



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1432 Vienna, 13 July 2023

EU Statement on the Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the OSCE 2004 Action Plan on the Promotion of Gender Equality

1. The European Union thanks OSCE Secretary General Helga Schmid for her presentation on the Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Sofia 2004 OSCE Action Plan on the Promotion of Gender Equality. Implementing our OSCE commitments on gender equality is vital for reaching progress on our commitments on human rights and comprehensive security.
2. Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine continues to have a particularly devastating impact on the security of women and girls. We should not forget that crises and conflicts deepen pre-existing gender gaps. The destruction of livelihoods and educational opportunities affects women and girls disproportionately. The use of sexual and gender-based violence, including as a tactic of war, as documented *inter alia* in the ODIHR and Moscow Mechanism reports, is immensely alarming. The EU strongly condemns these illegal, brutal and cowardly actions.
3. It is unacceptable that in 2023, women and girls still face gender discrimination, stereotyping, and sexual and gender-based violence, preventing them from reaching their full potential and fulfilling their aspirations, and hindering their full and equal enjoyment of human rights. We encourage all participating States to implement the commitments in the OSCE Gender Action Plan and take into consideration the recommendations of the report.
4. We value the work of the OSCE Secretariat, autonomous institutions, field missions, as well of the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Gender, in supporting participating States in implementing their OSCE

commitments, and we highly appreciate the work of the OSCE structures and institutions to change the gender dynamics in the organisational culture. We welcome the introduction of the staff instruction on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and the revision of the instruction on sexual harassment. We especially welcome activities aimed at engaging men in gender equality, as their involvement is key for achieving progress.

5. As stated in the Gender Equality Progress Report, accountability and strong leadership are needed for implementing gender mainstreaming. Therefore, we regret the decrease in the number of women seconded to senior management staff positions within the organisation, from 42% in 2020 to 27% in 2022. We strongly encourage participating States to be mindful of gender balance in nomination processes, to second more female candidates to senior management positions, to keep statistics on female nominations and to share this information with the Secretariat.
6. Gender mainstreaming into the monitoring and evaluation of all OSCE activities, programmes and projects is essential. Such an approach benefits activities in all three dimensions. We warmly thank the North Macedonia Chairpersonship for keeping gender issues high on the OSCE agenda and we look forward to the upcoming Gender Conference in Tetovo on 5-6 September.
7. Gender equality is a core principle of the EU and we stand ready to work tirelessly, both within the EU and with our international partners, to make it a reality.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, the Potential Candidate Country GEORGIA, and the EFTA country LIECHTENSTEIN, member of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA, MONACO and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.