

Joint Statement Security Dialogue “Sexual and Gender-Based Violence as a Weapon of War” - 12 November 2025

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the following participating States: Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Georgia, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United Kingdom

As we mark the 25th anniversary of the WPS agenda this year, we welcome the FSC Side Event on “Sexual and Gender-Based Violence as a Weapon of War”, arranged by the FSC Chairpersonship earlier today. Over the past quarter century, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and its subsequent resolutions have transformed how we understand conflict, peacebuilding, and accountability.

However, as the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine tragically demonstrates, conflict-related sexual violence continues to be used as a deliberate weapon of war.

In 2024, the UN’s human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine documented 209 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, perpetrated by Russian armed forces, law enforcement authorities and penitentiary staff against Ukrainian civilians and prisoners of war. Russian authorities’ widespread and systematic use of sexual violence against Ukrainians was confirmed by the International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine in March 2025 and has been documented also in Moscow Mechanism reports.

These crimes constitute grave violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity. They demand not only condemnation, but accountability. Impunity perpetuates cycles of violence, and justice is the foundation of sustainable peace.

Mr. Chair,

In line with the OSCE WPS Roadmap, we underscore the importance of adopting and enforcing codes of military conduct that explicitly prohibit SGBV in operations and detention monitoring and integrating gender-sensitive training across all ranks of the armed forces. Command responsibility must be enforced without exception.

In this regard, the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, offers a strong foundation for embedding accountability and gender responsiveness in security governance.

As we commemorate 25 years of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, we must furthermore renew our collective resolve to turn commitments into action across its four pillars.

Survivors of rape and other forms of SGBV endure not only physical pain and social stigma, but also profound psychological trauma. Promoting trauma-informed services, building community-based healing networks, and training local professionals are key steps toward restoring their dignity and well-being. Survivors must be placed at the centre of response strategies, treated not merely as victims, but as agents of resilience and reconstruction.

Mr. Chair,

In the coming month, the international community will observe the 16 Days of activism against Gender-Based Violence, from 25 November to 10 December 2025. We call on all participating States to transform outrage into reform, to ensure that every survivor has access to justice, care, and the chance to rebuild their life in peace and dignity.

Thank you.