



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation Nr 764 Vienna, 1 October 2014

EU Statement on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict

The European Union and its Member States would like to extend our gratitude to Ms Rosy Cave, from the Stabilisation Unit, United Kingdom, for her insightful presentation on the UK's Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative. We would also like to thank the FSC Chairmanship for having scheduled for discussion an important topic which is of particular relevance to the OSCE cross-dimensional and comprehensive concept of security.

The use of rape and sexual violence in armed conflict are war crimes and grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions and of the Rome Statute. These crimes feed on areas of instability and must be prosecuted and punished under national and international law. We welcome the steps taken by the international community towards a consolidated approach to conflict-related sexual violence and, more generally, women, peace and security, reflected in UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions, including the most recent UNSC Resolutions 2106 and 2122(2013).

At the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict held in June 2014 in London the European Union has committed to take more steps to protect those who are at risk, to assist those who have been targeted and to end impunity of those who commit these crimes. We are currently identifying areas of practical actions to be undertaken ranging from strengthening our assistance to human rights defenders to EU's wider crisis response activities.

Hence, the European Union continues to implement its dedicated policy on women, peace and security, adopted in 2008, including through close cooperation with international and regional organisations. In this context, we support the systematic inclusion of the prevention of sexual violence and the protection of and assistance to victims and survivors in every UN mandate and continue funding activities to support victims and survivors and to prevent further crimes at national, regional and international level. We welcome therefore the Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict initiated by the UK in

September 2013 and endorsed to date by 155 UN member states, including 50 OSCE participating States out of which all EU Member States.

We pay particular attention to the full implementation of the provisions of the UNSCRs on this matter, in particular to the need to address the acute issue of sexual violence in conflict by, inter alia, ensuring women's active involvement in all of the phases of the conflict cycle, namely mediation, peace-keeping, crisis management, post-conflict rehabilitation and formal peace processes.

As already stated on numerous occasions, we strongly believe that the OSCE and especially the FSC has an important role to play with regard to women, peace and security. Conflict-related sexual violence should be dealt with in this context by considering ways for the comprehensive implementation at OSCE level of all relevant UNSC Resolutions on women, peace and security, children and armed conflict, and protection of civilians in armed conflict, as well as the Arms Trade Treaty, which contains clear provisions on gender based violence against women and children.

Furthermore, we reiterate our support for the adoption of an OSCE-Wide Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security which we consider as an important step towards the OSCE stepping up and streamlining its activities, as a regional security organisation, in this important area.

The candidate countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO, ICELAND**, SERBIA and ALBANIA, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, and ANDORRA align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

** Iceland continues to be a member of EFTA and the European Economic Area.