



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting Warsaw, 22 September - 3 October 2014

EU Statement for Working Session 7: Tolerance and Non-Discrimination I

Madam/Mister Moderator,

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States,

Gender equality is an essential element of a democratic society. It is one of the founding values of the EU and a fundamental right reflected in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. We therefore strongly support efforts to advance gender equality within the OSCE area and beyond.

The OSCE as a regional security organization and with its comprehensive concept of security is in a unique position to advance gender equality. We believe the 10th anniversary of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality provides us with an excellent opportunity to actively seek ways to further strengthen our work towards achieving gender equality. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Swiss Chairmanship, ODIHR and the OSCE Secretariat for convening the Gender Equality Review Conference in Vienna in July. The conference allowed us to take stock of our efforts in implementing the Action Plan, including identifying gaps in the implementation of the commitments as well as seeking new ways forward.

The OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality highlights the importance of implementing the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and related resolutions, which remain highly relevant. We are convinced that the UNSCR 1325 needs to be implemented in a holistic and comprehensive manner. We therefore support the development of an OSCE-Wide Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.



EUROPEAN UNION

Another important focus area outlined in the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality is advancing the political participation of women in the participating States. Much remains to be done to ensure the equal participation of women in democratic processes. We wish to highlight that OSCE commitments, inter alia, call on the participating States to consider legislative measures to facilitate a more balanced participation of women and men in political and public life and decision-making. Particular attention needs to be paid to vulnerable groups such as Roma and Sinti women and girls, women and girls belonging to indigenous peoples, women and girls with disabilities and LGBTI persons who often face multiple forms of discrimination. We commend the work of ODIHR and other relevant OSCE structures in advancing the political participation of women and encourage further efforts in this regard.

We would also like to recall the importance of combating and eradicating all forms of violence against women – a topic that will be discussed in more detail tomorrow. Violence against women is the most wide-spread human rights violation of our time. We look forward to actively working further in the OSCE to enhance our common efforts to eradicate violence against women.

The Gender Equality Review Conference served to highlight the need to ensure a strong and sustainable institutionalization of gender issues in the work of the OSCE. We thank the current and incoming Chairmanships-in-Office for their related conclusions in this regard. We stand ready to actively engage in the work to ensure that a gender perspective is integrated in the policy, planning and decision making processes as well as in the programmatic work of the OSCE from the beginning.

Finally, we would like to present the following recommendations to the OSCE and to the participating States:



EUROPEAN UNION

- 1) Improve through concrete measures the implementation of the OSCE 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality and report on the progress made.

- 2) Ensure a strong and sustainable institutionalization of gender issues in the OSCE, including by facilitating a gender equality network of the participating States, convening regular Gender Equality Review Conferences as well as taking all necessary measures to ensure that a gender perspective is integrated and mainstreamed in the policy and operational work of the OSCE.

- 3) Enhance efforts to adopt an OSCE-Wide Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

- 4) Finally, we encourage participating States to introduce measures that will result in increased representation of women in political and public life and, as relevant, to seek support from ODIHR and other OSCE structures in this regard.

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, and the EFTA countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ARMENIA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA, MONACO and SAN MARINO 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.