



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

The Secretary General's Annual Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality

Address to the PC by the OSCE Secretary General
Marc Perrin de Brichambaut
Vienna, 24 September 2009

Madam Chairperson,

Excellencies,

Dear Colleagues,

December of 2009 will mark five years since the participating States agreed on a comprehensive Action Plan to promote gender equality in the OSCE.

Looking back, I am pleased to report that there has been an acceleration of positive trends over the past year. As we move forward, however, our understanding of the obstacles that remain becomes more precise. In overcoming these obstacles, it is important that we take a more nuanced approach to implementing gender equality in the coming years.

Today's report covers the period from May 2008 to May 2009. It highlights examples of good practice that have developed during that period. It also points to areas of concern and challenges still to be met.

As you know, through the Action Plan, OSCE participating States have made the goal of equality between men and women an integral part of the Organization's policies -- within the OSCE's executive structures, in its operations and programmes, and at the level of the acquis of commitments undertaken by the participating States.

In examining these three areas, let me begin with the recruitment and employment practices of the executive structures. Here, one of the most significant improvements over the reporting period was a notable increase in the proportion of women in senior positions. These numbers have increased, slowly but steadily, in each year that the Action Plan has been in place. As of May 2009, 24% of senior managers in the OSCE were

women at present. This is a noteworthy increase from 19% last year, and this upward trend has continued in the months since the end of the reporting period.

This result is significant, but the context should be remembered -- given the small number of leadership positions overall in the OSCE, small fluctuations in recruitment and secondment can lead to dramatic increases or decreases.

This leads me to a less positive point, which I feel we should address. For the first time in five years, we have seen a *decrease* in the numbers of women nominated by the participating States for seconded positions. Between 2004 and 2008, the percentage of nominations of women had increased year by year. In 2009, it fell by six percent. To put this trend in context, I should also note also that even in the best of times, the participating States have never nominated more than one woman for every four men.

While I remain firmly committed to implementing the ambitious goals of the 2004 Action Plan, I would like to remind you that these goals require contributions from all – achieving gender equality must be a joint endeavour of the executive structures and the participating States. We must ensure that an appropriate number of women are nominated to top management vacancies in the Secretariat, the Institutions and the field operations.

Close analysis highlights enduring disparities also at levels just below the senior management categories. For instance, there are 40 men and only 14 women currently holding P4 positions. Recruitment figures for 2008-2009 indicate that barely one-fifth of applications to higher positions were submitted by women.

This overall picture is further complicated by wide disparities in the various thematic areas of the Organization's work. As in previous years, the OSCE has seen an under-representation of women in military and police matters. At present, only six out of 50 civilian police officers within the executive structures are female.

The good news is that we have taken note of these challenges and we are acting upon them. The Gender Section, led by Jamila Seftaoui to whom I would like to pay tribute along with her team, and the Department of Human Resources are taking steps to ensure that "*well qualified women are identified and attracted, in conformity with the Staff Regulations*" and the Gender Action Plan. The Gender Section has also launched a

project aimed at alleviating the imbalance in military and police matters, by maintaining a roster of women experts in the security field. I encourage all participating States to support this resource, and to keep it in mind when seeking specific expertise.

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Dear Colleagues,

Steps to improve the percentage of women employed by the executive structures are important. They are also transparent and easily measurable, and for this reason are more visible when we consider the Organization's overall efforts in the field of gender mainstreaming. But promoting gender equality is much more than just a 'numbers game.' The Action Plan calls for a comprehensive approach to gender equality – where the Organization can make a real difference is in its programmatic work and in promoting the highest possible standards among its participating States.

In this respect, the appointment of five deputy Heads of Mission as gender focal points is significant. The involvement of senior management in gender issues demonstrates a real commitment to the spirit of the Action Plan. The missions in question also provide a workable model to help ensure that gender-sensitive programming is pursued in all three dimensions. They also help to ensure that all staff has the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to mainstream gender in the missions' activities.

The Organization remains deeply committed to strengthening the skills and raising the gender awareness of its staff. During the reporting period, seminars, capacity-building and training sessions were conducted to the benefit of several hundred staff members.

The Action Plan calls for the integration of a gender perspective in OSCE activities and projects across each of three dimensions. This makes good sense. The link between security, democracy and prosperity is strong, and the three dimensions of OSCE work are intrinsically tied to one another. Gender issues are relevant to each dimension and help make for more effective projects and activities.

OSCE institutions and field operations are conducting vital work on women's legal rights, political participation and media projects. This year also saw important efforts to address gender issues in the economic and environmental dimension.

During the reporting period, field operations implemented almost 70 projects in which gender issues were given consideration and included in the thematic substance of their field work. This is an important achievement.

I am convinced that we can do more in this area. Involving women in project implementation, and targeting them as beneficiaries, is a crucial first step. The challenge remains to design and execute projects where women's and men's needs, and the differential impact and benefit to each sex, is a thread running through each project from start to finish.

In this respect, the support of the Gender Section has proved crucial in several field missions, which have undertaken gender assessments and are implementing concrete and closely monitored gender measures aimed at increasing the impact of their projects.

A few specific points are required on mainstreaming gender issues in the politico-military dimension.

While most projects in this dimension continue to be gender-blind, exemplary programs that integrate a gender dimension in police reform and community policing in Skopje, in Baku and in Kyrgyzstan were consolidated this year. These projects brought together many of the positive elements I have mentioned -- leadership, assistance to implementing staff in the field and close collaboration with our technical teams.

Community policing received special attention during the reporting period, as an important focus for many field operations and area of reform in a number of participating States. The Gender Section has published guidance on a gender-sensitive approach to community policing, which has proved very useful.

This publication joins other tools created by the Gender Section on integrating gender issues in specific thematic areas. Each of these tools provides a practical resource to assist staff in their work on gender mainstreaming. This work, in compiling good

practices and developing concrete guidelines, is also useful to the participating States. I urge delegates to become familiar with these materials and to share them widely in their capitals.

Ultimately, it is the participating States who bear the responsibility for implementing the commitments they have undertaken to ensure equal rights and opportunities for men and women.

The Action Plan tasks the OSCE with assisting the participating States in their own work to promote gender equality in several priority areas. Among these, the OSCE has emerged as a leader in developing responses to violence against women. The strength of the Organization in this respect is no accident. Violence against women is prevalent, to varying degrees, in all participating States. Addressing it has been a regular task for both governments and civil society. The Secretariat, institutions, and field offices have worked with host countries to consolidate the lessons of projects carried out in the OSCE region and beyond. The Gender Section published a compilation of good practices on combating all forms of violence against women.

The Secretariat has also facilitated information exchanges among experts from across the region, including both governmental and civil society organizations. The Special Human Dimension Meeting that is planned for November will provide another opportunity to capitalize on these strengths.

More can be done to reflect the aspirations contained in the Action Plan and Ministerial Council Decision 14 (2005) on women in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. Taking into account the experience and needs of women and men in conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction is vital for the fulfilment of women's human rights -- it can also ensure that programmes are more efficient and more successful.

I have already noted the work that must still be done regarding women in key military and police staff positions and to integrate gender issues in the politico-military dimension. Nonetheless, we have also seen some promising advances in this area. The work of field operations in Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro and Serbia merits special attention. Each has developed unique programmes to increase the participation of women

in conflict prevention, peace building and police reform. A number of participating States have given significant support for extra-budgetary gender projects to encourage a cross dimensional approach to gender mainstreaming. I would like to extend my thanks to those delegations.

In addition, with the aim of disseminating lessons learned from involving women in conflict prevention and post-conflict work, the Gender Section, ODIHR and the Forum for Security and Cooperation (FSC) are jointly organizing a series of roundtables in the security dialogue sessions. By addressing the links between gender and security issues (for example, in arms control, disarmament, crisis management and peace negotiations), the roundtables are reaching out to a wide audience and providing valuable entry points to help achieve key commitments under the Gender Action Plan.

Excellencies,

Dear colleagues,

This year has seen progress and development. This has been seen in the commitment shown by the executive structures to increase the share of women among senior managers, the continued mainstreaming of gender across themes and dimensions, the development of new tools, many of which are the result of collaboration across offices of the Secretariat and in the field, and the introduction of good practices that can be replicated throughout the Organization.

These advances have been underpinned by hard work and dedication to implementing the Action Plan. The OSCE Secretariat and institutions will continue to do more. So can the participating States – namely, in addressing the alarming decrease in female nominations noted in the reporting period and in maintaining the positive trend of support to extra-budgetary gender projects carried out in 2008-2009.

In this context, please allow me to say a few words regarding the proposal to streamline periods of service in the OSCE. As you know, I believe that our ability to establish and maintain stable managerial teams within the overall context of a non-career Organization is essential to our ability to deliver on the tasks we receive from the participating States. This is as true in the area of gender mainstreaming as it is in any other thematic field. Nonetheless, should the participating States decide to move this process forward, great

care will have to be taken to retain our focus on forceful implementation of the Action Plan and to ensure the continuation of the current trend of an increasing gender balance in the OSCE's management. I am working closely with the Senior Gender Advisor to develop specific steps to be taken in this regard.

In this respect, I would welcome an MC Decision under the leadership of the Greek Chairmanship to reinforce our efforts to promote gender equality. Several aspects come to mind, such as:

- ◆ increasing the nomination of women to key positions by the participating States to seconded positions;
- identifying and attracting more qualified women to our contracted vacancies;
and
- ◆ above all, reaffirming the commitment of the leadership of the OSCE family: Chairmanship, Delegations and Heads of Institutions, units and field operations, as well as you, the participating States.

2010 will feature important anniversary dates that will remind us of the need to continue implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (on women, peace and security) and Ministerial Council Decision 14/05 (on women in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation). The incoming Chairmanship, Kazakhstan, will benefit from the exemplary leadership of Finland and Greece in their dedication to gender equality. Let us mark these milestones with renewed determination to change for the better.

I thank you for your attention.