



2024 Annual Progress Report

On the implementation of the
OSCE 2004 Action Plan on
the Promotion of Gender Equality

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AI	Artificial intelligence
ATU	Action against Terrorism Unit
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
BSMU	Border Security and Management Unit
CHANGE	Capitalizing on the Human Dimension Mandate to Advance Gender Equality
CPC	Conflict Prevention Centre
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DA	Dialogue Academy for Young Women
DEIB	Diversity Equity Inclusion (with a focus on Belonging)
DHoM	Deputy Head of Mission
DHR	Department of Human Resources
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
ExB	Extra-budgetary
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GFPs	Gender Focal Points
GIP	Gender Issues Programme
GRB	Gender-responsive budgeting
GRL	Gender-responsive leadership
GWG	Gender working group
HCNM	High Commissioner on National Minorities
HoM	Head of Mission
ICAN	International Civil Society Action Network
MP	Member of Parliament
OCEEA	Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OMiK	OSCE Mission in Kosovo

OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OSR/CTHB	Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings
P/CVERLT	Preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism
PSEA	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
RFoM	Representative on Freedom of the Media
SALW	Small arms and light weapons
SEA	Sexual exploitation and abuse
SEE	South-Eastern Europe
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SI	Staff Instruction
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SPMU	Strategic Police Matters Unit
TAHCLE	Training against Hate Crime for Law Enforcement
TNTD	Transnational Threats Department
ToT	Training of Trainers
UB	Unified Budget
VAW	Violence against Women
WAVE	Women Against Violence Europe
WIN	WIN for Women and Men: Strengthening Comprehensive Security through Innovating and Networking for Gender Equality
WPON	Women Police Officers Network in South East Europe
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

Foreword

**Feridun H.
Sinirlioğlu**

OSCE SECRETARY GENERAL



For over two decades, the 2004 Gender Action Plan has been the OSCE's foundational roadmap on our common path towards gender equality. It acknowledges that women's full and equal participation in political, economic, and social spheres is not only a fundamental human right but also a vital pillar underpinning sustainable peace and security.

This vision is embedded within the OSCE's concept of comprehensive security - encompassing politico-military, economic-environmental, and human dimensions — recognizing

that durable peace and stability can only flourish when women and men equally shape conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and decision-making.

This year, as we commemorate the 25th anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, we are called to reflect deeply on the indispensable contribution of women in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. UNSCR 1325 set a global benchmark for women's meaningful inclusion in peace and security efforts - a standard that remains urgently relevant and pressing today.

In the past year under the leadership of my predecessor Helga Maria Schmid, whom I thank for spearheading and multiplying OSCE's efforts on gender equality, the OSCE has reaffirmed its commitment to

Foreword

transforming these principles into tangible progress – both within the Organization and across the OSCE region. The Secretariat and field operations supported participating States in strengthening women’s participation in peace processes, promoting economic empowerment, and intensify efforts to combat gender-based violence. Within the Organization, we have advanced towards gender parity and cultivated an inclusive and respectful workplace culture.

Despite these important achievements, the road ahead remains fraught with challenges. We are witnessing a worrying backslide in women’s rights accompanied by an increase in misogyny and discrimination. Women continue to be underrepresented in peacebuilding efforts and decision-making roles. New and alarming threats, including surges in online violence, sexual harassment, and femicide, are undermining not only women’s safety and dignity but also the very fabric of our collective peace and security efforts.

These realities demand of us a renewed commitment and collective effort. It is only by strong cooperation and determination that we can protect past gains and accelerate progress towards true gender equality. Let us embrace this moment to strengthen our commitment and foster our collaboration. Together, with shared purpose and solidarity, we have the power—and the responsibility—to create a more equitable, peaceful future for all. As the Secretary General of the OSCE, I reaffirm that gender equality is and will remain my top priority.

Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu
OSCE Secretary General

Key successes for 2024



The opening of the second edition of the Women's Peace Leadership Programme with the former OSCE Secretary General, Helga Maria Schmid, Vienna, Austria, April 2024.

Leveraging Mediators' Networks and OSCE wide expertise to implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda

Over the last years, the OSCE has launched several initiatives and networks to further the implementation of the commitments under the Women, Peace and Security agenda (WPS) and throughout 2024 the OSCE [Networking Platform for Women Leaders including Peacebuilders and Mediators](#) has continued to be a catalyst for promoting women's active participation in peace and security efforts. A number of activities were launched aimed at empowering and supporting women peacebuilders and conflict resolution experts including through targeted mentoring programme for young

women under the WIN project (Women & Men Innovating & Networking for Gender Equality). Moreover, with GIP support, several participating States have been active in developing National Action Plans as key tool to implement WPS commitments.

Second edition of the Women's Peace Leadership Programme

Another cohort of women completed the second edition of the Women's Peace Leadership Programme in November 2024. Participants were also invited to high-level meetings with decision-makers, such as the Munich Security Conference 2024. (More on page 55.)

“Confidence was the most challenging issue for me. I was scared I would not fit this programme. Listening to higher-level people and their experience as young, combined with the three days with peace leaders—I felt that everyone goes through some challenges. I feel much more confident—in my daily work I feel more confident sharing my ideas.”

Participant of the 2024 Programme edition

“The fact that my activism is now associated with the OSCE has helped my profile. While my work remains the same—now the recognition is there.”

Participant of the 2024 Programme edition

Promoting women’s leadership and gender responsive humanitarian actions in Ukraine

In partnership with the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SESU), the OSCE/GIP under the WIN Project continued in 2024 with two online and two in-person training sessions of SESU staff, including 54 women. This brought the total number of trainees under the programme since its inception to 236. (More on page 53.)

Altogether, the OSCE executive structures held some 56 training initiatives on gender-based violence throughout the Organization’s entire region, with target groups ranging from security and judiciary personnel to government and civil society representatives. Interviews with participants of the SESU training are available online: www.osce.org/secretariat/563112

Progress made on developing and supporting National Action Plans (NAPs)

A broad array of activities in the OSCE region translated into concrete steps forward in advancing the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and the associated National Action Plans (NAPs). A pioneering workshop in Central Asia, driven by the GIP, opened new doors for support on developing NAPs in the region. In Ukraine, a new partnership between the OSCE and the Women Information Consultative Center resulted in nearly two dozen safety audits to assess the security situation of women and girls. An initiative in Kyrgyzstan, spearheaded by the OSCE Secretariat with the Programme Office in Bishkek and the local civil society organization (CSO) Search for Common Ground helped advance the development of a NAP on Youth, with a particular focus on promoting the participation of young women. Capacity-building in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan focused on gender in peacekeeping and in humanitarian mine action, respectively, while in Albania, with the facilitation of the OSCE Presence, the Women, Peace, and Security Working Group reconvened to support the implementation of the Second NAP on UNSCR 1325. (More on page 56.)

Investing In Young Women and Intergenerational Exchanges

Young Women for Peace Initiative (YW4P) in its second year

The YW4P, part of the Networking Platform for Women Leaders, including Peacebuilders and Mediators, entered its second year of implementation. In 2024 the *Young Women For Peace: Empowering Central Asian Young Women Initiative* was launched, with the financial support of the European Union. More about the programme here: [Young Women 4 Peace: empowering new generations to lead change and promote stability in Central Asia | OSCE](#)

2024 Geneva Peace Week: panel on women as agents of change

A panel discussion on Pathways to Peace: *Empowering Young Women as Agents of Change*, held at the 2024 Geneva Peace Week, brought to the fore the important role women and young people play in peace and security efforts. The event, organized by the OSCE together with the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, Women in International Security Italy and the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, focused on the barriers young women often face, including societal norms, discrimination and the limitation of resources, usually exacerbated during conflict and war. Details on the panel: www.osce.org/secretariat/576712

10 Years of the Dialogue Academy: Empowering the Next Generation of Women Leaders

Marking its 10th anniversary, the OSCE Dialogue Academy for Young Women (DA) continues to be recognized as a flagship collaborative initiative by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMiK) and the OSCE Mission to Serbia (OMiS). Over the past decade, the DA has empowered 230 young women from

Prishtinë/Priština and Belgrade to become active agents of change. Through a dynamic blend of leadership, mediation and dialogue training modules, the DA equips participants with the skills, confidence and networks needed to contribute meaningfully and collaboratively to peacebuilding efforts across the region. Together, DA and the DA Network of Alumnae illustrate what it means to invest in sustainable, lasting peace by empowering the next generation of women leaders to challenge existing barriers and shape a more inclusive future for the region.

Tackling all forms of violence against women and girls

‘#NoExcuse’: OSCE Secretariat’s 16 Days campaign 2024 focuses on online violence

One of the most prominent and successful OSCE communication campaigns every year, the Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence highlighted in 2024 the growing problem of online violence against women and girls (VAWG). During the campaign, 31 content pieces were published across four OSCE social media accounts, resulting in 299,137 impressions, 4,359 engagements, and 43,064 video views.

“Online violence against women and girls is a violation of their fundamental rights. Although often invisible, it leaves a very real and negative impact on women and girls, causing psychological harm, threatening safety, silences them and deepens the digital gender gap.”

Ian Borg, OSCE Chair-in-Office 2024,
Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister for Foreign and European Affairs and
Trade of Malta

While the OSCE field operations ran a plethora of events to support the 16 Days, the theme specifically tied in with a film screening organized by the Gender Issues Programme team together with the Representative on Freedom of the Media/#SOFJO project on online violence against women journalists and the delegations of Belgium and Germany. The film *#FatUglySlut—Online Abuse Against Women*, screened on 10 December, was followed by a panel discussion with a film director, EIGE representative and a woman journalist from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dalija Hasanbegović. (More on the 16 Days campaign 2024 on page 32.)

Addressing gender-based violence, particularly in war and conflict settings

Throughout the year, several activities, from Ukraine to Kazakhstan and Bosnia and Herzegovina, brought to the fore the issue of gender-based violence and the role of women and girls in war and conflict. (More on page 31.)

Central Asian women activists speak up at largest civil society event on VAW

Following the 2024 Women's Resource Centres Networking Conference in Almaty, where members of the WIN project's implementing partner [Women Against Violence Europe](#) (WAVE) spoke on sustainable and effective networking, five Central Asian women-activists and representatives of Women's Resource Centres (WRCs) were invited to take part in WAVE's annual conference, the largest civil society event working on the elimination of

violence against women (VAW). Both events broke new ground in building connections between the WRCs and the WAVE network, addressing a long-standing gap—there had been no platform for Central Asian activists and WAVE members to meet and exchange experiences previously.

Partnership with UNFPA to map domestic violence perpetrator programmes

A new partnership between the OSCE and the United Nations Population Fund's (UNFPA) Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia led to the joint report *Mapping of programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence in Central Asia*, the first of its kind in the region.

Initiative to draft first-ever Kosovo¹ Assembly declaration on violence against women politicians accepted

OMiK's Gender Equality Working Group initiated discussions on drafting the first-ever Declaration of the Kosovo Assembly on the elimination of violence against women in politics. The initiative was accepted by 66 members of the Assembly and is expected to be rolled out in 2025 at the local level.

¹ All references to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this Report should be understood in compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

Promoting women's access to natural resources and environmental decision-making

“No Woman’s Land” - gender, corruption and natural resource access

The international, OSCE-led event *No woman’s land: Unpacking the nexus and finding solutions on gender, corruption and access to natural resources*, held in New York on the margins of the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68) in March, put the spotlight on the relations between gender and corruption in the context of access to natural resources. A new OSCE publication was also launched on the issue: *Gender and corruption in the access to natural resources: Preliminary findings*. (More on page 59.)

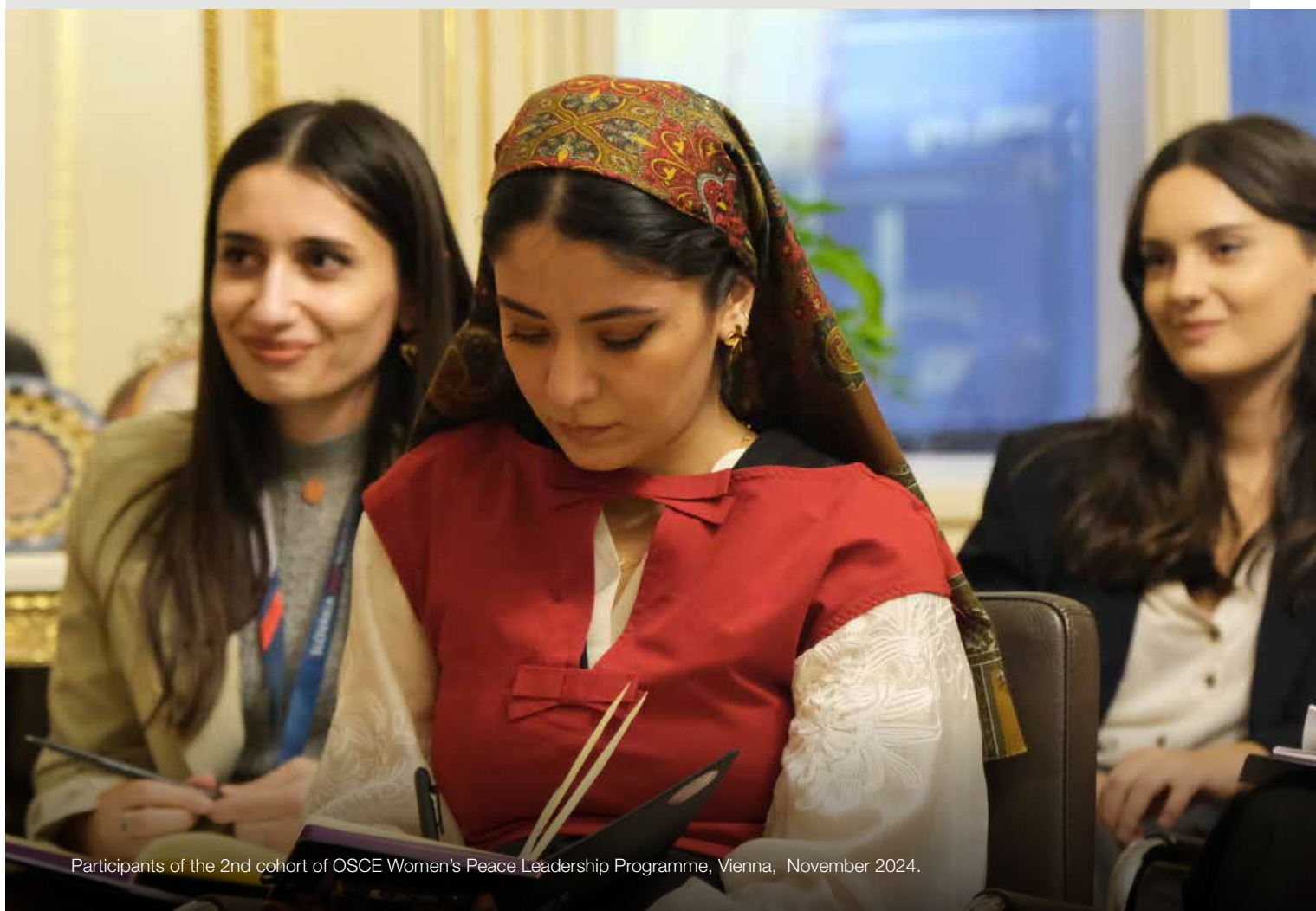
Eliminating discrimination against women in political and public life

First gender audit process in Albania

The OSCE Presence in Albania and ODIHR introduced the first-ever gender audit process in the country to shed light on the participation of women and men in administrative and legislative functions, key for making substantial changes in the country’s decision-making processes.

First-ever parliamentary gender plan in Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan’s parliament approved its first-ever parliamentary gender plan in 2024, developed with OSCE support. The plan aims to institutionalize gender-sensitive approaches in the legislative framework,



Participants of the 2nd cohort of OSCE Women’s Peace Leadership Programme, Vienna, November 2024.

ensuring gender equality is embedded in the country's decision-making processes. The OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek provided expert support to help draft the plan.

First-of-its-kind regional network of women in border and law enforcement agencies set to be created in Central Asia

An initiative by the GIP, CPC and BSMU put into motion the preparations for the creation of the first-ever regional women's network in border and law enforcement agencies in Central Asia. A total of 30 female representatives of state authorities and law enforcement from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan developed a concept and workplan for the network, which is aimed at promoting gender equality and strengthening women's representation in the region's

border and law enforcement agencies. Next steps are expected to be taken in early 2025.

Making the working environment safer for women and more inclusive

Mentoring Programme for Women at the OSCE re-started

In 2024, the Department of Human Resources re-launched the Mentoring Programme for Women, after a two-year hiatus. Throughout the year, the initiative supported 56 women mentees from across the OSCE region in their professional development. The structured, one-year programme pairs mentees with mentors of both genders, with the aim to improve development perspectives and retention of women in the OSCE.



OSCE Senior Advisor on Gender Issues Dr Lara Scarpitta and Director of CPC Kate Fearon meeting the participants of the II Women Peace Leadership Programme, Vienna, Austria, November 2024.

The way forward

In 2025, the OSCE celebrates the 50th year of its founding. At this momentous time, the core values to which the Organization's 57 participating States have subscribed, remain as relevant and central to democratic progress as ever.

Moving ahead on gender equality and the promotion of women's rights in the OSCE region is a core part of the participating States' commitments and the Organization has made great strides on these issues over the last decades. However, much remains to be done and mainstreaming gender into all the Organization's structures, activities, projects and programmes will continue to be a central challenge. In future years, specific focus will need to be put on the following areas:

Continue investing in women's leadership and participation in political, social and economic life

While the OSCE region overall has seen far-reaching improvements in women's full and equal participation in political life and decision-making, full gender equality is still lacking and discrimination remains pervasive. Continue investing in women's leadership across all spectrum of policies and actions remains essential to dismantle existing barriers and provide women full access to decision-making.

Leverage the 25th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 to turn the Women, Peace and Security from commitments into impactful actions

The celebration of a quarter of a century of activities to implement UNSCR 1325

on Women, Peace and Security in 2025 needs to be utilized to renew the OSCE's commitment and help speed up the implementation of the WPS agenda across the OSCE region, galvanizing the engagement of each participating States in this arena. It also provides an occasion to increase the visibility of the WPS agenda and to further expand the OSCE's partnerships, nationally and internationally, to push ahead with incorporating gender perspectives into all peace and security efforts, including conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Promote women's economic empowerment through digital tools

Many doors have been opened to women to become successful entrepreneurs by using digital technologies and platforms, a trend that must continue unabated and even be accelerated across the OSCE region. Women

must be given enhanced and wider access to digital tools, provided support to develop their skills, and helped to gain access to the marketplace and the broader digital economy. At the same time, OSCE efforts to educate women on the many pitfalls of digital engagement must continue, in particular those that relate to threats emanating from online violence, sexual harassment and abuse, and the heightened risk of human trafficking.

Recognize and address the intersection between gender inequality and corruption

There is ample evidence that corruption exacerbates gender disparities and increases, or at least perpetuates, social inequalities in the access to health and education services, resources and income distribution. Corruption is also related to the abuse of power for discrimination or deprivation of people of their rights. The OSCE must ensure that anti-corruption measures are gender-sensitive, promoting gender-sensitive reporting mechanisms, and implementing measures to prevent and address corruption while considering its gendered impacts. It needs to also continue to strive for stronger women's participation in anti-corruption initiatives in its participating States.

Acknowledge the disproportionate impact on women of climate change

The effects of climate change have a stronger impact on women and girls in society, leading to increased poverty, hunger, and vulnerability to displacement, violence, and other risks. This is particularly true for women and girls living in rural and marginalized communities. The OSCE is called upon to promote the effective participation of women in decision-making processes on climate change prevention, mitigation and adaptation.

Support gender-sensitive conflict prevention and resolution

Gender perspectives must become a more crucial component of one of the OSCE's core mandates: conflict prevention and resolution. Whether in conflict analysis, mediation or peacebuilding initiatives—the Organization must address the needs of all genders and therefore implement gender-sensitive approaches in its conflict-cycle activities, from conflict prevention to crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.

Redouble efforts to fight gender-based violence and support survivors

The last decade has seen an increased focus on gender-based violence (GBV) in all its forms across the OSCE region. And yet, more can be done to combat this egregious human rights violation, which not only manifests itself in the real world—most heinously in the form of femicide—but also online. The OSCE must continue its work to develop and implement comprehensive strategies to prevent and respond to all forms of GBV, with a particular attention put on the rising threats of online violence against women and the urgent need to combat femicide through co-ordinated legal, social and security measures.

Pay more attention to women with disability and engage youth for gender equality

While women from majority groups are generally at the centre of equality and empowerment drives, the OSCE has a special responsibility, under its human dimension umbrella, to focus on women from other groups, including those with disabilities, with its activities. Another, often under-represented actor in civil society action that can play an important role in bringing gender equality initiatives to the fore are youth initiatives, whose involvement in public and political life are crucial for democratic development across the board.

Introduction

Entering the third decade since its adoption, the OSCE's 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality (GAP) has lost nothing of its relevance for the achievement of full gender equality for women and girls across the OSCE region.

Gender equality is a cornerstone of the OSCE comprehensive approach to security and essential to achieve peace, security and stability. The GAP lays out the pathway for OSCE participating States as well as OSCE Executive Structures to mainstream gender and advance gender equality and women's rights in their policies, programmes and actions.

Despite the geopolitical challenges the OSCE and other multilateral international organizations are facing, and the impact these have on individual governments and societies, the implementation of the GAP has continued unabated in 2024 and reached a number of important milestones, both in terms of achieving gender balance within OSCE's own bodies and in implementing the GAP in the field through its programmes and projects.

This report delivers an assessment of the progress made in 2024 in implementing the GAP.

Internally, 2024 saw a continued steady increase of women employed by the OSCE in all categories, with a notable rise among senior management positions. An important role in this was played by the participating States, whose proactive stance in advancing more women candidates for seconded positions translated into better hiring rates of women. The OSCE Junior Professional Programme achieved 82 per

cent female representation in 2024. A new Staff Instruction also helped achieve more balanced gender representation in the recruitment process. Moreover, the Secretary General's Interoffice Memorandum on extrabudgetary project development has introduced a minimum Gender Marker 2 for all projects developed in the Secretariat to ensure that a gender perspective is effectively integrated in project planning and implementation.

Externally, significant effort was made to support the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda (WPS) in the OSCE region. Progress was made on developing and supporting participating States' National Action Plans (NAPs), and the Gender Issues Programme team spearheaded a pioneering workshop in Central Asia to support the development of NAPs in the region. Other activities under the WPS agenda included the launch of the 2nd Edition of the Women's Peace Leadership Programme under [The OSCE Networking Platforms for Women Leaders](#), including

Peacebuilders and Mediators as well as the OSCE Young Women for Peace Initiative in partnership with the EU. The 10th edition of the Dialogue Academy as well as safety audits to assess the security situation of women and girls and training on gender in peacekeeping and humanitarian-mine action were among the additional prominent actions to support the WPS agenda.

Another highlight of the year was, yet again, the OSCE Secretariat's 16 Days campaign organized by the Gender Issues Programme, which focused, under the title '#NoExcuse', on online violence. It was a very prominent and successful communication campaign and showcased how pertinent the central issue—online violence against women and girls—has become in the last years in the OSCE region. The campaign was rolled out also by the OSCE institutions and field

operations, with activities ranging from film screenings to public speeches, from debate tournaments to even a pub quiz, bringing in completely new audiences into the debate.

The many activities that marked 2024 as yet another year of successful action for gender equality and against gender-based violence and discrimination are reflected in the following pages of this report.

It shows that concerted and determined action can result in change—politically, institutionally, of the legal contexts and for the societies living under the umbrella of the OSCE.

The Organization continues to deliver, coming up with innovative approaches, new ideas and impactful projects, benefitting all members of society within the OSCE region.



Young Women for Peace Initiative in-person meeting, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, April 2024.

Chapter 1

Promoting gender equality in the OSCE

The GAP addresses not only gender equality as part of the OSCE's work programme in its region but also as part of its own structure, staff and operations. Aside from gender parity in terms of the number of male and female staff employed, it specifically singles out also the working environment prevailing in the Organization, ethical standards and accountability measures. As in previous years, the OSCE made considerable efforts in 2024 to improve the situation in all these areas.

1.1 Progress towards gender parity

The Organization continued in 2024 to push for the steady implementation of the 2019 Gender Parity Strategy, which aims to achieve gender parity across all staff categories by 2026. This consistent drive to promote a professional, inclusive, equitable and safe work environment in the OSCE resulted in the continued steady increase of women employed by the OSCE in all categories. This rise was particularly notable in senior management positions, a result that can be attributed, among other things, to an increased percentage of women applying for internal contracted positions, representing a total of 46.3 per cent in 2024. At the senior management level, this translated into 44 per cent (seven in absolute numbers) for contracted and 56 per cent (nine) for seconded positions.

The participating States' role in advancing more women candidates for seconded positions is not negligible; the Department of Human Resources (DHR) continued to observe in 2024 low nomination rates by the States for senior management fixed-term staff positions (S-4 level, Deputy Head of Mission, Head of Mission), although viewed from a multi-year perspective the numbers are slowly improving. In 2024, women only constituted 19.2 per cent of such nominations, while representing 41 per cent of all secondees nominations in the year. Aside from the role the States play, another barrier to gender parity in seconded positions is the lack of family-related benefits in secondees compensation packages, with few participating States offering them to their secondees.

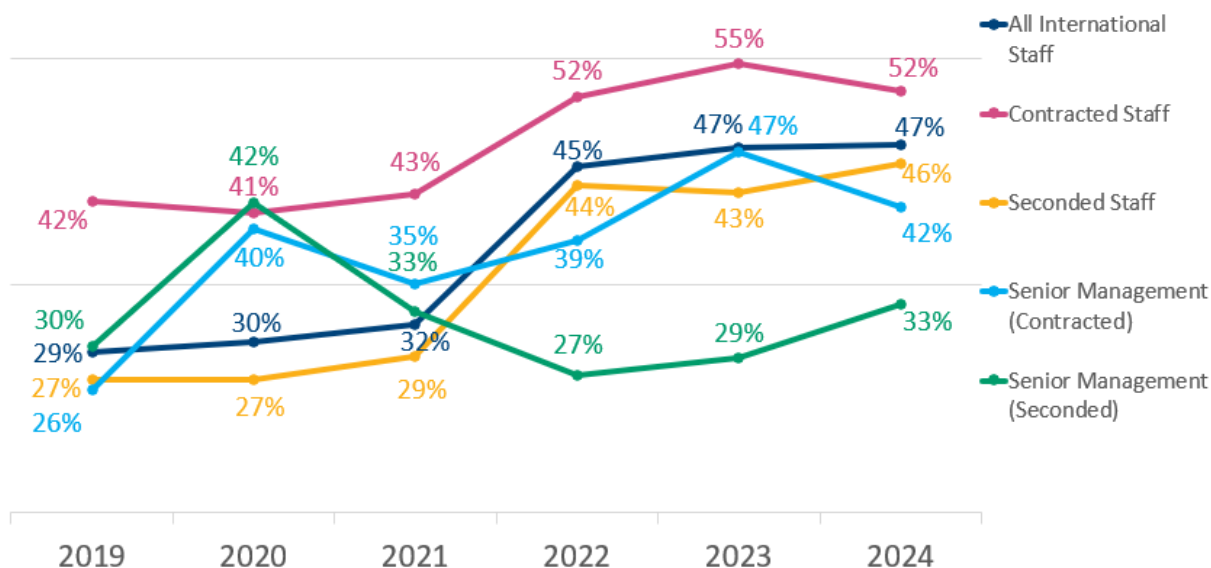


Table 1: Share of women in the different staff categories in the previous five years. Source: Department of Human Resources

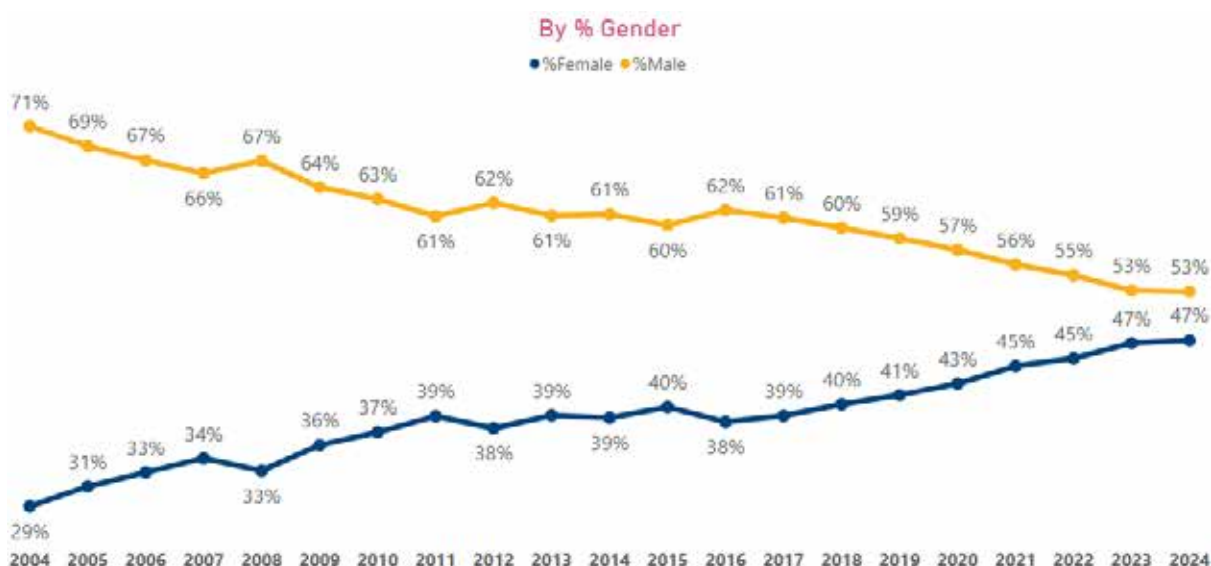


Table 2: Trend and share of all international staff by gender in the preceding 20 years, excluding the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine
Source: Department of Human Resources

At the same time, other professional programmes sustained their success. The OSCE Junior Professional Programme achieved 82 per cent female representation in 2024, which contributes to helping women candidates launch themselves into female leadership roles. More women also applied for internships, thereby strengthening gender balance across all levels of the Organization. In the Representative on Freedom of the Media's (RFoM) Office, there are more than

twice as many women staff members as men (15 versus six), although men are dominant in the Office's management. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) recruited fewer senior staff in 2024 (one recruitment process versus five in 2023, with one woman recruited versus three), which upped the percentage of recruited women among all candidates hired for senior posts from 60 to 100 per cent, while the overall number decreased by 66 per cent.

1.2 Recruitment practices

In 2024, a new Staff Instruction prepared the ground for important changes in terms of gender representation in recruitment processes, which came into force in autumn and is expected to deliver its full impact in future years. Interviewing procedures across the board in the OSCE—both in headquarters offices and the field—continued to implement gender balance principles. Gender representation in many offices changed only slightly, especially among senior management. Where changes were notable, they were often a result of more active recruitment drives in 2023.

Staff Instruction No. 17/rev2 on Standard Recruitment and Selection Procedures entered into effect on 1 September 2024.

It introduced special measures for decisions on the change of deadlines, readvertisement and cancelation of vacancy notices, e.g., if one gender represents less than 20 per cent of all applicants meeting the eligibility criteria. These changes aim at reinforcing the principles outlined in Staff Regulation 3.01 to attain gender balance in the OSCE.

DHR continued to ensure a 50 per cent representation in all interview panels and that gender balance is embedded at every stage, from drafting inclusive vacancy notices to gender-balanced short- and longlists. Thanks to its active talent acquisition work, the number of women recruited for senior-level positions increased in 2024 by 71 per cent compared to 2023.

GENDER / YEAR OF RECRUITMENT	2022	2023	2024	TOTAL
Female	8	7	12	27
Male	15	6	21	42
Total	23	13	33	69

Table 3: Number of women recruited for senior-level positions in 2024. Source: Department of Human Resources

Both ODIHR and RFoM ran each only one recruitment process in 2024 for a senior post, both resulting in the hire of a female candidate. In the OSCE Secretariat, the female director of the Department of Management and Finance was succeeded by another woman, leaving the staffing balance within senior managerial functions unchanged. OIO hired one senior evaluation officer, which brought 50/50 gender balance to OIO's Evaluation Section. The Transnational Threat Department (TNTD) hired a female candidate to head its Border Security and Management Unit. TNTD's Cyber/ICT Security Team, meanwhile, is gender balanced with three women and three men on its staff. The OSCE's Support Programme for Ukraine continued with the

same staff assigned to it as in 2023: out of 11 positions—one vacant—five are occupied by women (at P- and S-level).

In Astana, the OSCE Programme Office ran two senior-level recruitment processes, and both were filled by men as no women candidates were equally qualified. The gender breakdown of candidates, however, reflects a disbalance in the number of applicants for posts, with 446 women applying for those versus only 365 men. This is in stark contrast to the more balanced application numbers for consultancies hired under Special Service Agreements (SSAs), for which 95 men and 94 women applied. In Ashgabat, the Centre hired a female candidate as Economic and Environmental

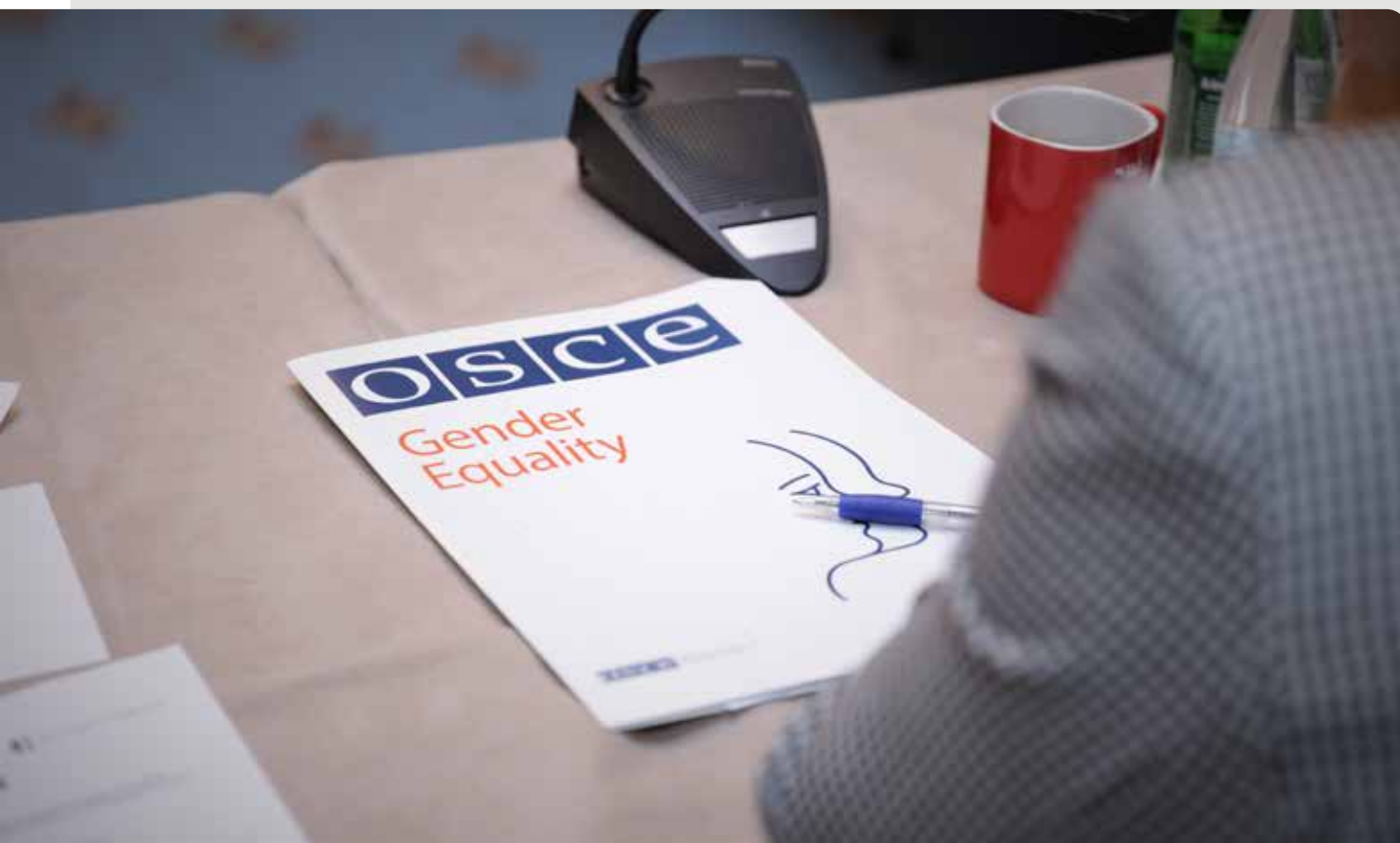
Dimension Officer, an S-2 senior-level position (her predecessor was also a woman). A fixed-term G-5 level post went also to a woman, as did two short-term G-5 level positions. The Centre also recruited 92 experts under SSAs, of whom 52 were male and 40 female.

With three male and two female senior staff members, the management level in the office of the Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan was gender-balanced in 2024 but the office noted that G-category staff continued to be slanted towards men for such jobs as security guard or driver, while most cleaner jobs were occupied by women, with little deviation in both cases. In Tajikistan, many senior management positions, vacated in 2022-2023, could only be filled in 2024, increasing the number of women in such positions from one to three.

The only notable change in South-Eastern Europe on gender representation was observed in the Mission in Kosovo, where a decrease in the number of management positions also resulted in a higher percentage of women among senior staff: 36 management positions in 2023, out of which

36.1 per cent (13) held by women, were reduced to 33 positions, with 42.4 per cent (14) held by women. Out of 28 fixed-term staff recruited in 2024 (both international and local), half were men and half women (14/14).

In contrast, no new women were recruited for senior-level positions by the Presence in Albania and the Mission to Skopje in 2024. The Presence ran only one recruitment process at senior management level (hiring one man), while the balance in the composition of its seconded positions remained unchanged (eight men, four women). However, Skopje noted an increase of women working in S-3 level positions in 2024, since a vacancy among the six S-3 staff members was filled by a woman (changing the numbers to four men, two women). In Montenegro, a new Head of Mission and Deputy Head of Mission were hired—both men. The Mission to Montenegro hired a female extrabudgetary (ExB) project officer, and the Mission to Serbia recruited three women to National Professional positions.



1.3 Leadership and people management

An important move forward to fully implement the 2004 GAP was recorded in 2024 with the pool of certified OSCE gender trainers supported through the OSCE Gender Issues Programme (GIP)/WIN project, increasing to a total of nearly 100 staff members—result of four completed rounds of train-the-trainer workshops delivered by the GIP. Based on WIN training material, a second round of the joint OSCE-EU training on gender took place in January, with a third in planning for 2025. In October, also under the GIP, a series of consultations between gender advisors and gender focal points from EU and OSCE missions on the sharing of experiences in monitoring missions were held.

A trend carried over from previous years continued to grow in 2024, namely that of staff utilizing the flexibility afforded by Staff Instruction No. 27/rev2 related to teleworking. DHR reported that an average of 90 per cent of female staff—versus 79 per cent in 2023—from across all OSCE executive structures used this facility, including 95 per cent of women working at the Secretariat (83 per cent in 2023). Among men, the numbers are lower but also experienced an increase: an average of 62 per cent across the OSCE (53 per cent in 2023), with 82 per cent working at the Secretariat (76 per cent in 2023).

The statistics probes the question of gender-based proximity bias due to more men working in the office and more women working from home or an alternate site.

STAFF NUMBERS USING TELEWORKING IN 2024	OVERALL	SECRETARIAT
Men	766	199
Active men in this period	1,239	242
In %	62%	82%
Women	1,131	312
Active women in this period	1,259	327
In %	90%	95%

Table 4: Number of staff using teleworking in 2024. Source: Department of Human Resources

DHR also renewed a tender for the OSCE's health insurance scheme, including new requirements that provide female personnel with better and extended benefits and services, including 100 per cent reimbursement of maternity care, home delivery and midwife visit expenses.

A few field offices also noted improvements for staff, namely an innovation by the Presence in Albania, implemented together with DHR, that allowed for registration periods of special leave without pay in connection with maternity leave be included in the records of Albania's Social Insurance

Institution with zero contributions paid. This was an important step for staff since these accrued months now qualify for retirement insurance, thereby directly combating old-age poverty and addressing gender-based discrimination. Further afield, in Uzbekistan, the office of the Project Co-ordinator introduced a new statement addressing sexual exploitation and abuse in its template used to hire personnel on SSA contracts—testimony to the office's efforts to hire consultants on a gender-sensitive basis.

1.4 Standards of conduct, ethics and professional working environment

November 2024 marked a full year of e-learning being completed on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Staff Instruction in the OSCE. In the Secretariat, two new PSEA focal points were assigned and a 'Coffee Briefing' held to explain their role in the Organization to staff, attended not only in-person by Vienna-based staff but also online by field-based personnel. Aside from heightening awareness of the issue and changing attitudes, these actions on PSEA fostered a 'speak-up' culture among OSCE officials and non-staff, giving them room to report violations in good faith and without fear of reprisal.

OIO's Investigation Unit held a workshop for 12 Secretariat staff—six women, six men—on how to investigate allegations of violations of a professional working environment. The three-day training event included gender-specific considerations in performing these investigations. OIO's Audit Unit introduced a new resource on unconscious gender bias and the persistent, systemic biases faced by women, helping to increase awareness of implicit biases and their impact on workplace dynamics, decision-making and overall inclusivity.

The office of the Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan held an all-staff workshop on creating an enabling and gender-responsive office culture. The Mission to Serbia highlighted that internal awareness-raising efforts resulted in more gender-sensitive language being employed in Mission communications and official documents. Committed to creating a more inclusive and equitable operational environment, the Mission also ensured that gender-sensitive security and accessibility measures were considered in the planning of its events.

1.5 Internal mechanisms for advancing gender equality and mainstreaming

The OSCE's internal mechanisms and tools to advance gender considerations in its operations and programmes are very broad. They include not only focal points, working groups and networks, but also action plans, guidance material and a great array of training offerings. Every OSCE executive Structure uses individual work and action plans that direct its activities in advancing gender equality and mainstreaming.

In nearly all OSCE offices, whether in the field operations, institutions or Secretariat departments, the Organization has assigned Gender Focal Points (GFPs), who provide strategic advice to management and support their colleagues in their gender mainstreaming efforts. At the end of 2024, out of 127 (main and alternate) GFPs, 29 per cent were men, a slight increase from 2023. As in previous years, many GFPs worked in the human dimension or on cross-dimensional issues and included senior staff members (S-4/P-5 levels and above) serving as main and alternate GFPs.

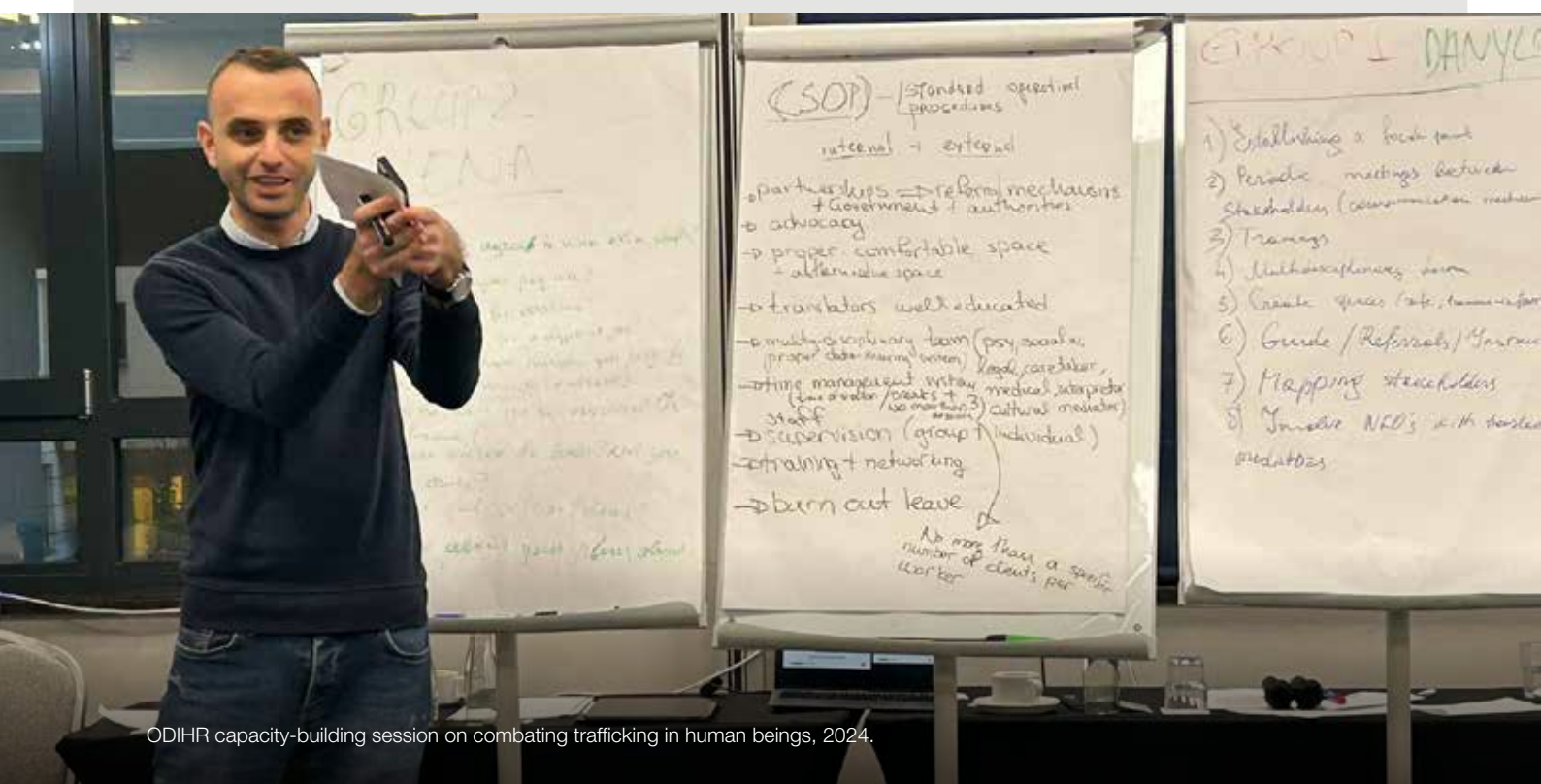
The GIP, together with the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre's (CPC) Programming and Evaluation Support Unit, co-ordinated the drafting of an Interoffice Memorandum (IOM) for developing extrabudgetary projects in the OSCE Secretariat. Among other things, the IOM introduced a Project Concept Note, the preparation of which is aimed to facilitate a strategic discussion at an early stage of development, including on its ambition to address gender issues. This is meant to ensure that Secretariat projects are developed with Gender Marker 2 which guarantees that a gender perspective is effectively taken into account in the planning and implementation of projects.

ODIHR's Gender Working Group (GWG), which brings together the Office's GFPs from across all departments and units, focused in 2024 on strengthening the Office's gender impact by enhancing synergies between different thematic areas through fostering further co-ordination between departments, as well as on supporting opportunities for mutual learning that ultimately support the implementation of the GFPs' gender mainstreaming mandate. At the High Commissioner on National Minorities' (HCNM) office, two GFPs started preparing for potential in-house gender training by first conducting a needs assessment that shed light on the HCNM's specific capacity-building needs, as well as on obstacles and challenges in mainstreaming gender in the High Commissioner's work. The RFoM's Office ran several events that included a gender focus, for example together with the GIP team a film screening and panel discussion on Fighting Online Violence Against Women and Girls, as well as round table that looked, among other issues, into gendered disinformation.

In the Secretariat, the Conflict Prevention Centre held eight training events on

project cycle management and monitoring and evaluation, which were all gender-mainstreamed and included components on gender analysis and sensitivity. The Department of Management and Finance continued its work on combating trafficking in human beings and forced labour in supply chains in all its forms. The Office of Internal Oversight (OIO) included a specific evaluation question related to gender in its thematic independent evaluations and stressed the systematic integration of gender equality in its internal audit assignments.

Under the GIP/WIN project, the fourth WIN Academy training-of-trainers took place in Tirana, Albania in May. The training aimed to deliver transformative training modules, creating a roster of trainers trained on gender equality and comprehensive security. The sessions were based on WIN Academy materials, including 12 training modules and training materials on gender equality in the context of comprehensive security, combined with a facilitator's manual. The resources are intended to provide OSCE staff across functions and offices with the knowledge and capacity necessary to more systematically integrate a gender perspective



ODIHR capacity-building session on combating trafficking in human beings, 2024.

into their work. More than 80 OSCE staff and external experts have taken part in this initiative to date.

The Transnational Threats Department's Action against Terrorism Unit (ATU) organized quarterly staff meetings dedicated to a gender-specific topic, hosted either by a staff member of the Unit or an external speaker, and regularly including a discussion to encourage learning and peer discussion on gender in thematic areas related to ATU's work. Topics included gender and foreign terrorist fighters, violent misogyny and violent extremism, and gender and the intersection between artificial intelligence and terrorism.

The GFP network in the field operations continued to expand and be active in 2024. In Ukraine, under the OSCE's ExB Support Programme (SPU), the Gender Focal Point Group ran a comprehensive training programme, focusing among other issues on gender terminology, intersectional gender approach, socially ascribed attitudes and behaviours, and the country's traditional and changing gender roles.

In Ashgabat, an international staff member was appointed as GFP, with a local staff member as alternate. In September, the Centre approved a Gender Equality Strategy and Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan (GAP) for 2024–2026 and followed up in December with gender equality training for OSCE staff in the country.

The Programme Office in Bishkek approved a new Gender Strategy for 2024–2028, developed by its GWG, and ran a series of gender equality training events throughout the year, notably in context of comprehensive security and in politics. In Dushanbe, the Programme Office approved a new Gender Strategy and associated Action Plan for the period 2024–2026. The Office also specifically focused on the significant underrepresentation of women in the politico-military dimension in Tajikistan, incorporating into their train-the-trainer and border security training courses the OSCE's Gender and Security Toolkit (Tool 6 on Border Management and Gender).

In Albania, the OSCE Presence's GWG supported the development of a new Gender Strategy for 2025–2027 and the Annual



The fourth WIN Academy training-of-trainers for 30 OSCE staff in Tirana, Albania, May 2024.

Action Plan 2025, introducing a gender checklist as an annex for new ExB and Unified Budget (UB) projects. The Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina established a co-ordination group on GBV, which at times also addresses wider gender equality issues. In 2024, it developed Mission positions on the draft Laws on Eliminating Violence against Women of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and *Republika Srpska* and on femicide as a separate criminal act, among other issues.

The Mission in Kosovo's Gender Equality Working Group (GEWG) contributed to the development of sub-legislation for the new Kosovo Violence against Women/ Domestic Violence law and supported the Kosovo Police with the implementation of its Gender Agenda 2024–2028 and its Action Plan. Throughout the year, the Mission conducted both general and targeted training courses on gender equality, including the WIN training, for Mission staff and specific beneficiaries. These efforts significantly strengthened gender mainstreaming across projects and institutional frameworks,

including in its external programmatic work. The Mission to Serbia established a working group in March to monitor the implementation of its current GAP and conducted a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation process for the new GAP 2024–2025. The Mission's Gender Focal Point Network (GFPN) convened a working group to specifically look into a recent Constitutional Court decision to suspend certain provisions of Serbia's Gender Equality Law and to analyse the legal framework, assess the constitutionality review process, and examine its potential implications for Serbia and the Mission's activities.

In Skopje, the Mission operationalized a robust gender governance framework by adopting new Terms of Reference for its Gender Co-ordination Mechanisms. This institutional upgrade equips the Mission's leadership with clearly defined structures and mandates to advance a whole-of-Mission, gender-responsive approach across internal operations and external programming. The restructured framework, anchored by two task forces (on gender equality and on



Training for Psychologists at the Women Resources Centre, Dushanbe, Tajikistan, August 2024.

countering VAWG, respectively), reinforced the Mission’s capacity to co-ordinate, monitor and deliver on gender commitments.

In Moldova, the Mission established a GWG, which developed a Gender Roadmap to better mainstream gender in the Mission’s operations.

Gender Mainstreaming Levels Across Active ExB Projects with a Gender Marker (2020–2024)

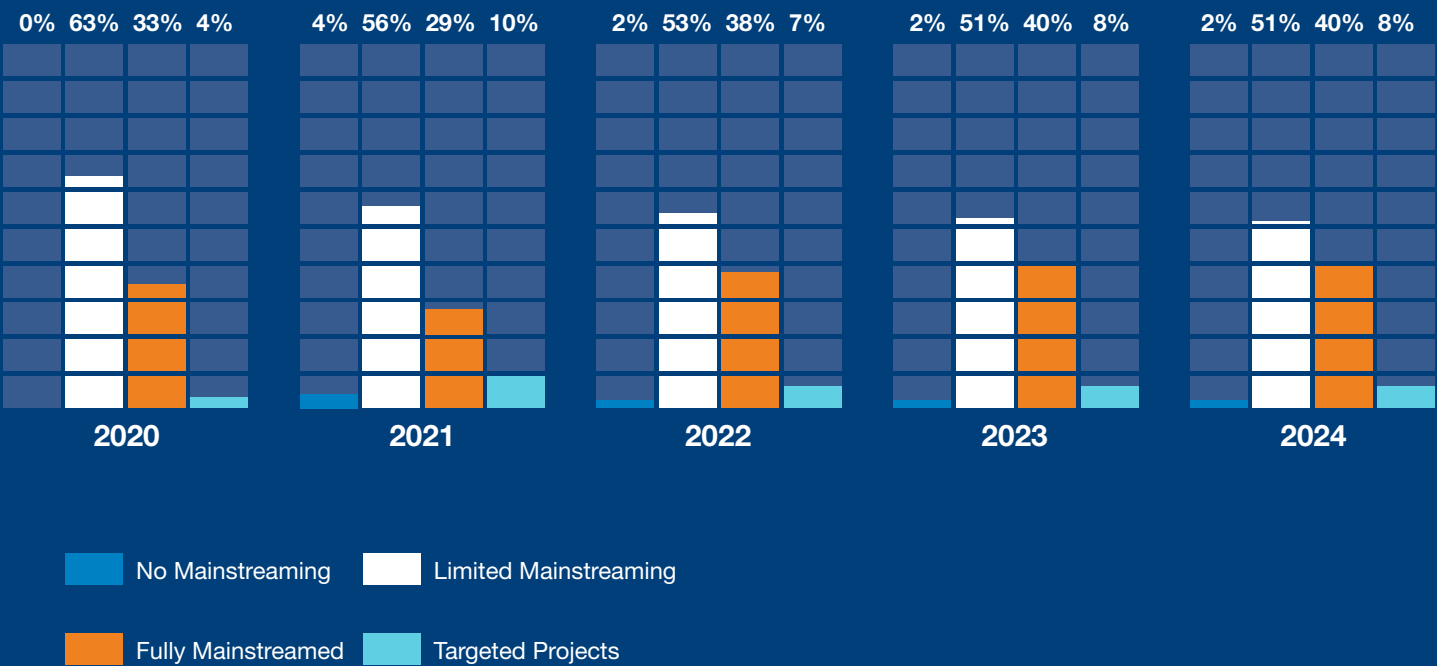


Table 5: Gender Mainstreaming levels across ExB Projects (2020-2024)

¹ The total number of active ExB projects as of 14 August 2025 was 214.* This number includes projects for which the Gender Marker was marked as 'Not Applicable'. However, data for such projects has been excluded from the calculations and only projects with an assigned Gender Marker (G0–G3) are shown in the breakdown.

Chapter 2

Promoting gender equality in participating States

The GAP stipulates that gender mainstreaming is a way of contributing to achieve comprehensive security. Some of the key points of this are to foster non-discriminatory legal and policy frameworks; to prevent and combat violence against women and girls; to ensure that they have equal opportunities to participate in political and public life; to encourage their participation in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict reconstruction; and to promote that they have access to equal economic opportunities. The OSCE delivered on all these points in the course of 2024.

2.1 Ensuring non-discriminatory legal and policy frameworks

Both ODIHR and the OSCE's field operations were active in this area, helping to strengthen anti-discriminatory laws and policies and further anchoring gender equality in legal frameworks as well as in real life in the Organization's region.

As part of its mandate to work with lawmakers on mainstreaming gender and diversity, ODIHR provided gender- and diversity-specific considerations in 22 out of 26 legal reviews and assessment, thereby contributing to legislation free from direct and indirect discrimination. In Montenegro, the Office provided lawmakers with a report containing recommendations on mainstreaming gender and diversity at each stage of the legislative process. ODIHR also provided an opinion paper on two organic laws of Georgia, on *Amending the Election Code and on Political Unions of Citizens in Relation to Gender Quotas*. ODIHR's Opinion was used by stakeholders to inform the debate on the topics in the legislation and advocating for temporary special measures to accelerate women's political representation in the country.

ODIHR also provided capacity-building and technical assistance on combating trafficking in human beings to participating States to strengthen their National Referral Mechanisms, including to ensure that these take into account specific impacts of this crime on different genders and related victim needs. Capacity-building activities also targeted civil society organizations working with Ukrainian refugees to enhance their abilities to identify presumed trafficking victims amid refugee flows, with a particular focus on women and girls as the biggest group among displaced people.

On the ground, OSCE field operations actively pursued a broad variety of projects to strengthen gender equality and non-discrimination in the respective countries' legal and policy frameworks. In Turkmenistan, the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat organized a training programme on legislative reforms to address domestic violence (DV) in the country, designed to provide a comprehensive overview of legal frameworks and best practices in OSCE participating States and internationally. Further north, in Kazakhstan, the OSCE Programme Office in Astana organized online training for social workers, medical specialists and law

practitioners (29 women, three men) on the rights of persons with disabilities affected by sexual and GBV, focusing on accessibility to healthcare, social and legal services, as well as on how to apply immediate victim-centred assistance and referral mechanisms to survivors of this crime.

The Programme Office in Bishkek and Kyrgyzstan's parliament organized a round table on political participation and leadership of women in the country, attended by 28 parliamentary staff, representatives of government offices and women activists from Chui province (24 women, four men). The Office also provided expert support to support amending the country's law *On state guarantees for equal rights and opportunities for women and men*. Together with ODIHR, the Office held a train-the-trainer workshop in Warsaw in May for members of the Kyrgyz Association of Women in the Security Sector, focusing on policing and human rights in the framework of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

In Dushanbe, the Programme Office supported a government working group in Tajikistan in its efforts to harmonize the country's normative framework with anti-discrimination legislation, in particular the Equality Law adopted in 2022. To help the country's Commissioner for Human Rights raise public awareness of the Law, its anti-discrimination mechanism and the Ombudsperson's role in its implementation, the Office also ran a series of information sessions.

In Uzbekistan, the Project Co-ordinator assisted the country's Children's Rights Ombudsperson with the development of special operating procedures for law enforcement practitioners working with victims of child abuse and trafficking in human beings.

In South-Eastern Europe, a strong focus of the OSCE field operations was put on action against DV and VAWG. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, a country shaken by

several very violent femicides in 2023, the OSCE Mission offered legislative support to the entity of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by bringing practitioners together to examine a new draft Law on Domestic Violence and Violence against Women to replace the law in force since 2013, improving its provisions. In a related initiative, the Mission's ExB project *Addressing Security and Safety Risks of Illegal Possession, Misuse and Trafficking of SALW and Their Ammunition in Bosnia and Herzegovina* strengthened inter-institutional collaboration on reviewing the firearms legislation and GBV. The Mission partnered with women police associations to train officers and donated ICT equipment to improve GBV case record-keeping. A Gender Equality Monitoring Framework was also developed as an outcome of this activity. Building on this foundation the Mission also played a key role in combating harmful legislative initiatives aimed at restricting the operations of civil society organizations in the entity of *Republika Srpska*, including some that are active in gender mainstreaming and the prevention of GBV.

The Mission to Montenegro analysed seven primary school textbooks to identify gender stereotypes in them. The findings were taken on board by UNICEF and the country's Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation as input for a new strategy for educational reform. The Mission also worked with the government to include gender mainstreaming into its mid-term work plan, which previously had been 'gender-blind'.

In Serbia, the OSCE Mission advanced gender-sensitive law-making by supporting a comprehensive revision of the country's Gender Equality Strategy 2021–2030, aligning it with national legislation and international commitments. To enhance gender-sensitive judicial processes, the Mission trained 101 public prosecutors and prosecutorial assistants (59 women, 42 men) on clear, precise, and well-reasoned indictments.

In North Macedonia, the Mission to Skopje supported the country's first-ever Participatory Gender Audits of two independent national bodies—the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption and the Commission for Prevention and Protection from Discrimination—applying the International Labour Organization's methodology. These Audits catalysed institutional change by embedding gender-sensitive approaches into anti-corruption and anti-discrimination frameworks. The Mission's engagement positioned both bodies as regional pioneers in integrating gender equality into core governance mandates, with tailored Action Plans under development to drive sustainable implementation. The Mission also implemented the ExB project *Assisting the National Authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia to Decrease the Risk of Weapon Proliferation and Misuse of SALW*, which enabled gender-inclusive infrastructure improvements within the Police Canine Unit, and supported the recruitment of the first female canine handlers.

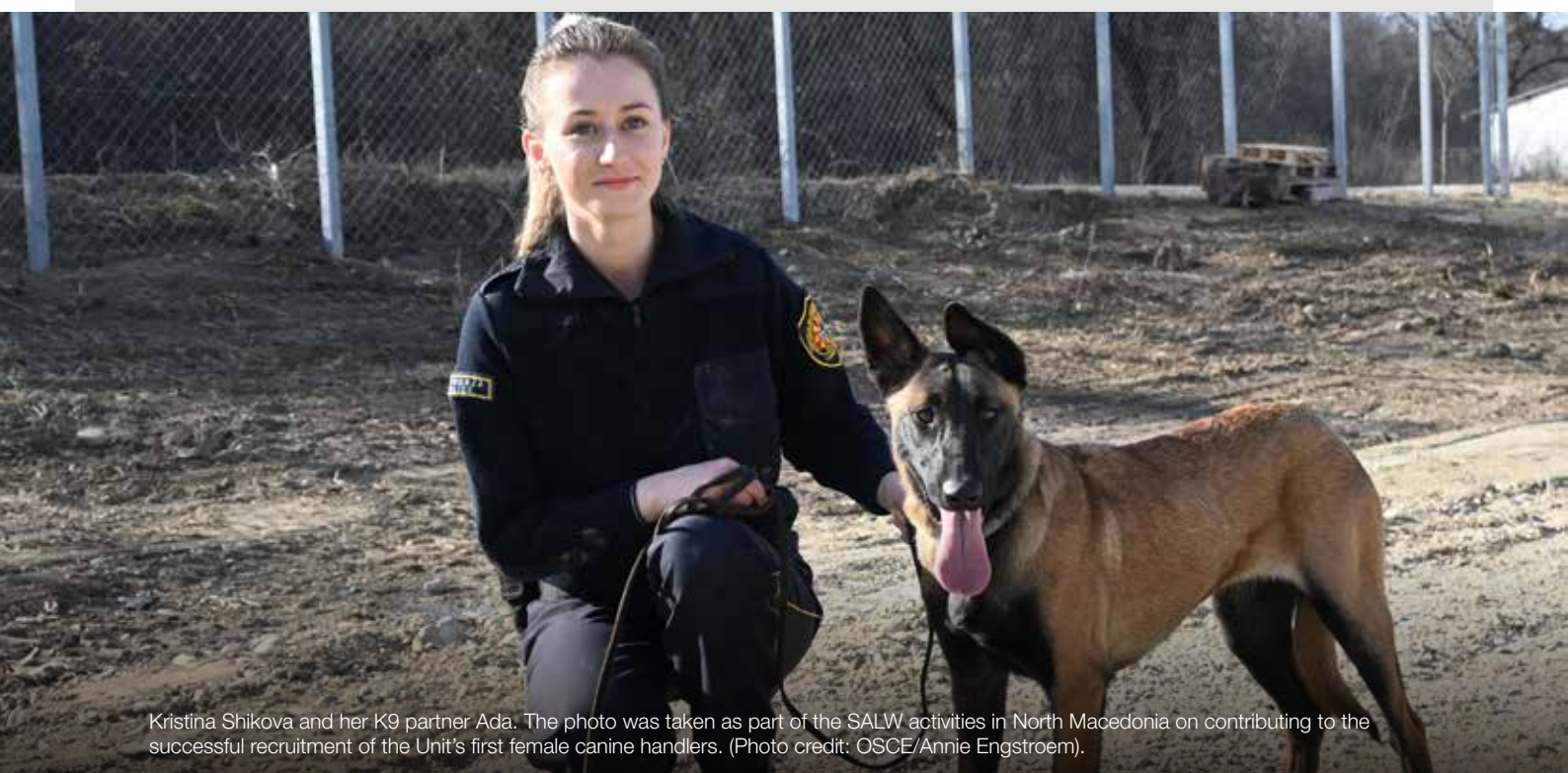
Through its ExB Support Programme for Ukraine, the OSCE trained constitutional justice stakeholders in the country on

gender-sensitive legal reasoning, integrating gender mainstreaming as an argumentation strategy in amicus curiae submissions (referencing a person or group who is not a party to an action but has a strong interest in the matter). As a result, the Constitutional Court of Ukraine adopted a gender-sensitive constitutional terminology toolkit, ensuring inclusive legal interpretation. Another initiative focused on the Free Legal Aid system in Ukraine, helping embed gender-sensitive approaches in the system's policies and operational procedures, thereby improving access to justice for women and marginalized groups.

2.2 Preventing and combating violence against women and girls

In the 2004 Action Plan, the OSCE participating States recognized² that negative gender stereotypes contributed to the persistence of violence against women and called for more action to not only overcome such stereotypes but also to prevent and combat all forms of GBV. They tasked all OSCE executive structures with a broad array of initiatives to act against this crime, including legislative initiatives, support for

² 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, 44. (c). <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/7/d/23295.pdf>



Kristina Shikova and her K9 partner Ada. The photo was taken as part of the SALW activities in North Macedonia on contributing to the successful recruitment of the Unit's first female canine handlers. (Photo credit: OSCE/Annie Engstroem).

institution-building, awareness-raising and training. In 2024, the OSCE delivered across the board on these taskings, both on the ground and centrally in the Secretariat and the institutions. The GIP continued co-ordinating work on the issue across the Secretariat, through programmatic activities and awareness-raising campaigns. A special role in this context is reserved every year for the *16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence* public information campaign co-ordinated by the GIP, which in 2024 again ranked among the topmost-viewed OSCE campaigns. (Find more on this campaign in the sidebar on pages 32 & 33.)

The GIP continued its work in Central Asia, facilitating support to women resource centres and organizing, in May, the third *Networking and Capacity-Building Conference for Women Resource Centres (WRCs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)* in Almaty, Kazakhstan. This event built upon the outcomes of previous exchanges held in Dushanbe in 2022 and Tashkent in 2023. Organized under the WIN project, the event was designed to facilitate knowledge exchange among WRCs, CSOs and other stakeholders in Central Asia. It aimed to consolidate achievements, address existing gaps and provide resources to

WRCs to address the most immediate challenges in supporting survivors of gender-based violence.

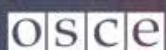
The GIP team also supported exchanges between women-led CSOs in Ukraine on addressing GBV in conflict (see sidebar on page 35). In addition, two publications were launched, the *Proposed Minimum standards and Components of the Training Curricula for Police and Judicial Training on VAWG and Mapping of programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence in Central Asia* (see Annex for download links). The former publication introduces minimum standards based on a mapping on police and justice sector training curricula on VAWG in South-Eastern Europe, that offer OSCE-wide guidance for policymakers and training institutions to enhance the effectiveness of VAWG training for law enforcement and the judiciary. It is aimed to serve as guidance for all upcoming OSCE training on the issue in the region. The latter presents the result of a mapping exercise on perpetrator programmes in Central Asia, highlighting good practices and areas for improvement.



The third Networking and Capacity-Building Conference for Women Resource Centres (WRCs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Almaty, Kazakhstan, May 2024.



**16 DAYS OF
ACTIVISM AGAINST
GENDER-BASED
VIOLENCE**



#NoExcuse

Again one of most prominent OSCE public information campaigns of the year

With 299,137 social media impressions, 4,359 engagements and 43,064 video views, the 16 Days campaign of 2024 again ranked at the top of most successful OSCE media campaigns. A specific focus was put by the Gender Issues Programme team—who organized and co-ordinated the campaign—on online violence against women and girls, threading the catchphrase ‘#NoExcuse’ into all the OSCE’s activities.

A total of 31 content pieces were published on four OSCE social media channels (X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn), including video messages, banners and news articles. The focus: empowering women and girls by raising awareness, promoting safety and emphasizing the need to amplify women’s voices, uphold consent, provide support and encourage reporting. More information on the ‘#NoExcuse’ campaign: www.osce.org/secretariat/583651

On 10 December, the Gender Issues Programme, together with the RFoM and the delegations of Belgium and Germany, organized a film screening of #FatUglySlut – Online Abuse Against Women, followed by a panel discussion featuring women journalists, politicians and experts on the topic who provided valuable insights on combating online misogyny and addressing the role of

governments, educators and online platforms in creating a safer digital space.

ODIHR developed its campaign with a series of social media posts and flew, for the first time ever, an orange flag outside its Miodowa premises, complemented by a new plaque affixed to the railings that provides information to passers-by on the aim of the campaign.

The Parliamentary Assembly’s Special Representative on Gender Issues, Dr. Hedy Fry (MP Canada), also joined the campaign on social media and issued a press release, expressing her deep concern over the alarming rate of GBV worldwide.

The campaign was rolled out with equal enthusiasm by the OSCE field operations, which organized a plethora of activities

highlighting the topic and engaging stakeholders across the board: conferences, training sessions, public speeches, social media campaigns and video messages reaching hundreds, often thousands of people—to name but a few of the ideas the staff in the field came up with. Some of the most notable initiatives were a ‘Human Rights Cup’ debate tournament in Bishkek; a very successful social media campaign in Montenegro with renowned athletes addressing boys and young men; the first 16 Days campaign event organized independently by the North Macedonia

parliament and the signing of a Declaration of Intent to counter violence against young women and girls, endorsed by the country’s first woman President; and even a pub quiz for men in Kosovo, to coax them to think about GBV through self-reflection rather than a top-down, ‘preaching’ approach—truly “flipping the script” on the way how engagement on gender issues can be approached from a fresh point of view.



Social media campaign visuals from the OSCE 2024 16 Days of Activism Campaign focused on raising awareness on online violence, November 2024.

The Strategic Police Matters Unit (SPMU), part of the OSCE Secretariat's Transnational Threats Department, trained more than 1,100 police cadets from South-Eastern Europe in fighting GBV, applying a victim-centred approach. The training programme involved participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and North Macedonia. Aside from presentations by police officers, prosecutors and psychiatrists, the programme included creative elements illustrating the impact and severe consequences violence has in real life.

The greatest impression on me was how serious the consequences of violence are.

A participant of the OSCE training for police cadets

Together with the SPMU, the Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (CTHB) organized an event to highlight the victim-offender overlap and the application of the non-punishment principle in human trafficking cases involving women who have committed crimes in the context of their exploitation. The event took place on the margins of the OSCE High-level international conference on strengthening criminal justice responses to and detection of trafficking in human beings amid refugee flows from Ukraine, held in June 2024. The High-level conference, attended by over 110 criminal justice stakeholders from countries hosting significant numbers of refugees fleeing Ukraine—mostly women and children—underscored among other issues the need for regional and inter-agency co-operation across the board to tackle trafficking-related crime involving Ukrainian refugees, such as sexual and labour exploitation, and forced criminality.

The ATU, in co-operation with the Mission to Skopje, organized a multi-stakeholder training course in Skopje in November, on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism

and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism (P/CVERLT): Addressing challenges in the 'digital information disorder'. Understanding the Linkages between Gender, Violent Misogyny and Violent Extremism. In post-training surveys, the participants of the course demonstrated that they had gained a deeper understanding of the link between gender and violent extremism, learning about concepts and obtaining insights into global and local efforts to counter violent extremism. In addition, the ATU organized a training-of-trainers for 17 participants from Uzbekistan from law enforcement and judicial institutions to strengthen their understanding on how integrating human rights improves investigation outcomes and addresses the role of gender stereotypes as barriers to effective investigations.

Jointly with the GIP/WIN project, the ATU continued to work with a team of experts to enhance the OSCE's evidence base on violent misogynistic and gendered narratives used by violent extremists online, with a view to provide actionable recommendations to P/CVERLT government and non-government stakeholders. It is planned that the final research product, scheduled for release in 2025, will include recommendations that detail possible entry points for P/CVERLT professionals on what the results mean for their practical prevention work.

Continuing its longstanding work on the Safety of Female Journalists Online (#SOFJO) initiative in 2024, the RFoM throughout the year presented and promoted the Guidelines for Monitoring Online Violence Against Female Journalists at various forums and to a range of stakeholders involved in the safety of female journalists, including journalist organizations, newsrooms, law enforcement agencies, academic circles, parliamentarians and civil society organizations. The Guidelines are a landmark publication issued in 2023 by the Representative, compiling key indicators and metrics that signal an escalation of online violence against women journalists.

As a result of ODIHR's work with prison and correctional officials and National Human Rights Institutions and National Preventive Mechanisms (NPMs) on preventing and addressing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in places of deprivation of liberty, the Polish NPM revised the checklist used during its monitoring visits to incorporate SGBV questions. It also reported that ODIHR's training enhanced the focus on the situation of women prisoners and increased visits to women's prisons. The Serbian NPM reported ongoing use of ODIHR's Practical Guide on SGBV in detention monitoring to inform their work and review their operating arrangements.

ODIHR, assisted by the Mission to Skopje, also piloted a new training course in North Macedonia, where 49 members of the country's parliament and parliamentary staff (39 women, ten men) learned about the definition, standards, responses, strategies and measures to prevent and address violence against women in politics, based on ODIHR's Addressing Violence against Women in Politics In the OSCE Region toolkit.

As part of its ExB Support Programme for Ukraine, the OSCE trained 171 criminal justice stakeholders (91 men, 80 women) on conflict-related sexual violence and ensured that the X Lviv Criminal Justice Forum, held in September, included a session on war-related GBV, equipping law enforcement with tools to investigate and prosecute such cases in conflict settings. The OSCE also trained ten female Free Legal Aid representatives from nine regions of Ukraine on gender-sensitive legal practices at the V Annual Forum of Women Lawyers in Lviv in June. The event was attended by 200 female human rights defenders and focused on war-related gender justice.

Another project in Ukraine, held in partnership with Ukraine's Commission on Journalistic Ethics and the NGO Women in Media, aimed at providing journalists with practical recommendations on reporting GBV

in war, ensuring ethical coverage that does not reinforce stereotypes or retraumatize survivors. This was the topic at an OSCE-supported special panel, held during a conference in September on investigative journalism in Kyiv. Under the ExB Support Programme for Ukraine, the OSCE also held a series of events on GBV in the country, including an awareness event specifically for staff members and training for judges and legal professionals on gender-sensitive case management of GBV, including cases arising from war-related violence. Recommendations were also submitted to the Free Legal Aid system to expand services for women in occupied territories and abroad, addressing survivors' needs.

To provide victims with a more effective and trauma-informed response, the OSCE trained hotline personnel in Ukraine on how to better handle calls related to DV and child protection. Under the same project, it also organized a series of training events for social service providers to strengthen their ability to offer psychosocial support to GBV survivors, focusing on trauma-informed care and community-based assistance.

In Central Asia, there was a notable increase of activities by the OSCE field operations focusing on the perpetrators of DV. This directly responded to the first regional mapping of such perpetrators in the region, under a joint project undertaken by the GIP in partnership with the UNFPA's Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Methodology for this exercise—the first of its kind in Central Asia—was based on a combination of desk reviews and interviews with key stakeholders in each of the five countries in the region.

In Astana, the Programme Office co-organized in November a regional conference titled Domestic Violence Counteraction Systems in Central Asia: Correctional Programmes for Aggressors, which was attended by parliamentarians, government representatives, international organizations and NGOs, as well as experts and

academics from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The event, held in collaboration with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Union of Crisis Centres of Kazakhstan, served as a platform to share best practices, exchange experiences and develop a unified regional strategy to combat DV, tailored to the specific sociocultural contexts of each participating country.

In Kyrgyzstan, the country's President signed into law amendments of the legislation on domestic, sexual and gender-based violence on 7 August 2024, introducing several improvements and updating the country's Standard Correctional Programme. The Programme Office in Bishkek, working with UNODC and the EU, supported a group visit of six representatives (three women, three men) of relevant government offices to the Landau Prevention Centre in Germany in December, where they learned about the implementation of a perpetrators programme, interagency co-operation in addressing GBV, and other important aspects of combating and addressing GBV.

The Programme Office in Bishkek also continued supporting the work with perpetrators of DV. In 2024, trained instructors—supervised by a subject-matter

expert—provided physiological consultations to 98 such perpetrators (all men) from Chui, Issyk-Kul, Naryn and Talas provinces.

Other OSCE activities in Central Asia in 2024 focused on the support for victims of DV and of trafficking in human beings. In Ashgabat, a dedicated hotline was set up by the OSCE Centre's implementing partner, the NGO Keyik Okara, which provided legal and psychological assistance, as well as consultations, to victims of DV. Over six months—from August to January 2025—87 people received legal assistance and 120 obtained psychological support. A total of 673 calls were fielded, including 73 related to DV, three to sexual violence, two to religious violence and five to social violence. Assistance also came in the form of shelter for the most vulnerable—women and children—while the OSCE and its partner negotiated solutions for them with the relevant local authorities.

The Programme Office in Astana, in tandem with the aforementioned regional conference on DV, supported a study visit of six key national responders from Kazakhstan to the South Palatinate Intervention Center in Germany, where they obtained insights into evidence-based practices, including



Regional conference on combating domestic violence in Central Asia, featuring representatives from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, Almaty, 25 November 2024.

cognitive-based therapy and operational strategies, and explored advanced risk management tools, such as the Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment or the Danger Assessment Score.

The Programme Office in Bishkek organized a series of seminars in Chui, Issyk-Kul, Naryn and Talas provinces in May and June for 123 regional representatives (62 women, 61 men) from various government offices, all involved in the implementation of the correctional programme. In addition, the Office worked again with a grassroots network of 28 Women Initiative Groups, holding a training event to strengthen the fundraising skills of network's leadership.

From October to November, the 2024 Central Asian Youth Forum took place in Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan, focused on the gender dimensions of trafficking in human beings. The Programme Office in Bishkek focused its activities on professional development to strengthen interagency efforts in assisting trafficking victims. A total of 20 participants (11 women, 9 men) received tailor-made training focused on promoting gender-sensitive approaches to support and rehabilitation.

In Tajikistan, the Programme Office in Dushanbe organized training for 15 teaching staff (eight men, seven women) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Academy on victim-centred handling of DV cases, as well as a series of train-the-trainer events, held in co-operation with the Committee for Women and Family Affairs, which provided 231 civil servants and professionals (185 women, 46 men) the necessary competencies to raise awareness and themselves deliver training on gender equality and DV case management. The Ministry's working group on the issue, supported by the OSCE, also discussed recommendations for the police on how to respond to DV. Previous such recommendations contributed to the establishment by the Ministry of two new Gender-Sensitive Police Units and helped increase the number of processed DV cases by eight per cent (from 2,162 in 2023 to 2,336 in 2024). The 13 Women's Resource Centres (WRCs) across the country, with support from the Programme Office, provided assistance to 1,265 survivors of DV (1,141 women, 124 men), conducted 3,657 (3,280 women, 377 men) legal and 3,604 (3,237 women, 367 men) psychosocial consultations, successfully resolving 90 per cent of the legal and 94 per cent of the psychosocial cases. The WRCs also held



Participants of the 2024 Central Asian Youth Forum on Combating Human Trafficking, 28 October 2024, Issyk-Kul (Photo credit: OSCE/Aida Almazbekova).

696 awareness sessions, reaching 15,559 community members.

The Mission in Kosovo and the Presence in Albania jointly organized a meeting between Dragash/Dragaš and Kukës municipalities to improve the DV response by the municipality structures. The initiative not only established a non-formal channel of communication between members of the two municipalities' Co-ordinated Referral Mechanisms for Domestic Violence but also helped identify what can and needs to be done in terms of joint intervention for the affected women.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Mission recognized in 2024 that there was a need for a more professional response by service providers and effective referrals by social service professionals. Consequently, it developed an accredited training programme for members of this profession, equipping them with tools and expertise to more effectively address cases of DV and provide adequate victim support. Some 30 social service staff were trained during the year. Working with the country's institutions, the Mission supported four committees of both houses of the Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in holding three thematic sessions on DV. All three sessions resulted in draft recommendations adopted by the committees, and recommendations from the first and second sessions adopted by the Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Mission in Kosovo continued to support the authorities in shaping transformative policies, including drafting gender-sensitive legislation and providing targeted capacity-building on violence against women for key stakeholders. It helped the Ministry of Justice draft sub-legal acts operationalizing the legislation on VAW, DV and GBV, including regulations on Municipal Co-ordination Mechanisms on Domestic Violence, the first violence against women SOS helpline, and the establishment of the Kosovo Secretariat on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women. The Mission also organized

seven public hearings on the draft Law on Youth, ensuring diverse representation, including young women and non-majority communities, and contributed to the development of five sub-legal acts, as well as organized a workshop to engage the youth sector on the draft by-laws.

In July, the Mission in Kosovo released a DV trial monitoring report that highlights systemic issues in the adjudication of DV cases, violating fair trial principles and human rights standards. After the report's publication, the Mission facilitated six regional round tables with judges, prosecutors and defence attorneys to develop solutions on the issues raised. To strengthen the Kosovo Police victim-centred approach to assist women and children affected by GBV, the Mission trained 322 police officers, including 186 women, on newly enacted Violence against Women/Domestic Violence and Gender-based Violence standards. It also trained some 140 members of local Municipal Co-ordination Mechanisms Against Domestic Violence from six municipalities, leading to several municipalities drawing up local policies to tackle violence against women. In November, as part of its continued programmatic support to the Kosovo Assembly Women Committee Chairs, the Mission facilitated discussions that led to the drafting of the first-ever Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in Politics, which was endorsed by 66 MPs, representing both the position and opposition groups, including non-majority representatives. The Declaration is expected to be rolled out at the local level ahead of the 2025 local elections.

In Montenegro, the introduction of a simulated criminal procedure for VAWG, specifically targeting stalking of women journalists, has been translated by the OSCE Mission to a hands-on training module for representatives of the judiciary. Some 18 judges and prosecutors (14 women, four men) from the high and basic courts/prosecutor's offices, along with police officers and support staff from NGO shelters, took

part in such training in 2024. To support women survivors of violence, the Mission collaborated with the NGO SOS Helpline Nikšić to provide occupational therapy and concrete professional skill development in greenhouses run by shelters for victims.

In Serbia, the Mission, together with the country's Supreme Prosecutor's Office, updating the guidelines on the non-punishment principle, ensuring that victims—primarily women—are not penalized for crimes committed under coercion. It also trained 113 prosecutors and misdemeanour judges (83 women, 30 men) on applying the principle and facilitated a series of round tables on the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence for a total of 83 legal professionals (58 women, 25 men) to discuss challenges and legislative improvements. The Mission also supported the holding of the Second Regional Femicide Forum and the Victimology Society's Annual Conference, the first of which gathered 62 regional experts (58 women, 4 men) to discuss establishing a femicide watch, criminalizing femicide, and improving accountability mechanisms; while the second was attended by 91 professionals in the field (85 women, 6 men) and addressed victim rights and best practices in victim assistance.

In Skopje, the Mission sponsored a baseline study to evaluate the processing of DV and GBV cases across key institutions, revealing critical gaps in the response to these crimes and leading to actionable recommendations aimed at improving institutional co-ordination and efficiency. It also continued to work with youth at the local level, engaging secondary school students and teachers in efforts to prevent GBV, including in cyberspace.



Head of OSCE Mission to BiH speaking at the joint session of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) parliamentary committees focused on institutional responses to domestic and gender-based violence and the role of the law enforcement and justice sectors, 2024.

PATHWAYS TO PEACE: Empowering Young Women as Agents of Change

15 October 2024 (11:00 – 12:30)

Geneva, Switzerland,
GCSP - 4th floor (pétale 4),
and online



Organization for Security and
Co-operation in Europe



Geneva Centre for
Security Policy



Women in
International Security
ITALY



WIN –
Women & Men Strengthening
Networking for Gender Equality

GBV and women's role in war and conflict

During the Geneva Peace Week 2023, the OSCE partnered with the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, Women in International Security Italy and the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network to organize a panel discussion on empowering young women as agents of change in the context of peace and security.

In Ukraine, the WIN project's interventions targeted, among other issues, also the enhanced protection and response to VAWG in wartime and post-conflict settings. ODIHR conducted research aiming at strengthening National Referral Mechanisms on Countering Trafficking in Human Beings, with a particular focus on women and children who are fleeing conflict zones.

Under the ExB Support Programme for Ukraine, the OSCE's partner, the X Lviv Criminal Justice Forum, included a session on war-related GBV. During the Conference on Investigative Journalism in Ukraine in September, a special panel delivered practical recommendations to journalists on reporting GBV in war. In Astana, the Programme Office hosted an international conference in December that examined women's roles in conflict prevention,

humanitarian response and peacebuilding, while in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Mission supported a variety of anti-terrorism activities that also included discussions on the procedural and substantive challenges in cases involving women's recruitment, radicalization and involvement in conflict zones. Key takeaways included the importance of integrating gender-sensitive approaches in evidence collection, victim protection and rehabilitation efforts.



The high-level panel of the side event on Empowering Young Women as Agents of Change in the framework of Geneva Peace Week with former Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid, 15 October 2024.



Dr. Lara Scarpitta, OSCE Senior Adviser on Gender Issues, addressing the high-level panel at Geneva Peace Week, 15 October 2024.

2.3 Ensuring equal opportunity for women to participate in political and public life

The OSCE continued its active support for women in political and public life both through targeted initiatives and activities driven by the Organization's institutions and operations in the field. The OSCE Secretariat continued supporting the OSCE participating States in implementing their gender-related commitments in all three dimensions of security. In 2024, all three Chairs of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) prioritized the importance of the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and UNSCR 1325, with several Security Dialogues dedicated to this topic. The CPC continued supporting the FSC with gender-disaggregated data. In 2024, on average 31 per cent women and 69 per cent men participated in the FSC's plenary meetings. The panellists providing expertise for the Security Dialogues and FSC Chair's side events in 2024 were comprised of 46 per cent women and 54 per cent men.

ODIHR, capitalizing on its mandate, completed a gender equality assessment of the National Assembly of Slovenia in

2024 and conducted a gender audit of the National Assembly of Serbia, assisted by the Mission to Serbia. The Office also launched gender audits of the parliaments of Albania and Latvia and carried out gender audits and projects for five parliamentary political parties in Denmark and Montenegro. ODIHR, together with the Mission to Skopje, also helped the parliament of North Macedonia to develop its new Gender Action Plan, covering the period 2025–2027.

In its election-related work, ODIHR continued to strive to achieve gender parity across all facets of its election observation activities, with ever-growing attention to the participation of women in the composition of its missions. It deployed more women than men in both analyst positions and mission management (51.5 per cent).

This inclusivity strengthens the quality of ODIHR's observation work and enhances the effectiveness of the assistance ODIHR provides to participating States in implementing recommendations following election observation. The 15 final reports published in 2024 included 24 gender-related recommendations on how to improve the participation of women in political and public life.



ODIHR capacity-building session on combating trafficking in human beings, 2024.

As part of its capacity-building work, ODIHR held the [CHANGE self-advocacy training for Roma women and feminist activists from Ukraine](#) in April, which helped participants to learn more about self-advocacy and how to strengthen their stand in public and political life.

The event, attended by Roma women advocates from Ukraine, empowered them to engage in meaningful dialogue with authorities and other stakeholders through effective and strategic advocacy, ultimately aiming to combat gender inequality.

To mark International Women's Day 2024, the HCNM teamed up with the OSCE Chairpersonship, RFoM, ODIHR and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to host an expert meeting and conference on the gender aspects of surveillance and human rights within the broader context of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security.

Meanwhile, the RFoM continued working on its Safety of Female Journalist Online (SOFJO) and Healthy Online Information Spaces / SAIFE projects (the latter extended in 2024 as the 'SAIFE Renewed' project), with the goal to promote a healthy online information space and a safer environment

for women journalists online so they are not intimidated into self-censorship or to even leave the profession altogether.

Moving the focus to the OSCE's work in the field, the ExB Support Programme for Ukraine helped strengthen media standards and media literacy by giving assistance to the Commission of Journalistic Ethics (CJE), which in 2024 endorsed a new policy that sets standards for gender-sensitive reporting by the media, the Gender Equality Policy in Media Content.

In Albania, the Presence supported the reactivation of an ad hoc working group on gender and women in decision-making as a platform for supporting and promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in decision-making roles. As part of a project to enhance the human and institutional capacity of the Albanian parliament, to improve its inclusiveness, oversight and accountability practices, and to promote youth and gender perspectives in the legislative process, the Presence, in co-operation with ODIHR, introduced the first gender audit in Albania. The audit report, expected to be finalized in early 2025, will also establish Albania as the first country in the region to produce data on gender



Regional Central Asia Safety of Journalist Event, Beyond the Headlines: Protecting Journalist to Advance Media Freedom, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 26-27 June 2024.

mainstreaming in senior management levels and women members of parliament participation.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Mission focused its attention on a project leading to a greater inclusion of Roma women in national representative bodies, as well as on an initiative to review the influence of male politicians on gender equality. The Mission also held an expert meeting, together with ODIHR and all OSCE field operations in South-Eastern Europe, that brought together close to 80 participants who discussed the role of male politicians as actors in strengthening gender equality and addressing all forms of violence against women.

The Mission in Kosovo conducted an eight-month long women capacity-building programme, the EmPOWER Local Women Politicians Programme, involving 37 local women politicians, eight of whom were directly mentored by Women Committee Chairs as part of the Mission's programmatic support of the Kosovo Assembly's female MPs, thereby enhancing their leadership, advocacy and governance skills. These efforts resulted in the professional growth and nomination

of seven local women politicians for the February 2025 parliamentary elections. The Mission's support for the Kosovo Assembly also including the organization of a high-level conference led by women MPs, which mobilized 66 out of 120 members of the Assembly to sign the Declaration on Violence Against Women in Politics and Public Life, a landmark policy facilitated by the OSCE that guides joint efforts to create a safer and more inclusive political environment for women.

In Montenegro, the OSCE Mission co-hosted with local partners an international conference on the role of gender quotas in political and social structures, at which the participants adopted a draft Declaration on Equal Political Participation of Women, setting the stage for future action. The conference also ignited a dialogue on the need to amend the country's Law on the Election of Councillors and Members of Parliament, with a focus on ensuring long-term gender balance.

The Mission to Serbia trained eight gender equality commissioners at the University of Belgrade on discrimination prevention, developed 300 informational leaflets, and supported the Summer School 'Law and Gender'. The Mission also organized,



International Day of the Girl Child Conference, Dushanbe, Tajikistan, October 2024.

together with ODIHR, a participatory gender audit workshop for members of parliament and parliamentary staff (14 women, 12 men) to evaluate gender equality mechanisms in the National Assembly.

The Mission to Skopje supported North Macedonia's parliament with the implementation of its Gender Action Plan, including by organizing a high-profile plenary session on International Women's Day that focused on MPs' role in advancing gender equality. Together with ODIHR, the Mission also delivered a capacity-building workshop for MPs and parliamentary staff on hate speech and violence against women in politics, equipping them with tools to foster a safer and more inclusive political environment.

The Centre in Ashgabat focused on strengthening gender mainstreaming in the electoral process by training media professionals on gender-related aspects in elections. In Astana, the Programme Office organized a conference on advancing women's political participation and leadership in decision-making processes. In Kyrgyzstan, the parliament adopted its first-ever gender plan in October, developed with expert support from the OSCE. The Office was

also active in training various constituents in Kyrgyzstan on gender roles in politics, including (together with UNICEF) running an awareness-raising event for high-school girls from around Bishkek, empowering the young women to aspire for future leadership and decision-making positions.

The Programme Office in Dushanbe held a training course on gender mainstreaming, election campaigning and political communication, as well as leadership, for women politicians from all registered political parties in the country. It also co-organized a round table dedicated to the International Day of the Girl Child in October and continued its awareness-raising campaign on the prevention of violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism across the northern region of Tajikistan. Focusing on economic-environmental activities, the Office trained water management professionals (25 women, six men) from the Syrdarya Women Basin's Forum.



Training on Addressing Violence Against Women in Politics, Skopje, North Macedonia, 29–30 October 2024.



Malborë Qerimi during her apprenticeship at the Lipjan/Lipljan municipality, 1 August 2024.

“Grit and determination”: How a woman overcame her disability to make a difference

At 15, a car accident changed Malborë Qerimi's world forever: she was left with limited mobility. But she refused to let that define her future. With grit and determination, she regained her independence and pursued her dream of making a difference. An apprenticeship programme by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo allowed her to work in the General Administration Section of the Lipjan/Lipljan municipality, where she quickly proved that young women with disabilities are not just beneficiaries—they can be changemakers. She streamlined resident requests and impressed municipal leadership so much that the mayor extended her apprenticeship beyond the OSCE programme's duration. “The wish and strong will to ‘become somebody’ can really make you achieve the impossible,” Ms Qerimi says. Diamant Bytyqi, Deputy Mayor of Lipjan/Lipljan, chimes in: “We need to empower all parts of our communities and ensure our

future leaders represent the diverse people they serve. This programme is helping to shape young leaders with their own unique strengths and stories like Malborë's, and that's important to our municipality.” Ms Qerimi's story is not only about one young woman—it's about how opening one door can help shape a more inclusive system.

2.4 Strengthening women's participation in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict reconstruction

A central point in this work area, highlighted prominently in the 2004 Action Plan, is the OSCE's role in supporting the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 1325, by supporting its participating States with the development of National Action Plans, enabling women to become more integrated into the security sector, and strengthening their role in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict reconstruction. The OSCE Action Plan explicitly emphasizes women empowerment as an essential factor for comprehensive security and calls on all OSCE executive structures to develop activities to support it.

In May 2024, ahead of the recovery and reconstruction conference on Ukraine in Berlin, the GIP team, under the leadership of the Secretary General, organized a consultation with Ukrainian women leaders from the WIN project-supported Networking Platform. The meeting focused on their vision for recovery and reconstruction planning.

Their recommendations were shared with the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and integrated into OSCE's advocacy for gender-responsive reconstruction. Additionally, the GIP collaborates with the Office of the Government Commissioner on Gender Equality Policy of Ukraine to support gender-sensitive recovery and reconstruction efforts.

In alignment with the agreement between the GIP and the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SESU)—continuing the partnership that commenced in 2023—the WIN Project organized a series of capacity-building activities aiming to enhance the SESU's ability to deliver inclusive, effective and gender-aware humanitarian assistance (see also sidebar on page 53). Under the WIN project, the GIP team also partnered with the Kyiv-based Women Information Consultative Center to run activities in support of the country's NAP. This included nearly two dozen safety audits undertaken in government-controlled communities in seven of the country's regions.

The GIP continued to work on the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, strengthening notably the networks established under the Women's Peace Leadership Programme. Another



OSCE WIN Project's workshop on women's leadership in humanitarian response in partnership with the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SESU), 2024.

cohort of women leaders completed the Programme in 2024, the second edition of which again offered the participants tailor-made opportunities for increased professional visibility, better career opportunities, stronger professional networks, and improved self-confidence in the realm of peacebuilding. (For more on these GIP/WIN activities, see sidebar on page 55).

Under the GIP/WIN project, the third exchange between women from Ukraine and Bosnia and Herzegovina, coupled with online activities, was organized, on the topic of enhancing protection and response to VAWG in conflict. In 2024, discussions in this area focused on sustaining long-term support for GBV survivors, ensuring inclusivity and adopting a needs-based approach. OSCE experts shared gender-inclusive justice strategies and the integration of GBV considerations into Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction efforts.

In addition, in collaboration with Women Against Violence Europe (WAVE), WIN supported a series of training events in Ukraine, based on the training manual on preventing and responding to GBV in conflict and post-conflict settings. Specialized training sessions empowered women's organizations and stakeholders to strengthen trauma-informed, survivor-centred responses, foster collaboration and address the evolving risks of GBV.

The OSCE's Transnational Threats Department (TNTD) and the UN organized the Second Meeting of the Central Asia Regional Expert Council (REC) on the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Returnees in Tashkent, Uzbekistan in November. The event was attended by 40 participants and focused on civil society-led rehabilitation programmes, exploring how gender and age-sensitive considerations can be integrated into the REC's initiatives. The REC aims to consolidate expertise in prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration efforts across Central Asia of returning foreign fighters.

The Department also organized a training event on *Gendered Aspects of Cross-Border Crimes and Gender-Responsive Border Security and Management*, which targeted first- and second-line officers from OSCE Mediterranean participating and partner States, who learned more about the nexus between organized transnational crimes and gender. In addition, they were introduced to gender-sensitive and trauma-informative interviewing techniques to improve the identification of victims and potential perpetrators of cross-border crimes.

In line with UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and UNSCR 2242—which stresses the importance of women's leadership and participation in preventing and countering violent extremism and terrorism—the ATU continued to work with the GIP's WIN project on the running of two women professionals networks that focus on preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism, specifically in Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe. The networks meet regularly online, both regionally and jointly, to discuss relevant thematic issues and challenges, and engage in common brainstorming. In October, the ATU and the WIN project team organized an in-person meeting for more than 70 participants from the networks.

The Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) continued to incorporate gender perspectives in water governance and the participation of women in conflict prevention and water management at all levels, with a focus on Central Asia. As part of the third phase of its project Women, Water Management and Conflict Prevention, the OCEEA provided support to the Women in Water Management Network in Central Asia and Afghanistan. The Network provides a community of practice for women water experts engaged in different aspects of transboundary water co-operation processes in these two geographical areas. The overall mission of the Network has positive implications for lowering tensions

in a comprehensive security approach and strengthens regional dialogue in the region.

In March, in the framework of this project, the OSCE co-convened the Women in Water Diplomacy Network Second Global Network Forum in Vienna, which was attended by over 80 diplomats engaged in water management issues from nearly 50 countries, including those working on Women in Water Diplomacy Networks in the Nile Basin, the Orange-Senqu Basin, Central Asia and Afghanistan, and the Americas. The participants discussed water governance challenges and how to transition from conflict to co-operation in this field.

In Turkmenistan, the main activity by the Centre in Ashgabat was on building the capacity of law enforcement and security officials in countering transnational threats related to organized crime and terrorism. A total of 40 participants, 11 of them women, took part in three-day training events in the cities of Turkmenbashi and Mary. Further north, in Kazakhstan, the Programme Office in Astana hosted an international conference on the role of women in ensuring peace and security, which specifically looked at the systemic barriers to women's leadership in political and public life, exploring legislative frameworks to protect women and children, and integrating gender-responsive policies in the security sector. The Programme Office also supported the Kazakhstan Peace Operations Centre (KAZCENT) with delivering its first ever training course on gender aspects in peacekeeping operations for 17 military officers (seven women, ten men) from Kazakhstan and other invited countries (Jordan, Nigeria, and Tunisia). Key topics included human rights, countering sexual exploitation and abuse, addressing GBV in peacekeeping, understanding gender equality frameworks and masculinities in international security, and advancing the WPS agenda in peacekeeping systems.

Throughout the year, the Programme Office in Bishkek helped the Ministry of Interior run a country-wide national anti-drug campaign,

with a special focus on the diverse roles women play in drug trafficking, from victims to couriers, recruiters and managers. More than 100 events were held in all provinces of the country, with a participation by women of 50 per cent. The Office also supported a series of seminars in the cities of Bishkek, Osh and Kadamjai, organized by the Ministry of Interior and the Kyrgyz Association of Women in the Security Sector for police officers, focusing on peacebuilding processes, the rule of law, human rights and the role of police in UN peacekeeping operations. Under the WPS agenda, the Programme Office in Bishkek focused on environmental governance and decision-making in the context of broader peace and security agendas, for example in the area of sustainable water management and the role women play in this sensitive area that also has wider security connotations.

In Tajikistan, the Programme Office in Dushanbe held a workshop for a newly established working group tasked with developing a national action plan on gender and diversity in mine action. The event not only covered national strategic documents on the issue but also international commitments under UNSCR 1325 and the UN's Gender-Responsive Peacekeeping Operations policy and helped participants learn how to mainstream gender and diversity in mine action programmes. As part of its disaster risk reduction and management activities, the Programme Office held 30 awareness-raising sessions across Shahrison, Devashtij and Istaravshan districts on gender inclusivity in disaster preparedness and mitigation strategies, as well as first aid in emergencies. Other activities in Tajikistan included ten women empowerment and gender equality awareness-raising sessions across Tajikistan held by the OSCE-trained members of the OSCE Youth Network, reaching 283 participants (192 women, 91 men); a cultural day dedicated to gender awareness for 32 women and youth (18 women, 14 men); and a round table in recognition of the International Day of the Girl Child.

Within its WPS agenda, the Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan held a leadership training course in Tashkent for women in the judiciary and law enforcement. A total of 27 participants from these sectors attended, including from the Supreme Court and General Prosecutor's Office. To promote further implementation of the NAP on WPS at the local level, the Co-ordinator held a roundtable meeting in Termez, near the border with Afghanistan, for 28 representatives (25 women, three men) of judicial bodies, law enforcement agencies and non-governmental organizations.

Over in South-Eastern Europe, the Presence in Albania teamed up with the country's National Cyber Security Authority (AKSK) to increase the number of women working on cyber/ICT security. They ran a workshop on women empowerment in ICT/cyber security and a 'Regional Cybercamp', putting the emphasis on gender and breaking the myths that ICT/cyber security and technology are reserved for male professionals. Collaborating with UN Women, the Presence also contributed to the Women, Peace and Security Week in November, a national conference divided into three parallel sessions, on women in uniform, the role of civil society under the WPS agenda, and

on youth, peace and security. In the same month, the Presence held the third youth talk on WPS, together with its Youth Advisory Group. The discussion addressed the role of boys and men in advancing the WPS agenda.

Meanwhile, the Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina facilitated a cross-entity workshop in the town of Zvornik in September, bringing together youth NGOs from the area to talk about GBV and community security. The participants committed to closer collaboration among community institutions to address GBV more effectively and already planned some joint initiatives, such as a cross-entity youth camp, awareness-raising film screenings in rural communities and informal educational activities for women and girls.

In partnership with the OSCE Mission to Serbia, the Mission in Kosovo hosted the 10th edition of the Dialogue Academy, bringing together 24 young women from Prishtinë/Priština and Belgrade for a transformative ten-day knowledge exchange in building bridges and driving social change. The two Missions also strengthened the capacities of the 230-strong Dialogue Academy Network of Alumnae (DANA), with



Deputy Head of OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Cornelia Taylor, and prominent women from Prishtinë/Priština and Belgrade discuss women's role in the political sphere at the 2024 Dialogue Academy for Young Women, Gorizia/Nova Gorica, 19 October 2024.

alumnae shaping the DANA Roadmap 2024–2027 and advancing women’s leadership in reconciliation and policy advocacy.

The Mission in Kosovo also drove a number of impactful community activities, raising such issues as property and inheritance rights for women and men and the unique challenges faced by women from non-majority groups. In addition, workshops with students and teachers, alongside collaborations with local women’s groups, have sparked essential conversations on GBV, women’s access to legal rights and the economic empowerment of women and girls. The Mission delivered a five-day training on public dialogue facilitation for women from four areas in Kosovo and continued its support for the Association of Women in Kosovo Police to help increase the participation of women in the Kosovo Police, which in 2024 remained below 15 per cent. Support included capacity-building activities for Association members and assistance for them to participate in the Global Conference on Gender Equality in Police held in Montenegro in March, and a visit to the women’s section of the police in North Macedonia.

In Montenegro, the OSCE Mission could register an increase of women police officers from 12 per cent in 2020 to 15 per cent in 2024, the result of a media campaign to encourage young women and youth to pursue careers in policing. The Mission’s annual public perception survey of the country’s police revealed a steady increase in recognition among those polled that men and women are equally capable of performing police work, up from 81.2 per cent in 2023 to 82.7 per cent in 2024. Another OSCE initiative in the country, on trafficking in human beings, provided 43 police and border police officers, prosecutors, judges and social workers with training on the application of a victim-centred approach in interviewing potential trafficking victims, including a set of gender-sensitive questions.

To strengthen gender-responsive policing, the Mission to Serbia supported the Women Police Officers Network through a regional workshop on effective communication for 31 women police officers, a seminar on gender-responsive security policies for the Ministry of Interior’s Gender Focal Points, and participation in the Global Conference on Gender Equality in Police. To improve gender-inclusive emergency and disaster



Association of Women in Kosovo Police (AWKP) two-day workshop on revising their Development Strategy and Action Plan for 2022–2024, 20 September 2024, Prishtinë/Priština.

risk reduction management, the Mission also held a seminar for 40 Ministry employees (25 women, 15 men) and equipped 15 gender focal points of the Ministry with tools to integrate gender perspectives into security sector planning.

The Mission to Skopje continued to help advance women's role in local peace and security by promoting their participation in municipal governance and supporting the institutionalization of the Gender Mentoring Programme for women in policing. These efforts contributed to the sustainable integration of women within the security sector. The Mission also organized four workshops designed to empower women to engage with law enforcement, contribute to community safety initiatives, foster trust, and advocate for inclusive, gender-sensitive security planning. The sessions were attended by 81 women from Aerodrom, Kisela Voda, Gazi Baba, Chair, Butel, Čučer-Sandevo and Shuto Orizari, with youth representing 34 per cent of all participants. This reflected not only a strong gender dimension of the event but also meaningful intergenerational engagement, enriching dialogue across age groups.

In partnership with ODIHR, the Mission convened the Regional Gender and Security Conference in March, gathering representatives from police institutions and women's police associations across South-Eastern Europe. The conference concluded with a set of actionable recommendations aimed at advancing gender equality in law enforcement. Building on this momentum, the Mission hosted a follow-up regional workshop in December, which focused on sharing best practices for the establishment and strengthening of Police Women's Associations.

In Ukraine, the OSCE—under its ExB Support Programme—co-organized with the Ministry of Economy and the Demine Ukraine initiative a gender awareness workshop for mine action actors to assess gender challenges and gaps in mine action

policies. The OSCE also engaged a gender expert to conduct interviews with key state and non-state mine action operators, analysing gender perspectives in their work. The findings will inform media publications on gender mainstreaming in mine action, ensuring greater public awareness of gendered risks and challenges in demining efforts. Another project involved incorporating a gender component into a training course on internal conflict management in public institutions, ensuring a more equitable approach to workplace conflict resolution, and into a training needs assessment for dialogue facilitators and mediators, identifying how the war differently impacts men and women in conflict resolution roles. The OSCE also organized training for 28 dialogue facilitators and mediators (25 women, 3 men), helping them create safe spaces, recognize hidden biases, and ensure equality and inclusion in dialogue processes, particularly in conflict settings.



Participants of the initiative by the OSCE and the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SESU), established under the WIN Project, December 2024.

More than 150 Ukraine emergency service staff trained on gender in 2024

Co-operation between the OSCE and the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SESU), an initiative established in 2023 under the WIN project, continued apace in 2024. The collaboration aims to strengthen gender-responsive and disability-inclusive humanitarian response by SESU personnel. In October, 100 staff participated in two online training sessions on this topic, followed by discussions on the practical application of the related manual for trainers developed for SESU. In December, 54 female participants from the Service took part in two in-person workshops on women leadership in humanitarian response, held in Lviv. The events addressed resilience-building and psycho-emotional support, recognizing the burnout and emotional strain women leaders often face. Participants developed stress management, self-care and leadership skills to sustain their effectiveness in crisis settings. More information on these workshops can be found here:

www.osce.org/secretariat/582844

This series of events in 2024 brought the number of SESU representatives trained under the programme to a total of 236. The initiative further embedded gender-responsive and disability-inclusive approaches and women leadership in crisis management and recovery efforts, thereby reinforcing the OSCE's long-term commitment to these principles in Ukraine. Interviews with SESU programme participants are available online:

www.osce.org/secretariat/563112

On the part of the OSCE institutions, ODIHR organized a pilot training course for armed forces members from Austria, Belgium and the United Kingdom on how to facilitate Human Rights and Gender Assessment for Armed Forces, while the HCNM, as part of ongoing research and knowledge-building in the area of gender and national minorities—including from the perspective of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda—held an expert round table on national minority women and conflict prevention and produced a report on the topic with preliminary principles and recommendations.

As every year since 2018, the OSCE's CPC conducted in 2024 again a new edition of the OSCE Scholarship for Peace and Security, an educational training programme on conflict prevention and resolution through arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation for young professionals from all participating States and Partners for Co-operation. The 2024 training programme was divided into an online course, with a women attendance of 88 per cent, and an in-person segment dedicated exclusively to female participants successful in the online course. Selected female graduates also took part in

a capacity-building event on negotiation and mediation, organized together with the WIN project team. A 2024 impact report on the programme reported that previous graduates remained engaged on security issues not only on a professional or academic but also on personal levels. More than 69.3 per cent of respondents were employed in peace and security-related professions. An overwhelming majority indicated that further learning about conflict resolution and de-escalation strategies and gaining dialogue facilitation skills would be relevant to increase their current professional capacities, and would contribute to global, regional, national or community-level peace and security-building at large.

The OSCE welcomed, for the third year in a row, young diplomats from the Organization's Asian and Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation participating in its flagship study visit programme to Vienna and Prague, offered them a tailored and unique opportunity to deepen their understanding of the OSCE's mandate and activities. The programme also featured a dedicated session on the OSCE's work in the field of gender equality.

2024 OSCE Scholarship for Peace and Security

Training programme for young professionals on conflict prevention and resolution in the OSCE area





Panelists and Speakers at the Summit of the Future side event on the Women, Peace, and Security agenda, co-organized in partnership with the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP), 21 September 2024.

From Albania to Tajikistan, implementation of Women, Peace and Security agenda moves forward

A multitude of activities in the OSCE region further stepped up the work on UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and the participating States' National Action Plans on the issue. The GIP held a pioneering Regional Expert Level Workshop on the topic in the region, attended by more than 20 government experts on WPS from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

In November 2024, another cohort of women participants, 15 in total, completed the second edition of the Women's Peace Leadership Programme (WPLP). The initiative offers tailor-made opportunities to women to engage with concepts and skills relevant to peacebuilding work, providing increased professional visibility, better career opportunities, stronger professional networks, and improved self-confidence. Marking the impact of this network, the 2024 Programme participants were invited

to high-level meetings with decision-makers, including the Munich Security Conference 2024. In December, the call for applications for the 3rd Edition of the WPLP, this time focused on the gender and climate nexus, was issued.

Building on the foundation of two years of leadership development, the OSCE also built an alumni network in 2024 for the Programme, serving as a sustainable platform for the women leaders and giving them access to continued support and opportunities for collaboration. In support of the Programme's second edition, the OSCE published a series of articles with participants' testimonials on their website and social media channels, resulting in 71,789 impressions and 3,427 engagements over the year. The articles can be viewed here: www.osce.org/secretariat/573394 In Ukraine, a new partnership was set up between the GIP/WIN project and the Kyiv-

based Women Information Consultative Center (WICC), which, under the WIN project, resulted in support activities for the country's NAP, including 21 safety audits undertaken in government-controlled communities in seven regions (Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Kirovohrad, Dnipro, Poltava, Lviv, Kyiv city) to assess the security situation and needs of women and girls. The WICC also held nine webinars on the Ethics of treatment of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) survivors, attended by 334 representatives (281 women and 53 men) of the security sector and social services, as well as local women activists. ODIHR organized a train-the-trainer course on policing and human rights for women law enforcement officers and representatives of women police associations from Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The course was held together with the OSCE field presences in the two countries and provided participants an overview of ODIHR's work on policing and human rights, offering them practical recommendations on how to implement the WPS agenda in their daily work. Under the ExB Support Programme for Ukraine (SPU), the OSCE engaged with the country's Government Commissioner on Gender Equality Policy and participated in the working group for the development of Ukraine's NAP, helping integrate gender perspectives into the country's security and peacebuilding efforts, reinforcing commitments to gender equality in conflict response and recovery, with a specific focus on demining work.

In November, the OSCE Secretariat, in co-operation with the Programme Office in Bishkek and the organization Search for Common Ground (Search), took part in a workshop with state officials and civil society organizations on the country's draft National Action Plan on Youth (2024–2027). The participants produced recommendations on the purpose and methods of monitoring and youth participation (including young women's participation) in political affairs. They also covered the issues of migration and improvements in the education and leisure spheres. The experts emphasized

the importance of refraining from the securitization of youth with reference to extremism, terrorism, and radicalism. Kyrgyzstan is expected to introduce the final version of the National Action Plan in 2025. The OSCE initiative forms part of a larger project to roll out a series of Model OSCE simulation exercises, including a simulation case focusing on the prevention of GBV and promotion of women's participation in state affairs.

Further work on the NAPs was done in Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe by the OSCE's field operations.

In Astana, the Programme Office, together with the Kazakhstan Peace Operations Centre of the Ministry of Defence, organized a five-day training course on gender aspects in peacekeeping operations in April, in support of the country's commitment to gender equality and its NAP 2022–2025. In co-operation with the Law Enforcement Academy, the Office also delivered a two-day training course for human resource experts to foster their understanding of gender-sensitive approaches and the challenges women face in the security sector.

In Dushanbe, Tajikistan, the Office held a training for their national counterparts on gender and diversity in humanitarian mine action, in context of the country's NAP, development of which is expected to begin in early 2025.

Meanwhile, in Uzbekistan, the office of the Project Co-ordinator held a two-day leadership training course in Tashkent for women in the judiciary and law enforcement, as well as a roundtable discussion in Termez, near the country's border with Afghanistan, for representatives of the justice, law enforcement and NGO sector to discuss how to increase the number of women in the security sector, part of the country's 2022–2025 NAP, and promote implementation of the NAP at the local level.

Moving further West, to South-Eastern Europe, the Presence in Albania facilitated the reconvening of the Women, Peace and Security Working Group to support the implementation of the country's Second UNSCR 1325 NAP, approved in December 2023. In collaboration with UN Women, the Presence organized a national conference to officially launch the NAP and strengthen the understanding of its requirements among key institutions. Additionally, in partnership with the Youth Advisory Group, the Presence held the third 'Youth Talk' on the topic The role of boys and men in promoting the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, bringing together experts and representatives from the Albanian Parliament, the Advice Line for Boys and Men, and political parties.

In Serbia, the Mission supported the drafting of Serbia's third NAP (expected to be launched in early 2025), ensuring an inclusive, participatory process involving civil society organization, public authorities and key stakeholders in the country. It also developed a new Gender Action Plan for 2024–2025, one of the key objectives of which is support for the adoption of a third NAP featuring as National Action Plan.



The participants of a five-day training course on gender aspects in peacekeeping operations, organized by the Programme Office in Astana together with Kazakhstan Peace Operations, April 2025.

2.5 Promoting equal opportunities for women in the economic sphere

While most of the OSCE's tasks on equal economic opportunities for both women and men have been laid down by the 2004 Action Plan for the OCEEA, the Organization's field operations have also been very active in 2024 in this area, reflecting a broad approach to this tasking from Eastern Europe to Central Asia.

The OCEEA launched the OSCE Central Asian Women's Entrepreneurship Programme, aimed at empowering women-led businesses in Central Asia through digital upskilling. Over the course of seven weeks, women entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds participated in a series of workshops, practical sessions and personalized mentoring, covering such key areas as digital transformation, online marketing and business management strategies. Participants learned to develop and scale their businesses using the Business Canvas Model, establish an online presence, and effectively utilize digital financial tools, supporting sustainable growth in the digital era. The programme also included a visibility campaign through OSCE social media channels and concluded with an in-person event in Almaty, where 21 women entrepreneurs from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan met to strengthen their peer-to-peer network. The event provided a platform for participants to exchange experiences and insights, further reinforcing the skills gained throughout the programme.

Another group of women, hailing from rural settlements of the Yaghnob Valley in north-west Tajikistan, took part in an economic empowerment programme in the energy sector, implemented by the OCEEA under the wider project *Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment in the Energy Sector in Central Asia for Energy Security and Sustainability*. The programme, supported by the OSCE, involved training

on the use of such off-grid clean energy technologies as solar parabolic cookers and mini-solar power stations. They learned the basics of renewable energy principles, giving them the skills to drive positive change in their communities through access to clean energy sources.

In 2024, the WIN project continued its collaboration with the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SESU) to strengthen gender-responsive and disability-inclusive humanitarian response. This follow-up initiative builds on the foundation established in 2023, enhancing the knowledge and skills of SESU personnel. In October 2024, two online training sessions gathered 100 participants and focused on gender-sensitive and disability-inclusive humanitarian action. Additionally, the sessions facilitated discussions on the practical application of the manual for trainers developed for SESU on this topic.

A key highlight was the presentation of the WIN project's new publication and pioneering work on *Gender and Corruption in the Access to Natural Resources*, which explores how corruption affects women's economic empowerment and decision-making participation in water, land, forestry and extractive industries (see sidebar on page 59).

NO WOMAN'S LAND

Unpacking the Nexus and Finding Solutions on Gender, Corruption and Access To Natural Resources

WEDNESDAY, 13 MARCH 2024

10:00 AM - 11:15 AM (GMT-5) 3:00 PM - 4:15 PM (CET)

Conference Room 6 – UN General Assembly Building

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OSCE Organization for Security and
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Eolas-Ionad na hÉireann
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Permanent Mission of Ireland
to the United Nations



Shedding light on gender and corruption in context of access to natural resources

In March, at the margins of the CSW68 held in New York, the OSCE Gender Issues Programme put the spotlight on the relations between gender and corruption in the context of access to natural resources. A side event co-hosted with Italy and Ireland and supported under the WIN project under the title *No woman's land: Unpacking the nexus and finding solutions on gender, corruption and access to natural resources* brought into perspective the pervasive impact of corruption on women in their access to natural resources, including land, water and forestry, and provided an understanding of the political, environmental, social and economic ramifications of corruption in this sector. d. More on the event is available on the OSCE website: www.osce.org/secretariat/564116

A central element of the event was a new OSCE publication on the issue, with the title *Gender and corruption in the access to natural resources: Preliminary findings* (see also the section on Publications in the annex of this report).

The Centre in Ashgabat focused its efforts on promoting best practices for the establishment and functioning of a business ombudsperson. A total of 15 participants (ten men, five women) from state authorities, small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs took part in an awareness-raising seminar with experts who explained the role of a business ombudsperson in supporting SME development, with a particular focus on women-owned enterprises.

In Kyrgyzstan, the Programme Office in Bishkek implemented a project to empower women by enhancing their economic security and enabling them to build better futures for themselves and their families. This took the form of in-kind support, such as access to essential business equipment, as well as of targeted entrepreneurial skill training for the women participants. In 2024, 52 women from Talas and Osh provinces took part in this Women's Economic Empowerment initiative, which contributed to increase the participation of women in the local economy—especially relevant for provinces where local SME development helps lessen the migration of workforce. In addition, 31 women entrepreneurs launched or expanded

their own businesses and 89 jobs (68 in Osh and 21 in Talas province) were created by women who participated in the programme.

The Programme Office in Dushanbe, operating through the WRCs, organized 104 vocational training courses in remote areas of Tajikistan on sewing, embroidery, weaving, bakery, cooking and computer literacy. A total of 1,261 people (1,214 women, 47 men) took part in the programme, 194 of whom reported later finding jobs in different government bodies or private businesses, while 418 established their own small sewing or bakery businesses at home. The Office also held advanced training courses on gender economics for participants from government agencies, private organizations and civil society, who learned about the importance of integrating gender perspectives into economic and financial systems. Finally, the Office held a round-table discussion for representatives of the country's women's caucuses, judiciary, parliament, as well as the Committee of Women and Family Affairs and the Ministries of Internal Affairs and of Justice, to present and discuss gender mainstreaming perspectives on different pieces of legislation. During the event, the Alliance of Women Parliamentarians and the Union of Women



Advanced Training on Gender Economics, Dushanbe, Tajikistan, November 2024.

Judges proposed several recommendations for changing legislation, based on best practices on gender mainstreaming used in Austria's parliament and the judicial system of Spain. This was a direct result of a study visit by the participants to these countries in 2023.

Rounding up the OSCE's activities in Central Asia, the Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan held training courses for 171 women entrepreneurs from rural areas to help them improve their computer literacy and digital marketing skills, which, in turn, enhanced their capacities to start and manage a business. An additional group of around 400 young people, many of them women, took part in an OSCE-sponsored youth start-up incubation programme that helped them to strengthen their entrepreneurial and ICT skills, to come up with business ideas and upgrade their knowledge on how to establish a start-up.

Further west in the OSCE region, in South-Eastern Europe, the field operations ran a panoply of initiatives to support gender equality in economic development. In Albania, the Presence organized three workshops on financial education, data analytics and advocacy, rounded up by a

final 'datathon' event (a competition where participants work through a large and complex dataset and present their result to a jury). A total of 31 participants (25 women, six men) participated in the initiative. The Presence also held an 'Ideathon' workshop for 21 young entrepreneurs (16 women, five men) on how to navigate the start-up ecosystem, including idea development, pitching strategies, financial resources and regulatory compliance. The workshop tied in with the launch of a Toolkit for Start-ups, both of which were supported by the OCEEA's YDEAS II project. The entire initiative paid particular attention to mainstreaming gender in its activities, by encouraging women to participate, get engaged and contribute to the discussions, and collect gender data. Women entrepreneurs showed particular interest in the Toolkit, which also includes legal information on non-discrimination and harassment in the business sector.

In 2024, the Mission in Kosovo supported a handicraft fair in Prizren that included 118 women and one man from diverse communities to promote non-majority cultural heritage and contribute to rural tourism growth. It also organized entrepreneurship workshops on basic business concepts



Interregional Fair organized by NGO Equality with support from UN Women and the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Prizren, 6 September 2024.

and best practices, to empower vulnerable women, especially from marginalized communities, by improving their access to the public and economic sphere.

In Serbia, 80 women took part in two meetings of the Alumni Club of the Share Your Knowledge mentorship programme, an OSCE initiative to give the participants' networking opportunities and strengthen their capacity-building and strategic planning skills. The Mission also organized round tables in Subotica, Niš, Belgrade and Novi Sad, involving 125 women entrepreneurs, students and CSO representatives—76 of them women—to promote green economic culture and sustainable practices, such as circular economy, climate resilience and participatory decision-making.

Finally, in Ukraine, under its ExB Support Programme, the OSCE engaged the Office of the Government Commissioner on Gender Equality Policy to assess the baseline for a gender impact assessment methodology and identify key barriers to women's full participation in the economy. The assessment has the goal to inform policy recommendations that promote gender-responsive business regulations. The GIP strengthened the skills of women from

conflict settings in the digital economy. Under the WIN project, support was extended to the implementing partner, WomenGoTech, in delivering a programme aimed at empowering women displaced from Ukraine or those remaining without stable income sources by introducing them to high-value technology industry jobs and facilitating their reskilling. The funding enabled outreach to women across Central and Eastern Europe and allowed for the creation and adaptation of programme content, addressing linguistic and professional challenges specific to Ukrainian women. The project's impact was recognized by Ukraine's Ministry of Digital Transformation, leading to the signing of a memorandum of co-operation and the integration of programme content into Ukraine's digital portal DIIA, ensuring broad and long-term accessibility for Ukrainian women seeking career opportunities in the technology sector.



Exchanges between Ukrainian and Bosnian activists working on violence in conflict supported by the OSCE Gender Issues Programme under the WIN project, 2024.



Gender Equality for State Commission for Prevention of Corruption Training, Skopje, North Macedonia, 9 July 2024.



The II International Youth Forum of the Syrdarya River Basin, 30 September 2024, Khujand.



Discussions among participants of the 2024 Dialogue Academy for Young Women, Gorizia/Nova Gorica, 17 October 2024.



Women Police Association Event during the 16 Days of Activism, Skopje, North Macedonia, 10 December 2024.



Closing event of the 2024 Dialogue Academy for Young Women, Gorizia/Nova Gorica, 19 October 2024.



The Ak-Tulpar Chess Centre, an initiative created under the support of Entrepreneurship Support Centres (ESCs) and the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek, 2024.

From modest opening gambit to more than 1,000 followers

How chess gave economic power to a mother of five

In 2023, Aichurok Tolubaeva from Osh, Kyrgyzstan, decided not to be a pawn of destiny any longer and opened the Ak-Tulpar Chess Centre. What began as a small initiative with one single trainer and 25 students quickly became a raving success. Ms Tolubaeva expanded the Centre to two locations and is preparing to open a third one. Her mission is to invest in the future by equipping young minds with critical skills through chess, such as better memory and logical thinking, an initiative that was rewarded with support from Entrepreneurship Support Centres (ESCs) supported by the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek. A public relations consultant from the ESCs gave her additional help by improving her Instagram presence, teaching her mobile photography and targeted promotion. “I started with just 250 subscribers, but after applying what

I learned, my followers have surpassed 1,000,” Ms Tolubaeva says. “More parents began reaching out through Instagram, leading to the successful opening of our second branch.” Her story is testament to how strategic support and digital tools can drive entrepreneurship and create lasting community impact.



#GratëFrymëzjnë #WomenInspire

Thumbnail from the video testimonials under the hashtag #WomenInspire, The OSCE Presence in Albania, March 2024.

Portraying the positive energy of women entrepreneurs and civil society activists

On International Women's Day 2024, the Presence in Albania kicked off a month-long communication campaign featuring the voices of inspiring women. In video testimonials broadcast on social media under the hashtags #WomenInspire and #GratëFrymëzjnë, women told their own stories and thereby conveyed the positive energy of women entrepreneurs and civil society activists who participated in OSCE activities and networks, towards the realization of their dreams and objectives and their contribution to the development of the community.

The videos are available on Instagram and Facebook:

www.instagram.com/p/C4PvulBN6nS
www.facebook.com/OSCE.Albania/videos/1130676191423494 and
www.facebook.com/reel/922190866280331

2.6 Building national mechanisms for the advancement of women

On 30 July, on the occasion of the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, ODIHR launched a new publication, the Guidance on Establishing and Maintaining National Survivors of Trafficking Advisory Councils. Following the event, which brought to the attention of OSCE participating States the importance of promoting the ethical and meaningful inclusion of survivor leaders in anti-trafficking efforts, several States showed interest in exploring more engagement of survivor leaders in designing and developing anti-trafficking policies, and for the identification of victim and potential victims of human trafficking. Since 2021, ODIHR also works closely with the members of the International Survivors of Trafficking Advisory Council, who inform ODIHR's work in combating trafficking in human beings.

The RFoM continued to implement its Gender Action Plan 2022–2027, a pillar of which is focused on advancing gender equality in the participating States. It provides for the States' support in fulfilling their gender equality commitments and implementing relevant measures through national mechanisms. Under its Safety of Journalists project, RFoM continued supporting the OSCE participating States in enhancing their national action plans on journalist safety, with a particular emphasis on gender and intersectional perspectives. The RFoM also continued to work with the Guidelines for Monitoring Online Violence Against Female Journalists, which are designed to assist civil society, governments and other stakeholders in incorporating a gender perspective when monitoring journalists' safety. The Guidelines, comprising a comprehensive set of indicators, are intended to help with the monitoring of online violence, with one of the indicators specifically designed to track the escalation of violence from online to 'offline', thereby allowing for more timely intervention to prevent further harm. The Guidelines also offer tailored monitoring guidance for

respondents to enhance the protection of women journalists in digital spaces.

On the ground, activities focusing on this work area mainly took place in South-Eastern Europe. In Albania, the OSCE Presence held mobile journalism training for students at the University of Tirana, with strong female participation and a focus on encouraging aspiring female journalists to take on leadership roles in storytelling and reporting. A similar approach was underlying a peer exchange programme in Niš, Serbia, which gave aspiring female journalists from Albania and Serbia opportunities to collaborate, exchange knowledge and build networks, leading to strong regional co-operation and amplifying women's voices in journalism.

Also in Serbia, the Mission there organized tailor-made training events for the Bulgarian and Russian National Councils of National Minorities (NMCs) and supported the Bunjevac NMC in developing a five-year strategy with a gender-sensitive approach. As a result, gender mainstreaming principles were integrated into the NMC strategy, and all NMCs were guided to apply gender-sensitive budgeting, ensuring public funds align with gender equality objectives. The Mission also helped organize training for five local self-governments to strengthen the functioning of local Councils for Inter-Ethnic Relations, which among other issues included a component on gender mainstreaming. This in turn fostered a more balanced representation of women in these bodies.

Further to the west, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, officials working for cantonal authorities benefited from several workshops the OSCE Mission ran to present to them legislation in the field of gender and human rights, such as relevant laws and by-laws, as well as on how to employ gender-responsive budgeting strategies as institutional mechanisms to strengthen gender equality.

The Mission also initiated the development of three municipality-level gender action plans, two of which were adopted in 2024 (for Prijedor City and Kladanj Municipality).

The Mission in Kosovo published a report on school dropouts, highlighting persistent challenges despite authorities' efforts, particularly for Kosovo Roma, Kosovo Ashkali, and Kosovo Egyptian children. This analysis informed the Kosovo Inter-Institutional Working Group's action plan for early marriage prevention and was followed, in December, by the first-ever conference for school psychologists and pedagogues on this issue. A separate activity involved 137 officials (110 women, 27 men), who participated in OSCE-driven events to strengthen Local Gender Equality Mechanisms by training them on gender-

responsive budgeting, response to DV, and inclusive public policies. The Mission also trained municipal Gender Equality and Media Officers on gender-sensitive language and provided input to the gender action plan of the Association of Women in Kosovo Police and the Association of Women in the Kosovo Correctional Service.

In North Macedonia, the Mission to Skopje organized a regional workshop bringing together women police officers to exchange good practices on establishing inclusive professional networks. The event supported the formation of a Women's Police Association in North Macedonia and promoted institutional mechanisms to strengthen gender equality within the law enforcement sector.



ODIHR and the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina joint event on Engaging Male Politicians, June 2024 (Photo credit: Zejd Kadric)



Former OSCE Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid and OSCE Senior Adviser on Gender Issues Lara Scarpitta at the Gender Champions Award Ceremony, 11 July 2024.

Meet our Gender Equality Champions of 2024

In 2018, the OSCE Secretary General established the annual Gender Champion Awards, administered by the Gender Issues Programme, to recognize outstanding achievements of OSCE leaders—

individual women and men, teams, or projects—to promote gender equality.



Leadership Award **Paolo Bernasconi**

Paolo Bernasconi, the OSCE's Director for Human Resources, received the Leadership Award for his firm commitment in promoting gender equality across the Organization, particularly for his pivotal role in implementing significant changes in the recruitment process and the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) policy and training. Under his leadership, the OSCE achieved gender parity among its international staff.



Gender Focal Point Award **Shpresa Mulliqi**

Shpresa Mulliqi, National Public Safety Awareness Officer with the Mission in Kosovo, received the Gender Focal Point Award for being a transformative force in promoting gender equality and social inclusion through her dedicated advisory and capacity-building work for the Association of Women in Kosovo Police and the Association of Women in the Kosovo Correction Agency.



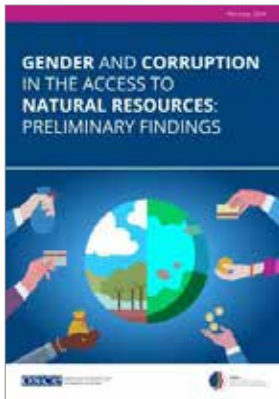
Staff Member Award **Jamilya Sharifova**

Jamilya Sharifova is Senior Programme Assistant at the Programme Office in Dushanbe. She received the Award for her tireless work in promoting gender equality in the remote region of Garm, in eastern Tajikistan. Her efforts in conducting home-based workshops, establishing women support groups, and facilitating small business initiatives for women have been instrumental in empowering women and addressing the aftermath of the 1992-1997 civil war.



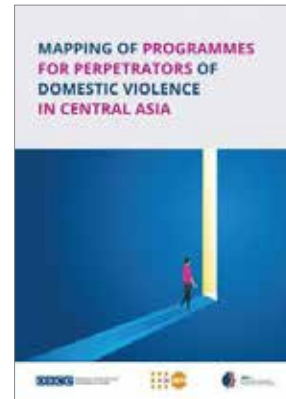
Project Award **OSCE Mission to Skopje**

The Project Award was handed over to three team members of the Mission's Police Development Unit: Senior Police Advisor Gordana Mitrovic, National Programme Officer Faruk Ademi and Programme Assistant Naser Nagavci. The Mission's five-year Gender Mentoring Programme in the Police project significantly improved the understanding of gender-related challenges among staff at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, empowered women police officers, and contributed to the personal and professional development of the project participants. As a result, many women police officers have been promoted to higher managerial positions.



OSCE Gender Issues Programme

Gender and Corruption in the Access to Natural Resources: Preliminary Findings



OSCE Gender Issues Programme

Mapping of programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence in Central Asia



OSCE Gender Issues Programme

Proposed Minimum standards and Components of the Training Curricula for Police and Judicial Training on VAWG



OSCE Gender Issues Programme

Navigating Networks: A Roadmap for the Creation and Operation of Women-led Peacebuilding Networks in Central Asia, Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus



OSCE Gender Issues Programme

OSCE Women's Peace Leadership Programme: Empowering the Next Generation of Women Leaders



OSCE Mission to Mission to Skopje (2024)

Participation of Community Women in Political and Public Life in North Macedonia



OCEEA (2024)

Advancing a Just Energy Transition in Central Asia:
Women's Key Role in the Energy Sector



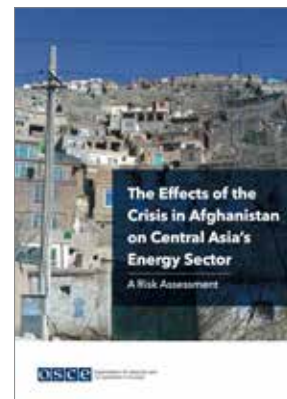
OCEEA (2024)

From Commitment to Action: OSCE's
Anti-Corruption and Good Governance Report
2023-2024



OCEEA (2024)

Empowering Women to Drive Sustainable
Energy Access in Rural Tajikistan. A Catalyst for
Community Development and Wellbeing



OCEEA (2024)

The Effects of the Crisis in Afghanistan on Central
Asia's Energy Sector. A Risk Assessment



OCEEA (2024)

Green Paper on Social Economy in the
Western Balkans



OSCE CTHB (2024)

Invisible victims: The nexus between disabilities
and trafficking in human beings



OSCE Office of Internal Oversight (2024)

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ODIHR support for parliaments on advancing gender equality — factsheet

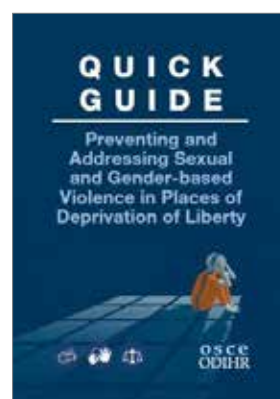
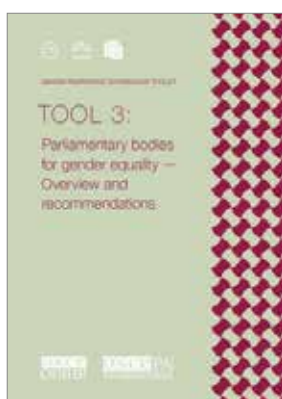


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Advancing gender equality in politics — National assessments and action plans — Tool 1

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Transforming political parties from within — Gender audits and action plans — Tool 2



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Parliamentary bodies for gender equality — Overview and recommendations — Tool 3

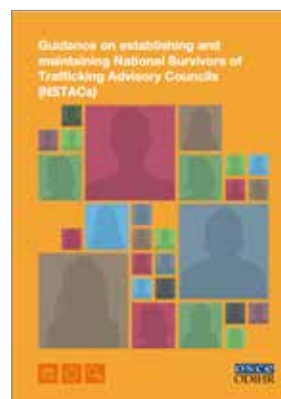
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Quick Guide on Preventing and Addressing Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Places of Deprivation of Liberty



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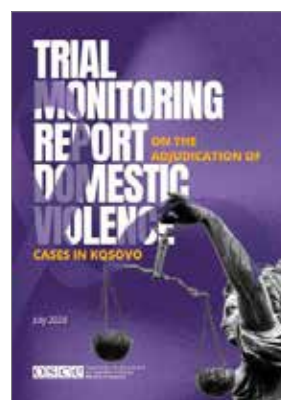
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