



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°1110 Vienna, 18 June 2025

EU Statement for Security Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security: the Role of Women in Strengthening Defence and Ensuring Resilience

1. We warmly welcome the distinguished speakers to this meeting and thank them for their presentations and for sharing their experiences with us. We also commend the Estonian FSC Chairpersonship for keeping Women, Peace and Security high on our agenda and for today's specific topic on "The Role of Women in Strengthening Defence and Ensuring Resilience". We also thank the Chair for organising the special briefing earlier this morning about ODIHR's facilitator's guide that provides a methodology to assess armed forces' adherence to human rights and gender equality standards.
2. Madam Chair, the EU and its Member States recognise the important role of women in Armed Forces. Gender mainstreaming to enable more inclusivity and participation of women in planning and decision making at all leadership levels is an absolute priority. Integration of women's perspectives at all stages of preparation, planning and implementing of policy is proven to have more effective results in combat, peacebuilding and peacekeeping scenarios.
3. The UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions represent an essential tool for the involvement of women in all institutions and gender-responsive processes of conflict prevention, peace-making, peacebuilding and post-conflict rehabilitation. We recall the three OSCE ministerial decisions on this topic and call for their effective implementation: MC decision 3/11 on the conflict cycle reaffirming the significant role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding and urging participating States to implement UNSCR 1325 by ensuring increased representation of women at all levels in conflict resolution and peace processes, MC decision 7/09 that calls for equal opportunities within the security services, including the armed forces, and to allow for balanced recruitment, retention and promotion of men and women; as well as MC decision 14/05 on the need for concrete OSCE action to integrate women and women initiatives into all phases of the conflict cycle.

4. Madam Chair, tomorrow we commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflicts and we do so in sombre times. In 2023, United Nations-verified cases of conflict-related sexual violence increased by 50 per cent compared to 2022, which also show the dire need for the implementation of the WPS agenda. Reports continue to inform us of widespread sexual and gender-based violence also in the OSCE area, including in the context of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The use of sexual violence is a clear violation of international human rights, humanitarian, and criminal law. We strongly condemn all acts of sexual and gender-based violence in conflicts and reiterate our steadfast commitment to uphold international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and to end impunity for international crimes. We call on participating States to conduct effective investigations into these crimes, bring perpetrators to justice, ensure accountability, and provide all victims with safe and unhindered access to justice, and adequate redress as emphasised by the WPS agenda.
5. As per the MC decision 18/4, we recognise the importance of actively engaging men and boys in efforts towards elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and girls, including by addressing the root causes of gender inequality and violence and by raising awareness about the impact of negative attitudes, behaviours and gender stereotypes that can underlie and perpetuate discrimination and violence. In this vein, we look forward to the side event on "25 Years Women Peace and Security agenda – Men's role in countering unconscious bias" organised by the FSC Chair's Co-ordinator on matters relating to the UNSCR 1325 and the Men4Gen Network in the margins of the ASRC.
6. As the largest regional security organisation in the world the OSCE can make a strong contribution to the WPS agenda. We therefore very much welcome CiO Finland's OSCE-wide Roadmap on Women, Peace and Security that was launched during the CiO Gender conference in May this year. The Roadmap contains options for concrete, tangible actions that participating States can undertake on a voluntary basis to further the implementation of the WPS agenda.
7. We commend the ODIHR, the field missions and the Secretariat for their continuous engagement in the implementation of the WPS agenda and underline the importance of a strong cooperation among all relevant stakeholders in

implementing gender equality and WPS commitments. Civil society organisations, women-led and youth organisations, women human rights defenders, women peacekeepers and women peacebuilders have a crucial role to play as agents of change.

8. We recall our commitment to support women's and girls' equal, full, effective and meaningful participation, in all their diversity, including in all spheres of public and political life.

Thank you.

Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Republic of Moldova, Republic of Serbia, San Marino, Ukraine align themselves with this statement.