



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**

**“The Secretary General’s Annual Progress Report  
on the implementation of  
the 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality”**

**Secretary General Thomas Greminger**

*Vienna, 5 July 2018*

Mr. Chairperson,

Dear colleagues,

It is a pleasure to present the Annual Progress Report on the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality.

Progress toward gender equality and the inclusion of women is a significant measure of success for any organization today. For the OSCE it takes on added significance as it is also part and parcel of comprehensive security. All of us share responsibility for turning our commitments into reality for women and men throughout the OSCE region. Including a stronger gender perspective in our work also gets us closer to our joint aim of ensuring that the OSCE is fit for purpose.

The good news is that in 2017 OSCE executive structures made significant strides in implementing the 2004 Gender Action Plan. On the whole, it offers us plenty of reassurance that we are moving in the right direction. The annual report captures promising practices and lessons learned, as well as strategic areas that need more attention. I will single out a few highlights but I encourage you to read the report and to draw on its many recommendations.

The **Second Gender Equality Review Conference**, organized by the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship, the Gender Section and ODIHR, was the flagship event last year. Following on the first such conference in 2014, it provided a high-level platform for over 300

participants and drew attention, including in capitals, to key achievements and challenges in the implementation of the Gender Action Plan.

At the operational and programmatic level, OSCE field operations, the Institutions and the Secretariat promoted gender equality and inclusion of women through various projects and activities across the three dimensions. Allow me to mention a few highlights:

- In the first dimension, **we built the capacity of law enforcement officers** to promote gender equality and combat gender-based violence in different parts of the OSCE area. This included training over 2,400 neighbourhood police officers in Ukraine and 365 female officers in Bosnia and Herzegovina. And the OSCE Mission in Kosovo trained 72 police women on preventing violent extremism and radicalization that can lead to terrorism.
- In an effort to reduce the traditional gender gap in the political-military field, **a unique training programme on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons** targeting mainly women was developed by the Conflict Prevention Centre, together with the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA)
- In the second dimension, **empowering women** is an increasing focus area of OSCE field operations. In Central Asia, for example, our field operations provided female entrepreneurs with skills and knowledge on management practices and business development, fair trade and green technologies.
- We also made progress on **mainstreaming gender perspectives into OSCE projects**, particularly those addressing critical environmental and climate change threats to human security.
- In the third dimension, looking at gender and politics, **ODIHR and field operations worked with over twenty political parties** in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Moldova to support the drafting of gender audit reports. Half of them received further assistance with the drafting of gender action plans.

These activities, and many more mentioned in the report, clearly show our continued dedication to supporting OSCE participating States with the implementation of their gender equality commitments.

Looking at our internal structures and measures to promote greater gender equality within the OSCE's executive structures, there are some positive developments I wish to highlight:

- **Ten out of 15 field operations now have dedicated Gender Action Plans**, and ODIHR and the Secretariat have specific internal strategies for mainstreaming gender in their work.
- We can also see an increase in the number of **Gender Focal Points**, who are playing a fundamental role in gender mainstreaming the work of the executive structures.
- Here in the Secretariat, the **Executive Gender Coaching** programme was piloted, my directors and I were the first beneficiaries, and I already see an increased commitment and action taken by senior management.
- And ODIHR has established a cross-departmental **Gender Leadership Team** to support further progress in gender mainstreaming across the Office.

Turning to gender balance among OSCE staff, I am proud to say that we have reached **gender parity at the director's level in the Secretariat**. This is a positive signal and gives us additional motivation to tackle gender imbalance at the senior management level, which organization-wide currently stands at around 30 per cent women, with plenty of scope for improvement.

**This is also true for heads and deputy heads of field operations**, positions that remain strongly male-dominated. In 2017, less than one-third of the heads of missions were women, and there was only one female deputy head of mission. Once again I strongly encourage OSCE participating States to nominate more female candidates for these positions.

We cannot fail to note also that gender imbalance remains particularly visible in the **Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine**, which still has only 16 per cent female monitors. Again, I call on you, the participating States, to put forward more women for these posts, as this increases the ability of the Mission to engage with a wide range of stakeholders and to achieve its mandate

Our analysis of progress and challenges in 2017 has been substantially supported this year by the **thematic evaluation conducted by the Office of Internal Oversight (OiO)**. Covering the period 2013 to 2017, the evaluation provided an in-depth review of progress on gender mainstreaming and proposed a comprehensive set of measures to reach the objectives of the Gender Action Plan. Recommendations include: an enhanced institutional set-up for promoting gender equality; better co-ordination and synergies among executive structures; stronger leadership and strategic direction; and better positioning of gender focal points.

The OiO evaluation also found that we still lack a shared narrative about how promoting equality between women and men contributes to comprehensive security. Developing such a shared narrative would enable us to approach gender issues more strategically.

The 2017 Annual Progress Report lists a range of recommendations that reflect the OiO findings. I will highlight a number of them that I think are particularly important for us to act on in the near future, including as part of the reform agenda:

1. **Strengthening leadership and accountability.** The Executive Gender Coaching pilot at directors-level was a good start. I believe it should be expanded to the heads and deputy heads of field operations and the Institutions. I have already introduced a mandatory gender objective in the performance management for my directors.
2. **Enhancing gender balance in senior management positions.** DHR took important steps last year by introducing the diversity scorecard, broadening the talent pool for recruitment, and raising awareness about sexual harassment. We need to build on this by reviewing and enhancing our internal policies and practices in recruitment and retention of staff.
3. **More women candidates for senior positions.** This is to quite an extent the responsibility of participating States, but we will help by documenting good practices from countries which have put in place effective measures to increase the number of women they nominate.
4. **Strengthening the Gender Focal Point network.** I am planning to introduce guidelines and instructions to achieve better positioning, recognition and resourcing of Gender Focal Points in all executive structures.

5. **Systematic capacity building of staff** by creating tailored, context-specific training and resource materials to improve gender mainstreaming throughout the OSCE. I will introduce mandatory gender training for all OSCE staff.
6. The report clearly spells out that **gender mainstreaming** has to be improved in all three dimensions; all executive structures need to take responsibility. Earlier this year, I announced a **Gender Champion award** for staff to raise awareness and offer an incentive to improving gender mainstreaming in the OSCE.
7. I want to promote better representation of women here, in the Hofburg, **in all conferences and meetings** organized by the Secretariat to avoid all-male panels – these so-called “manels” - and promote gender parity among speakers.
8. Finally, we can do more to secure **women’s participation in OSCE-supported peace processes**. In close coordination with the Troika, I will propose measures that might in future help facilitate the appointment of women as special or personal representatives, high-level mediators, heads of mission, and to other high-level positions.

Dear colleagues,

**Without gender equality, there can be no comprehensive security.** To achieve gender equality, further acceleration of OSCE performance is needed. This will require strong political support from the participating States, as well as additional financial and human resources. Based on plenty of evidence from research over the years, we can be certain that the OSCE will be more effective and our results more sustainable if our efforts are inclusive of both women and men. Based on the progress made in 2017, we have reason to look ahead with some optimism and renewed determination.

Finally, I want to thank the Gender Section for their work in preparing this report. I look forward to seeing further progress toward our shared goal of gender equality in the years to come.

Thank you.