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EU Statement on Human Rights in Armed Forces and Women, Peace and Security

The European Union (EU) and its Member States would like to warmly welcome today's speakers and thank them for the interesting and stimulating presentations on the issues of Human Rights in the Armed Forces and on Women, Peace and Security.

Only one week ago, at the Third Annual Discussion on its implementation, the Member States of the European Union had the excellent opportunity to reiterate our unwavering commitment and strong support for the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security and, in particular, for its role in promoting and upholding the human rights in the armed forces.

The conditions of service are an important aspect of the social and economic rights of the members of armed forces. We share the view that the respective competent authorities should take the necessary measures in order to ensure that conditions of service are duly implemented in accordance with the national law and international obligations. The involvement of parliamentarians and representative associations in determining the conditions of service is a key component of the social dialogue and the democratic control of armed forces. We look forward to discussing this in further detail tomorrow, 17 July, during the conference on Conditions of Service and Human Rights in Armed Forces.

We thank ODIHR for organising this conference and wish to express once again our sincere appreciation for its important contribution in view of strengthening the implementation of human rights commitments by participating States, in particular with regard to their armed forces members.

Mr. Chairman, The European Union and its Member States would like to express our gratitude also to the OSCE Secretariat's Gender Section and, in particular, to Ambassador Miroslava Beham, for their determined efforts to advance the Organisation's activities to strengthen the role of women in achieving peace and security. The Gender Equality Review Conference, that took place last week to mark the 10th anniversary of the OSCE Gender Action Plan, clearly demonstrated the keen interest of the representatives of participating States and the civil society in taking this task further.

We remain firmly convinced that the OSCE has an important role to play in the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and related resolutions. We support therefore further efforts in view of increased involvement of women throughout the conflict cycle, as well as of the protection of women in armed conflicts, including by prevention of sexual violence.

We are pleased that the FSC was able to agree upon wording on women, peace and security in the MC decision 8/13 on SALW and SCA adopted in Kyiv and stand ready to actively contribute to its full implementation. At the same time, we encourage all participating States to consider further steps to take into account gender aspects in the implementation of the OSCE SALW commitments. The OSCE Action Plan on SALW constitutes a natural reference point for such an effort.

Equally, we welcome the increasing number of participating States providing on a voluntary basis information on the implementation of Resolution 1325 within the information exchange on the Code of Conduct. However, we would like to stress that it would be beneficial to discuss the information that has already been provided with a view of lessons learned and possible good practices for the national implementation of Resolution 1325. In this respect, we commend the initiative taken by the Gender Section to carry out a Study on National Action Plans and other relevant national strategies for the implementation of Resolution 1325.

In conclusion, we wish to reiterate our continued support for the development of an OSCE-Wide Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

The candidate countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO, SERBIA and ALBANIA, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, the EFTA countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ARMENIA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and MONACO align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.