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Remarks by Ms. Milana Lazic, National Expert for Gender Equality,

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Although we align ourselves with the EU statement, let me make a few remarks in my national capacity.

The Republic of Serbia is dedicated to improvement of gender equality, as well as position of women and their participation in all aspects of life, including public, political, economic and social life within the country;

□ Government of the Republic of Serbia has formed **Coordination Body for Gender Equality** in 2014 with an aim to coordinate the Government efforts in the field of gender equality, as well to contribute to achieving greater gender equality in our society. As a national mechanism for gender equality, Coordination Body for Gender Equality is mandated to initiate and monitor implementation of strategic documents and laws in the field of gender equality, as well as give opinions and expert advice for the issues that are directly or

indirectly affecting gender equality within the Government and all other relevant institutions;

□ Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Construction, Transportation and Infrastructure and President of Coordination Body for Gender Equality is preparing new **Draft Law on Gender Equality**, which is soon expected to be put in the adoption procedure. This Law should amend the National Mechanism for Gender Equality on the national level and strengthen the coordination in the field of gender equality;

□ The Coordination Body for Gender Equality, along with the distinguished partners from the line ministries and institutions, as well as civil society and local self-governments, has coordinated a process of development of the **National Strategy for Gender Equality** for the period 2016 – 2020 and its first National Action Plan for the period 2016 – 2018. Both National Strategy and its Action Plan have been adopted in February 2016.

▪ The Strategy recognizes **3 strategic goals**:

1. Changed stereotypes, gender patterns and improved culture of gender equality;
2. Increased equality of women and men by implementing policy of equal opportunities and measures;
3. Introduction of gender mainstreaming in the policy adoption, implementation and monitoring processes at all levels of governance.

□ Following new data on **number of women in decision making** process in Serbia is increasing. There is an increase of women members of the Government - the number of women members of the Government has increased from 21% in the previous to 25% in the current Government composition, and remained at the fulfillment of quotas in the National Assembly at over 30% (33,33%). The percentage of women presidents of Local-Self Governments is approximately around 9% after the new elections and the number of women members of local parliaments from the previous elections estimates 19%.<sup>1</sup> We still need to improve the position of women in the

managerial structures, since data show that their number is approx. 25%.

□ The Republic of Serbia, has established **Gender Equality Index**, as the first national instrument for measurement of gender equality. Gender Equality Index Initiative was launched at the end of 2014 and was adopted in February 2016. Serbia became the first country outside of the EU to have adopted this instrument, based on the methodology of European Institute for Gender Equality. Gender Equality Index is covering 6 domains relevant to the measurement of the gender equality and it estimates **40.60** points in the Republic of Serbia, compared to the EU average of **52.9** points, out of 100 maximum points. (In these six domains, the score of the Republic of Serbia in domain of power is 43,0 compared to 39,7 of the EU.)

□ Serbia has introduced an obligation for all national institutions to incorporate the aspect of gender equality in their **budgetary programs**. Gender responsive budgeting is introduced as a principle in the new Law on Budgetary System and projections are that in 2020. all budgetary users will introduce this principle in their budgets. This is important form a standpoint of Istanbul Convention, since after inclusion of gender indicators, we will be able to look at budget spendings allocated for women and men, and thus can affect the allocation of budget on issues that are affecting women directly. This year 100 both male and female civil servants were trained from 43 institutions, and last year 347 of them at all levels of governance.

□ Coordination Body for Gender Equality has started negotiations with the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia for the possibility to pilot gender equality component of **IPA funds**, within sector budget support, which would be used to increase human capacities and strengthen national mechanisms in the field of gender equality in the Republic of Serbia.

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□ The data of the women members of LSG after the latest elections is not available yet.

- Serbia was among the first countries that have ratified the **CAHVIO** (Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, also known as Istanbul Convention) in October 2013, and from August 2014 the Convention has started being implemented. Next year Serbia will report to GREVIO committee in charge for monitoring the implementation of CAHVIO.
- The **new amendments of Criminal Code** in the Republic of Serbia will introduce for the first time new crimes recognized in CAHVIO, such as sexual harassment, stalking, genital mutilation and forced marriages, as well as increase punishments for criminal crime – rape.
- The Ministry of Justice is preparing the **Draft Law on Combatting Family Violence** which will contribute to the implementation of ratified Convention.
- At the same time, Coordination Body for Gender Equality, UN agencies and line ministries have started the implementation of the Project **“Integrated Response to Violence Against Women II“, with the support of SIDA**. The project started this September 2016 and it is expected to last 2 years. The project is expected to strengthen institutional framework and response to the violence against women, including the establishment of National Telephone Help line, work on prevention in schools, support social services to the victims and work with perpetrators, in line with both Istanbul Convention and Convention on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
- Serbia is under adoption procedure of the New NAP for the implementation of the **United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 – “Women, Peace and Security”** in Republic of Serbia for the period from 2016 to 2020. The Draft highlights the importance of the women security and safety, with special focus on vulnerable groups of women on the local level.

### **Final remarks**

- The new world challenges, among which I would point out threats to the human security and safety and our democratic and human rights' values, that we are facing today are shaping our new responses to those challenges. I believe changing world and deepen feminist perspective are giving us the opportunity to advance GE today compared to 2004 OSCE AP for Promotion of GE, therefore we should address the following emerging issues:
  - shift from women-for-women approach towards society approach: both men-and-women-for-women approach;
  - greater focus on prevention and investment in education of youth and children, peer to peer programs, as well as involvement of teachers, educators and parents to take an active role in prevention of violence and promotion of peaceful and non-violent communication;
  - human security of women, with special focus to vulnerable groups of women and women from minority groups;
  - developing and investing in culture in which violence will not be tolerated and invest in social cohesion that would keep our democratic and human rights' values high in the societal agenda.
- I would also like to express my **high gratitude to the Mission of OSCE in Serbia**, as our continuous partner for the improvement GE in Serbia.