender, and unequal rights and opportunities among women and men are unfortunately universal, worldwide problems and are a challenge for all of us in the OSCE region in our efforts to build and develop our democracies.

I very much hope that this meeting and the discussions of these two days will give us a new momentum to tackle the problems of women's under-representation and mobilize a greater political will to address these problems at national and international levels.

During the past several decades, the OSCE participating States adopted a number of important commitments which affirm the objectives of promoting women's participation in political and public life, eliminating gender-based discrimination and ensuring equal rights and opportunities to women and men.

Notable among these are the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality adopted in 2004, and the Ministerial Council Decision adopted in Athens in December 2009 on Promoting Women's Participation in Political and Public Life.

So that these commitments do not remain as mere declarations of will, the question that should be asked is: what should be done to translate these commitments into concrete actions at the national level?

Achieving gender-equality in real and factual terms is conditional on the adoption of sound legal frameworks in this field. In Georgia, for example, through analyzing the past practice, we noted that previous legal framework did not fully ensure the implementation of gender equality principles. Based on good practices of other countries, we realized that it was important to introduce additional legal guarantees in this regard.

Since last April, the new law on gender equality entered into force. Through the adoption of this new law, a significant step forward was taken to ensure an effective legal framework for equality of rights and opportunities. Main direction of the state policy on gender equality were defined thereof. The first ever permanent state body – Gender Equality Council was established, which will co-ordinate state policies for promotion of gender equality. The Council is currently drafting the National Action Plan for 2011-2013, which will aim at promoting equality of rights and opportunities among women and men in all areas of public life. It is notable, that the Action Plan is developed in close co-ordination with Parliament, executive government and non-governmental organizations.

While there is certainly a political will to promote gender balance, there is a lack of tangible results. However, it should also be noted that a considerable progress has taken place in increasing

awareness on gender-equality and countering gender-based stereotypes in the education and other areas of public life.

Initiatives that led to the positive changes in the public opinion included awareness raising in educational institutions, community and student initiatives and conferences in the framework of equality awareness weeks, incentive-based initiatives for media professionals/journalists and for those working in private businesses.

I would like to particularly address one of our priority problems – employment. Since 2008, as the employment has topped almost 17 %, the effect has been fairly equal on women and men, however, significant gaps remain in the remuneration/income levels for women and men. The new labour code, which is thought to be based on principles of economic liberalism, has been adopted in 2006.

As is usually the case, this liberal Labour code is aimed at business development and investment promotion; however, it does lack mechanisms to ensure that the interests of employees are protected. Hence, we have noted facts of infringement of labour and social rights of citizens, especially among women. Women who return after maternity face particular challenges in getting back to their normal working regimes. We have also identified a strong need for provision of specialized on-the-job training opportunities.

Regulation of labour relations is of fundamental importance here, which the labour codes should ensure. Our current labour code requires harmonization with internationally recognized standards and practices. We are currently working in consultation with the labour union, so that this law will have strengthened provisions for the protection of the rights of employees and protection of labour rights of women.

In the backdrop of these reforms, significant other reforms in the employment in the public service were identified. Anti-corruption initiatives have had their positive impact. Participation and employment of women in the public sector has increased in judicial, prosecutorial, justice, defence and interior structures where many talented women were employed based on comprehensive testing exams.

The National Statistics Bureau indicates in its 2009 data that women comprise 52.9 % employed staff in state structures, while men comprise 47.1 %. However, problems remain in relation to women's participation in political and economic decision-making.

We are very concerned about women in the labour migration and what is called the feminization of migration. Protection of migrant women's rights is a priority which should be regulated by inter-state agreements.

One cannot under-estimate how critical to promoting women's effective public participation is the protection against domestic violence.

Based on the good practice examples from various OSCE participating States, in 2006 we adopted a number of important legislative initiatives. Parliament adopted the law on the protection and assistance to victims of domestic violence, as well as the law on combating trafficking in human beings. This has significantly improved our international standing as we moved to the so called 'first basket' countries as classified by the US Department of State.

I would like to stress the importance of technical assistance measures that we have received from international agencies, in the field of gender equality. Due to their assistance and expertise,

important achievements have been made. Now that the ground work has been laid, we welcome more assistance and support for the implementation of these laws.

I would like to particularly stress the role of the OSCE in promoting democratic institutions and human rights protection mechanisms in Georgia. The OSCE's role in peace-building is of critical importance.

On this same note, ensuring women's participation in peace building and conflict resolution processes is critical to their success, something that the OSCE was actively pursuing in the past through its Mission.

We remain hopeful that the OSCE will fully re-establish its activities in Georgia, and will further assist us in promoting democratic principles.

In the entire OSCE region, at national and regional levels we need a renewed engagement and active work to ensure our commitments to promoting gender balance and women's participation in public life.

The key message that should guide state officials and those active in public life is that truly democratic governance and institutions will only be achievable if women as half of the population will have guaranteed equality of rights and opportunities along with men.

Thank you.

ANNEX IV – Biographical Information on Speakers, Introducers, and Moderators

Key-note Speaker

Ms. Elza Pais, Secretary of State for Equality, Portugal

Ms. Pais is the highest ranking government official in Portugal in charge of co-ordinating multi-faceted work of the government of Portugal for the promotion of gender equality and advancement of women. She is the state advisor on gender-mainstreaming in various policies and programmes at the national level. Ms. Pais has previously served as the representative of Portugal in the Council of Europe's inter-governmental working body on Equal Opportunities and Gender Mainstreaming. At various times in her career, Ms. Pais has served as a member of the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences of the University Nova de Lisboa, focussing on research and policy advice in the field of gender-based discrimination and combating violence against women.

SESSION I – PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE OSCE REGION – PROGRESS ACHIEVED AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

Introducer:

Ms. Mette Kongshem, Director, EurAsia Research and Strategy, Norway

Ms. Kongshem has held various high level governmental positions, in particular in the Norwegian Foreign Service and has served as the Ambassador of Norway to the OSCE and later to the Central Asian countries. During her time as the Head of the Norwegian Delegation to the OSCE, Ms. Kongshem led the work on drafting of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality and has initiated various initiatives within the Organization to ensure gender-mainstreaming in various policies and programmes. In her current capacity, Ms. Kongshem works to promote high level dialogue and assistance initiatives in the OSCE region in the field of human dimension.

Moderator:

Dr. Nadezda Shvedova, Co-Founder of “Women’s Forum,” Russian Federation

Ms. Shvedova is a prominent Russian civil society activist and academician with a long- standing experience as a researcher on gender and politics and women’s participation issues in the region of the newly independent states (former Soviet republics). Ms. Shvedova, doctor of political sciences, leads a Moscow-based association “Women’s Forum” which works to promote gender-based analysis of current legal and policy reforms in the Russian Federation as well as in other post-Soviet countries. In parallel, Ms. Shvedova heads the Center of Socio-political Studies of the Institute of USA and Canada Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences.

SESSION II – EMPOWERING WOMEN AS POLITICAL PARTY MEMBERS AND AS ELECTED OFFICIALS

Introducers:

Ms. Aitkul Samakova, Member of Parliament, Chair of the Social Affairs Council of the Nur-Otan Faction in the Majlis of Parliament, Republic of Kazakhstan

Before being elected to the Majlis, Ms. Samakova headed Kazakhstan’s State Commission on Family and Gender Issues and led multi-sectoral policies focused on the advancement of women and employment policies. In the Majlis, Ms. Samakova has spearheaded the adoption of the Law on Equal Rights and Opportunities of Kazakhstan, and has led discussions at the national level on legislative and other policy measures to promote women’s increased participation in political life.

Prof Dr Werner Zögernitz, President of the Institute for Parliamentarism and Democracy Questions, Austria

Dr. Werner Zögernitz heads the Institute for Parliamentarism and Democracy Questions in the Austrian Parliament (parliamentary group of the Austrian Peoples Party, ÖVP). Mr. Zögernitz brings with him decades of experience as the member of one of the leading Austrian Political parties, Austrian People's Party where he has been coordinating the legislative work within the parliament on issues related to democracy, public participation, budgetary issues, and transparency in the decision making. The Institute that he currently heads, works in collaboration with other state and non-governmental organizations in Austria to promote awareness on issues related to gender-equality in governance and ways to promote women's increased participation in political life.

Moderator:

Ms. Lenita Freidenvall, Researcher, Women in Politics Research Centre, University of Stockholm, Sweden

Ms. Lenita Freidenvall is a prominent researcher on women's political participation, and a contributor to major European and international research initiatives on women in politics and challenges of under-representation. Her particular areas of expertise include participation and transparency of nomination processes in political parties, gender and constitutional politics and new institutional theories.

SESSION III - ENSURING GENDER BALANCE AND WOMEN'S EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC LIFE

Introducer:

Ms. Rusudan Kervalishvili, Deputy Chair of Parliament of Georgia, Chair of the Gender Equality Advisory Council of Parliament, Georgia

Ms. Kervalishvili has been appointed as the Chair of the Gender Equality Advisory Council of Parliament since 2008 after her election to the Parliament of Georgia in 2008. Under her leadership, the Georgian Parliament adopted the first-ever law on Equality of Rights and Opportunities between Women and Men, and has worked to address women's under-representation in political parties through outreach and collaborative initiatives with Women's NGO Coalition of Georgia.

Moderator:

Ms. Damira Sartbaeva (Kyrgyzstan), Regional Programme Director, UNIFEM Regional Office for the Commonwealth of Independent States

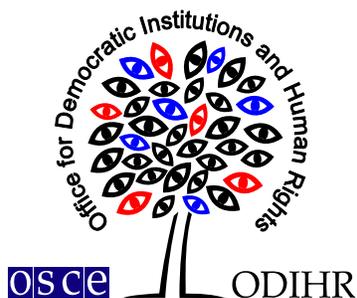
Ms. Sartbaeva heads UNIFEM's CIS programmes and is herself one of the prominent advocates of women's rights and gender equality reforms in Central Asia and in other countries of the post-Soviet region. Her particular areas of work include gender equality and the institutional reform, combating violence against women and integration of women's rights in the security sector reform.

SUPPLEMENTARY HUMAN DIMENSION MEETING

PROMOTION OF GENDER BALANCE
AND
PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL AND PUBLIC LIFE

6-7 May 2010

Ratsaal, Hofburg, Vienna



Opening remarks by

Ambassador Janez Lenarčič

Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)

Check against delivery!

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to this OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on *'Promotion of Gender Balance and Participation of Women in Political and Public Life'*.

I would first like to express my appreciation to the Kazakh OSCE Chairmanship for having proposed this topic. It seamlessly follows up on the third SHDM of last year under the Greek Chairmanship that dealt with Gender Equality and the complex relationship between gender and violence.

My appreciation also goes to other OSCE institutions and field missions not only for their participation in this meeting, but also and most importantly, for their contribution to promoting and supporting women's rights. I also appreciate the participation of our international partner organizations and representatives of civil society from across the entire OSCE region. The issues to be discussed here can only be successfully addressed by a wide coalition of actors.

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Excellencies,

In the simplest terms, democracy is understood to mean the rule of the people. Central to a democratic system of government is its

representative nature and hence its ability to respond to the needs of the citizens, women and men, on an equal basis.

In most countries, women make up more than half of the adult population and the electorate. This, we must admit, is not reflected in their level of participation in public affairs. Democracy is to remain a mere aspiration if significant parts of the citizenry are *de facto* excluded from public affairs. This is a major challenge for any democracy.

Throughout the last decades, many nations have taken drastic measures to ensure de-facto equality between women and men. Political will to address this challenge has been matched with groundbreaking laws and policies. Yet, the progress is uneven across the region: for example, the representation of women in parliaments, which is one of the most widely used indicators, ranges from 45% to as little as 6%.

Within the OSCE region, we had an average of around 14% women in national parliaments in 1995. We now have an average of 22%. Fifteen years have resulted in a mere 8% increase in women's representation in parliaments. This increase is largely due to significant progress made in a small number of participating States. In upper houses, progress is even slower.

Some additional statistics reveal a harsh reality. Only 4 OSCE participating States have 40% or more of women in parliaments (*the recommended benchmark set forth by the CoE and endorsed by the*

UN). Notably, 12 OSCE States have female presiding officers of parliament – the OSCE’s host state, Austria, is among them –, although this does not necessarily point to a higher degree of women’s participation in political life in these countries. And sadly, only 12 OSCE States have 30 % of women in parliaments (*the goal set by the UN to have been achieved globally by 1995*).

Starting with the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, OSCE participating States have firmly and repeatedly emphasized that “*full and true equality between men and women is a fundamental aspect of a just and democratic society based on the rule of law.*” Furthermore, OSCE States have affirmed their goal of not only achieving de jure but also de facto equality between men and women (§40, Moscow Document 1991).

At the Athens Ministerial Council meeting, held in December last year, the participating States adopted the *Decision on Women’s Participation in Political and Public Life* to generate a new momentum to address the continued under-participation of women in governance structures across the OSCE region. It calls on States to undertake specific measures to promote gender balance in all legislative, judicial and executive bodies, especially emphasizing the need for gender balance at the decision-making levels.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This OSCE-wide meeting on the promotion of gender balance and women's participation in political and public life should avoid leaning towards self-congratulatory statements. This is an opportunity for all of us to critically evaluate what has been achieved, what hasn't, and how to do more.

To move forward, we must identify the approaches that have proven to be successful. We must also examine the challenges that still lie ahead. The three questions we should ask ourselves and answer are the following:

- What can concretely be done to increase women's political participation at national levels?
- How can we put last year's MC Decision on Promoting Women's Political Participation into action?
- What particular assistance can the OSCE provide to participating States and other actors in promoting women's participation in political and public life, and what should be our priority?

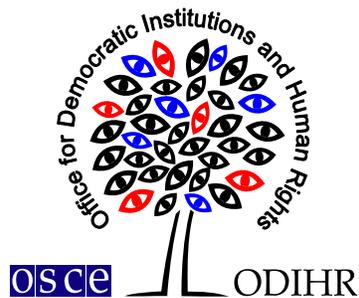
I am looking forward to a fruitful and enlightening discussion and thank you for your attention.

SUPPLEMENTARY HUMAN DIMENSION MEETING

PROMOTION OF GENDER BALANCE
AND
PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL AND PUBLIC LIFE

7 May 2010

Ratsaal, Hofburg, Vienna



Closing remarks by

Ambassador Janez Lenarčič

Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)

Check against delivery!

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This first SHDM has come to an end and I would like to express my deep appreciation for the high level of attendance. With 245 participants, this meeting has been the second best attended SHDM ever convened in recent years. This in itself evidences a strong interest, within the OSCE community, in issues of women's participation in public affairs, and demonstrates that the Kazakh Chairmanship made the right choice with this topic.

Let us for a moment look beyond the figures and examine the issues. The three rapporteurs just gave us an overview of the discussions and the recommendations made during these two days. What the discussions showed is that there is no shortage of examples of how women's participation in political and public life can be enhanced in different political and cultural contexts. I am tempted to conclude that, by exhibiting the variety of models and measures that have been tested successfully in different countries, this forum fully served its purpose.

The following measures and models were discussed as having proved effective in getting closer to equal participation of women and men in legislatures and other branches of government:

- constitutional provisions for parity in electoral lists,
- voluntary or mandatory gender-based quotas for proportional representation systems, and
- all-women shortlists for majoritarian electoral systems.

Regarding the role of political parties, many examples were given of how the lack of internal democracy, the unequal access to party funds, and the lack of gender-sensitivity in candidate selection could be addressed.

However, **no strategy can work** if it is not built on a wide consensus within society at large and if it does not come as a response to a **genuine public demand**. Here is an example: when the participation of women in political parties becomes something that **matters to the electorate** and is kept under scrutiny by the media, political parties are more likely to increase the number of women on their lists and in their internal structures. A policy centered around quotas may indeed facilitate, stimulate or accompany changes, but – as I said - these changes must ultimately **reflect a public demand**, as otherwise the gains may not be sustainable.

Therefore, central to any strategy to enhance women's participation in politics are the efforts invested in **awareness raising, voter education, media campaigns**, and so forth.

Another point made by many of you is the line drawn between the public and the private sphere. The unequal relation of women and men in the **domestic setting** is regularly undermining efforts towards gender equality in public affairs. How could women be empowered to participate equally in public life if at home they are relegated to a subordinate role? Gender equality policies therefore

need to be long-term and comprehensive initiatives that impact on the **cultural, social and political levels.**

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

During these two days, I have also heard critical voices. They pointed to the **gap between aspirations and facts.** They pointed to how decisive **political will** is, and how often it is lacking. The high attendance observed at this meeting illustrates a strong interest. ODIHR will continue to assist, provide expertise and share experience. But let us also keep in mind that, while this organization has developed an action plan six years ago, an action plan remains a plan only, if action is lagging behind.

With this, I wish to thank again the Kazakh Chairmanship for having put this subject on our agenda, and the moderators and introducers for their work. Let me also thank our ODIHR staff that put this meeting together under punishing timelines.

I wish you all a safe travel home.

This meeting is closed.



OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting

on

Promotion of Gender Balance and Participation of Women in Political and Public Life

FINAL LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Vienna, 6 - 7 May 2010

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Opening remarks
 Opening and closing remarks
 Keynote Speaker of the Opening Session
 Introducer at Session I
 Moderator of Session I
 Introducer at Session II
 Introducer at Session II
 Moderator of Session II
 Introducer at Session III
 Moderator of Session III