



## STATEMENT OF THE HOLY SEE

### 2017 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

*Working Session 16: TnD - Equality between men and women*

**Warsaw, 21 September 2017**

Mr./Mme Moderator,

The Holy See fully supports the specific attention given within the OSCE to women as well as to their political, economic, social and cultural participation, alongside and on the same level as men, reflecting the OSCE agreed commitments, aimed at advancing the “full and true equality between men and women [as] a fundamental aspect of a just and democratic society based on the rule of law”<sup>1</sup>.

Therefore, the Holy See joined the consensus on the “2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality”, reflecting its hope that the Action Plan would provide concrete measures and goals to move the OSCE and the 57 participating States, together and in unison, forward towards achieving the overdue equality between the two sexes. At the 2<sup>nd</sup> OSCE Gender Review Conference, held in Vienna earlier this year, the Holy See expressed its conviction that “the first step to advance the equality between men and women, and to challenge effectively what stands in its way, must be the recognition of the importance of women’s participation and engagement in all aspects of cultural, social, political, and economic life, offering a true vision of women’s inherent and inalienable dignity and aspirations” (PC.DEL/806/17 13 June 2017). This would also include the important recognition that equality between men and women is not about promoting women’s “sameness with men”, in some attempt to annul the differences between the two sexes. Such an approach would not advance our common efforts, rather the opposite.

Searching for an authentic and true equality between men and women within the OSCE region and within the Organization itself must consist of concrete, practical, everyday issues: equal access to political engagement and participation, equal pay for equal work, fairness in career advancements, equality of spouses with regard to family rights and duties, and protection for working mothers<sup>2</sup>, as well as for mothers who chose to stay in the home.

To advance our common efforts, the Delegation of the Holy See wishes to make the following two recommendations:

- that ODIHR continue its assistance to participating States in advancing the political participation of women; and
- that ODIHR ensure that its engagement with this issue is based on the common understanding of the OSCE participating States.

The Delegation of the Holy See reiterates its readiness to engage constructively with any other Delegation on the issue of equality between men and women.

Thank you, Mr./Mme Moderator.

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<sup>1</sup> Document of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE, Moscow, 3 October 1991, Principle 40.

<sup>2</sup> Cfr. John Paul II, Letter to women, 1995.