



EUROPEAN UNION

Concluding meeting of the 29th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum Prague, 9 - 10 September 2021

EU Closing Statement

During the past two days we have had the opportunity to discuss the topic of gender equality while touching upon the crucial issues of policymaking, taxation, budgeting, sustainable recovery, education, the labour market and pensions. We would like to thank all the speakers and moderators for their valuable contributions that reminded us of the complexity of the topic of women's economic empowerment.

We discussed the concerning realities and statistics which reveal the unequal opportunities women can expect in their careers in comparison to men. In 2021, it is unacceptable for women's work to not be valued equally, to disproportionately place the burden of work on one half of the population or for gender stereotypes to affect people's lives.

Efficient solutions to enhance gender equality are not self-evident. This is why it is crucial that impact assessment of all policies, projects and investments, those planned or already implemented, incorporate gender perspective and work with gender-disaggregated data. When drafting budgets and policies, we need to be aware of the potential gender equality impacts. We should adopt and apply gender-specific indicators in policy and project development, monitoring and evaluation phases. We need to harness the potential of education to contribute to the cultural change that liberates both women and men.

We look forward to utilising all the discussions that we have engaged in throughout the year and to collectively identifying ways to make our societies more fair and just, which is not possible without progress on gender equality. We hope to find concrete language for actions, which will steer us in the right direction and encourage women and men to become equal earners and equal carers, eliminating incentives that perpetuate unequal gender roles.

We also hope for a positive outcome on the negotiation of the Ministerial draft decisions focusing on security in relation to climate and the environment. The majority of our citizens recognise climate change as a major threat to our societies and in order for the OSCE to remain relevant, it is essential for us to address both climate and environmental challenges that our countries are facing, without exception.

In conclusion, we would like to thank the Swedish Chairpersonship and the OSCE Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities and his team for organising this meeting and the Czech Republic for kindly hosting us in the Czernin Palace. We would also like to express our appreciation to the organisers of the side events, which were a valuable addition to our discussions within the Economic and Environmental Forum.

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

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