



## EUROPEAN UNION

# OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting Warsaw, 21 September – 2 October 2015

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## EU Statement – Working Session 5

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I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and present the following recommendations to the OSCE and to the participating States:

1. Adopt an Addendum to the OSCE 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality
2. Enhance efforts to eliminate violence against women throughout the OSCE area
3. Adopt an OSCE-Wide Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security
4. Encourage participating States to increase representation of women in political and public life.

Mr/ Madam Moderator,

Promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women is an important priority among the EU's OSCE priorities. This year marks a particularly important year for women's rights and gender equality and therefore calls us for concrete outcomes. We celebrate 40 years since the first world conference on the status of women (Mexico 1975) and 20 years since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as 15th anniversary of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325.

The EU stresses the importance of addressing the gender equality and empowerment of women as a cross-dimensional topic; in politico-military, economic and environmental and human dimension. Gender issues should also be addressed in the FSC and in the EEC.



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OSCE Ministerial Council Decision 8/14 taken in Basel in December 2014 tasks the OSCE participating States to elaborate an Addendum to the OSCE 2004 Action Plan on the Promotion of Gender Equality and to bring it to the Permanent Council for adoption in 2015. The EU sees the Addendum as a high priority and it is crucial to adopt a timely decision on it this year. The EU aims at achieving an explicit and strong Addendum based on women's rights which enhances the existing OSCE commitments.

Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and related resolutions remain highly relevant. We therefore support the early adoption of an OSCE-Wide Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

Women's active participation and leadership is crucial in all parts of peace and security decision-making and action. In order to reach sustainable peace and security such an inclusive approach is needed. The OSCE as the world's largest regional organization has formulated its own commitments to implement UNSCR 1325 and its six follow-up resolutions. The topic enjoys wide support among OSCE participating States. There are 51 National Action Plans globally and 27 of them within the OSCE region.

The regional Conference and Consultation on UNSCR 1325 organized in Vilnius in April 2015 provided an arena for sharing best practices and complemented the previous efforts in the OSCE area.

We are delighted that the Secretary-General is organizing a Security Day on this very theme (UNSCR 1325) in November in Vienna to celebrate the 15-year anniversary of this landmark resolution.

Women and especially girls are particularly exposed to sexual exploitation and violence in conflict. It is urgent that we ensure accountability and stop impunity for



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violence against women and sexual violence – in conflict and in peacetime. Progress on gender equality and prevention of sexual violence are critical factors in achieving peace, security and sustainable development of societies.

Violence against women and girls is one of the most pervasive human rights violations and a significant cause of personal insecurity in the OSCE region. It can be particularly pervasive during periods of crisis, transition, conflict and post-conflict reconstruction. Violence against women is a major obstacle to women's participation in all aspects of society. The OSCE Ministerial Council Decision 7/14 taken in Basel in December 2014 marks an important step to tackle the issue in the OSCE area.

One of the areas where the OSCE has been innovative in combating violence against women is the establishment of an OSCE MenEngage Network. Engaging men and boys and supporting them in acting to put an end to discrimination against women and girls is a critical aspect of combating domestic violence and other forms of violence against women. Preventing and combating violence against women needs a comprehensive approach including prevention, protection and punishment for perpetrators. The OSCE Secretary General's Annual Evaluation Report on implementation of the 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality will focus this year on Violence Against Women.

We would like to see concrete improvements in the area of promoting gender equality. Establishing a biennial OSCE gender equality conference supported by adequate resources is one practical suggestion to promote gender equality within the OSCE.

Political participation of women needs to be enhanced in the participating States. Much remains to be done to ensure the equal participation of women in democratic processes. Particular attention needs to be paid to vulnerable groups such as Roma and Sinti women and girls, women and girls belonging to indigenous peoples, women



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and girls with disabilities and LGBTI persons who often face multiple forms of discrimination. We commend the work of ODIHR and other relevant OSCE structures in advancing the political participation of women and encourage further efforts in this regard. We also warmly welcome the work of the RFoM to address the challenge of online threats against female journalists.

Thank you.

The Candidate Countries TURKEY, the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, and ALBANIA\*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA, and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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