



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Warsaw, 19 - 30 September 2016**

**Working session 14: Tolerance and non-discrimination II,
including ensuring equal opportunity for women and men in all
spheres of life, including through the implementation of the OSCE
Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality**

Madam Moderator,

I am honored to speak on behalf of the European Union. I would like to deliver our key messages and recommendations on today's topic.

Promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women is a very important priority for the European Union. We strongly support the efforts to promote gender equality in the OSCE region. This is a major objective for us. Equality is one of the founding values of the EU and a fundamental right reflected in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Moreover, we have committed ourselves to promote gender equality through the Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality (2016-2019), the Gender Action Plan (2016-2020), and the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2015-2019).

We remain concerned of the low number of women in leading roles and positions related to conflict prevention and resolution. Conflict resolution and peace processes are more likely to succeed if women meaningfully participate in them. We therefore encourage further efforts to improve the gender balance in all work on peace and security, including with regard to senior OSCE positions, from both the Secretariat and participating States. Gender equality is both a goal in itself and a mean to achieve security, stability and peace.

Gender mainstreaming and promotion of gender equality has a positive impact on OSCE's policies and programmes and we welcome continued efforts in this regard. However, we have noticed that despite good intentions and efforts only around half of the OSCE's projects have reported about gender aspects and most of them in a very limited way. It is thus



EUROPEAN UNION

important to identify ways to further mainstream gender equality commitments throughout the Organization, including at the highest levels and in senior management decision-making.

We see gender mainstreaming as a key strategy to achieve gender equality. We stress the importance of addressing gender equality and empowerment of women as a cross-dimensional topic.

In 2015, the year of the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, there were significant developments regarding the normative framework of gender equality at the global level. The new Sustainable Development Goals and the Agenda 2030 were adopted by the UN with a stand-alone goal on the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The UNSCR 2242 on women, peace and security renewed the call on regional organizations to work on the inclusion of women in peace and security issues. Now, it is time to further improve the implementation of those commitments by concrete and well-resourced action.

We remain concerned of violence against women and girls, including sexual and gender based violence, in the OSCE area. Violence against women and girls is a serious human rights violation. The OSCE Ministerial Council Decision 7/14 taken in Basel in December 2014 marks an important step to tackle the issue in the OSCE area and we welcome the follow-up with concrete actions by the OSCE executive structures and participating States.

Violence against women and girls is rooted in unequal power relations and persisting gender roles in the society. Cultural understandings related to masculinity need to be broadened, attitudes need to be changed and traditional, unequal gender roles need to be deconstructed. Achieving this will have positive effects on security, stability and peace.

The OSCE 2004 Gender Action Plan needs updating to also take into account new global developments in the area of gender equality. We support further efforts to adopt an addendum with the view to bringing added value to the Action Plan, as tasked by the Basel Ministerial Council in 2014.

We note with concern that reporting on progress on the implementation of the OSCE Gender Action Plan 2004 is challenging due to the lack of monitoring and reporting



EUROPEAN UNION

mechanisms. We know that sufficient resourcing is necessary to achieve results. We would appreciate more information about how this could be addressed in the OSCE.

Internal accountability within OSCE structures for the implementation of the Gender Action Plan also needs further strengthening. Implementation of a gender marker system in the Unified Budget is a useful step forward and we would like to emphasize our support to it.

We would like to highlight that mentor networks and other types of networks for women are a useful tool to empower women and increase their equal participation in different spheres of life. This year's Annual Evaluation Report of the Secretary General focuses on this theme in its thematic chapter and it contains some very interesting examples of mentor networks in different participating States. The positive effects of mentor programs are also supported by research. In order to achieve gender equality both women's and men's active commitment and participation is required, in this regard one must also consider specific programs aiming at getting men on board into this transformative agenda for change, for example through coaching or mentoring.

We would like to present the following **recommendations** to the OSCE and to the participating States:

- Continue to work towards an update and strengthening of the OSCE 2004 Gender Action Plan and to adopt an addendum with the view to bringing added value to the Action Plan. Significant efforts were invested into agreeing on an Addendum in Belgrade.
- Enhance reporting and accountability on the implementation of the Action Plan. Explore how the internal accountability to ensure senior leadership and management actively support and facilitate the full implementation of the OSCE Gender Action Plan.
- Enhance efforts to combat violence against and sexual exploitation of women and girls throughout the OSCE area, including in the armed conflicts.



EUROPEAN UNION

- Increase the engagement and participation of men and boys in the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, including domestic violence.
- Enhance efforts to adopt the OSCE-Wide Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security that was initiated by Austria, Finland, Kazakhstan and Turkey in 2013.
- Encourage participating States to further increase representation of women in political and public life, and encourage States to fully implement the UNSC 1325 resolution and its subsequent resolutions.
- Improve the gender balance in all work on peace and security, including with regard to senior OSCE positions, from both the Secretariat and participating States.
- Strengthen commitments on human rights education and training on gender equality issues.

Thank you.

The Candidate Countries TURKEY, 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, GEORGIA and ANDORRA 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.