



## EUROPEAN UNION

### **OSCE Permanent Council No 1157 Vienna, 28 September 2017**

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#### **EU statement on the Secretary General's Annual Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality**

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The European Union and its Member States would like to thank the Secretary-General and the CiO's Special Representative on Gender Issues for their presentations and comments on the Annual Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality. We welcome the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General during the reporting period. We also highly value the contributions made by various OSCE structures, the Senior Adviser on Gender Issues and her team, the gender focal points, as well as the autonomous institutions. Moreover, we welcome the organisation of the second OSCE Gender Equality Review Conference under the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship this year, which shed some light on the progress made in implementing the OSCE Action Plan for the promotion of gender equality, as well as areas where more focus is required.

The EU has always been a strong advocate for gender equality and the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the OSCE. Incorporating a gender perspective and ensuring the equal participation of men and women in the OSCE's activities are key for sustainable peace, security and stability in the region.

Comprehensive gender mainstreaming requires a cross-dimensional approach, which the OSCE is well equipped to do. We are therefore pleased to note the progress made on the implementation of the OSCE Gender Action Plan. However, there still is much that needs to be done in order to fully implement existing commitments. A more structured, mandatory and outcome-oriented approach in mainstreaming gender into all OSCE's activities can be a useful tool in this regard. For example, mandating gender mainstreaming in all projects

would be in line with OSCE commitments. The use of gender disaggregated data to design and evaluate activities and policies should become common practice.

We welcome the Secretary General's efforts to focus on results-based reporting in the annual report, and agree that it is very difficult to measure results without clear benchmarks. Going forward we hope that the report can be streamlined to focus on outcomes, aided by the use of gender markers.

We note the impetus provided on specific aspects by two of the Ministerial Decisions and Declarations adopted in Hamburg. In this regard, we encourage the Chairman-in-Office to mainstream gender in all draft decisions and declarations tabled for the Vienna Ministerial Council.

With regard to capacity building we welcome an increased commitment within the OSCE Secretariat to integrate gender issues within regular training activities, such as in the Conflict Prevention Centre and the initiative of the Security Management Section's provision of training on women's security awareness. We are also very pleased that Secretariat Senior Management, including the Secretary General, are undertaking the Gender Coach programme and hope to see concrete results. The efforts to incorporate gender issues within the topics of SSG/R and VERLT, as well as to take account of UNSCR 2242, are also commendable.

We welcome the positive trend of assigning Deputy Heads of Mission as Gender Focal Points, which has happened in three Field Operations in 2016. These positions should not be voluntary, and the specification should be reflected in the objectives of the jobholder. We would like to see a standardised Terms of Reference for Gender Focal Points, to be used by all OSCE executive structures and field operations.

The overall decrease in the percentage of women in senior positions, especially in Field Missions, in the SMM and in other politico-military roles, remains a concern. This has been observed first hand by the Special Representative during her recent visit to Ukraine. Further efforts to increase the number and active participation of women in OSCE structures and formats dealing with conflict prevention, conflict resolution and mediation are needed, including as regards senior level appointments. In that regard we would like to welcome the joint

UNODA/OSCE training that seeks to promote the full and equal participation of women in disarmament and non-proliferation.

We welcome the efforts of the Gender Adviser in the Special Monitoring Mission to address the challenges – which as noted in the report are both internal and external – to the Mission's work on gender. We note that information on gender is routinely omitted from SMM reporting, and ask the Mission to ensure that the gender perspective is included in future reports.

We acknowledge the challenges of achieving the full participation of women in the 1<sup>st</sup> Dimension, but, in the spirit of UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions, failure to address the problem will undermine our efforts in the prevention, management and resolution of conflict. Women must be included at all stages in order to achieve lasting security in our region. We believe that there is more that can and should be done and reiterate our support for the adoption of an OSCE-Wide Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

The 2016 conference on Combatting Violence Against Women was strongly supported by the EU, but much more work needs to be done in this vital area. The EU also notes that violence against women and girls carries social and economic costs. Recognition and establishment of the costs of violence against women and girls is powerful advocacy tool to bridge the gap between declarations and actions. We would wish to see further activities by the OSCE and participating States in the area of violence against women, to finally end these insidious violations of basic human rights and ensure impunity becomes a thing of the past. We remind participating States of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls, launched at the UNGA two weeks ago by the UNSG and HR/VP, backed up with funding of €500 million.

The OSCE MenEngage network remains a useful mechanism to ensure men are actively involved in the promotion of gender equality, as we have seen put into practice by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo and the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek. We would welcome similar activities, particularly in the field of preventing violence against women, as recommended at last year's OSCE conference on the subject. We commend the leadership of the Network's Chairman and urge all participating States and OSCE structures to proactively reinforce the network and

its work.

We welcome the comprehensive set of recommendations in this year's report. We feel there is merit in considering an update to the 2004 Action Plan, but underline the need to maintain focus on implementing all outstanding commitments in the existing Action Plan. We are fully committed to doing more to combat violence against women and to counter VERLT. The proposal for an OSCE-wide Action Plan on implementing UNSCR 1325 would be a useful tool regarding the latter.

In conclusion, the EU stands ready to work with other participating States, OSCE structures and Field Missions, as well as ODIHR, HCNM and RFoM, to promote gender equality across the OSCE region, in all three dimensions. We also welcome the development of the 2017-2020 Road Map on the implementation of the Gender Action Plan. We look forward to continue the discussions we had at the Second Gender Equality Review Conference, the Prague Forum and the recent Chairmanship conference on Security Sector Governance and Reform, including on ways to strengthen women's economic empowerment and increased participation in the security sector. Additionally we are keen to explore the possible need to institutionally strengthen gender structures and improve the systemisation of work in this field, including the creation of a knowledge hub to act as a repository of best practice and expert guidance.

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 ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA 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.