



## OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2008

### Working Session 7: Tolerance and non-discrimination II

(2th October 2008)

#### EU Statement

Mr/Ms Moderator

On this session devoted to the equality of opportunity for women and men I would like, on behalf of the European Union to touch upon some points on equal opportunities for women and men and the prevention of violence against women and girls.

The EU attaches great importance to the promotion of equality between women and men. The principle of equal pay for equal work is implemented already in the founding documents of the European union. By now the EU is attaching much importance to the issues of gender equality. This is done by legislation, action programmes, gender mainstreaming, political dialogue and specific measures for the advancement of women. Gender equality is a necessary condition for EU objectives of growth, employment and social cohesion. The EU remains a reliable partner in the global effort to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Within OSCE the adoption of the 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality and its implementation should be mentioned. We welcome the recent publication of the Secretary General's annual report on the implementation of the Action Plan. The adoption of an international document aiming at protecting and promoting human rights is important, but monitoring and implementation of these tools is even more important. Therefore the annual evaluation reports on the implementation of the Action Plan are crucial. We commend the OSCE for their thorough, detailed and objective evaluation reports and appeal to the participating States, the Chairman in Office, the

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Secretary General and the heads of institutions and missions to further improve the implementation of the action plan.

In addition to the equal treatment measures another very important principle - gender mainstreaming - entered the stage with the Beijing platform for action which was adopted at the UN women's conference in 1995.

Now these two principles - equal treatment measures and gender mainstreaming - form the basis for the European Union's action. The present framework in this regard is the roadmap for equality between women and men for 2006-2010.

The roadmap covers six areas: equal economic independence for men and women., reconciliation of work, private and family life., equal participation of men and women in decision-making., eradicating gender-based violence and trafficking., eliminating gender stereotypes in society., and promoting gender equality in the EU's external relations, including in development and humanitarian contexts.

Furthermore the EU attaches great importance to the inclusion of a gender equality perspective in all three of the OSCE's dimensions, including the political military dimension where the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 should also be taken into account.

However, also within the European union like in any other region a lot remains to be done in order to achieve gender equality in practice. To mention only some inequalities that are remaining, there are gender differences in the spheres of career development, employment, pay and in distribution of domestic tasks. The relatively recently established EU gender and fundamental rights institutes may prove helpful in further assessing and evidencing these and other issues related to gender equality.

In the second part of the statement I would like to touch upon such important topic as prevention of gender based violence and violence against women and girls. The EU would like to underline that violence against women both violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment of women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms regardless of the form it takes, be it trafficking of women, domestic violence, forced marriage or killings in the name of honour to name just a few. In the EU there are different programmes designed to fight violence against women. In this regard we would like to mention the Daphne Programme which has financed over 400 projects to fight violence against women.

Combating violence against women is also one of the human rights priorities of the EU's external relations policy. The EU is therefore elaboration new guidelines dedicated to the fight against all forms of violence committed to

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women. These guidelines will serve as an operational tool to help European Embassies and EU representatives act on the ground for the prevention and the protection of women against violence.

The EU welcomes the efforts of ODIHR in initiating and supporting projects, seminars and awareness campaigns aiming at the prevention of violence against women. Promoting awareness raising campaigns is an everlasting task, and we commend ODIHR, and especially the Gender Equality Unit for taking this task so seriously. In addition the valuable work of the OSCE Secretariat Gender Unit, including in its gender mainstreaming efforts, is highly appreciated. The EU looks forward to the experts' seminar on Innovative Approaches to Combating Violence Against Women from 20 to 22 October 2008 in Dushanbe. The EU regards such efforts by the OSCE to be precious complementary to the recently completed Council of Europe campaign on violence against women.

Preventing and combating domestic violence forms one of the key components of the ODIHR activities in the field of promotion of gender equality in all spheres. The EU has noticed that ODIHR has worked to sensitize the law enforcement agencies towards this problem as a crime that needs to be vigorously combated, to build the capacity of law enforcement authorities to play an effective role in preventing and combating domestic violence, as well as to promote co-operation between the law enforcement bodies and NGOS on strategies and measures to prevent and combat this crime.

Referring to the need for coherence and to avoid duplication in the work of international organisations the EU welcomes the existing cooperation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe. The EU encourages both organisations to enhance and strengthen their cooperation in all fields possible, especially regarding in the field of tolerance and non-discrimination.

In conclusion I would like to reaffirm the EU's commitment to work closely with all OSCE structures and participating states in achieving the goals laid down in the OSCE's Action Plan.

The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia\* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and Serbia, the European Free Trade Association country and member of the European Economic Area Norway, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia align themselves with this statement.

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\*Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process

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