

Buantoscáireacht na hÉireann
don Eagraíocht um Shlándaíl agus Comhar san Eoraip
Permanent Mission of Ireland to the
Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe



Statement by Ireland at the 1499th Meeting of the Permanent Council
On the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
28 November 2024

Thank you Madam Chair,

I am speaking on behalf of the following participating States: Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Georgia, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, The Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States, and my own country, Ireland.

On 25th of November, we observed the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and initiated 16 days of activism against gender-based violence.

As we mark the 20th anniversary of the OSCE Gender Action Plan this year, and the 25th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 next year, we reiterate our commitment to combatting discrimination and the harmful gender stereotypes which underpin gender-based violence. We believe that by empowering both women and girls, and men and boys, we can fight both the underlying causes and consequences of gender-based violence.

Madam Chair,

Situations of armed conflict increase the risk of various forms of violence against women and girls, including intimate partner violence, domestic violence, conflict-related sexual violence, and more. This link is recognised in UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions on Women, Peace and Security, as well as recent reports from the UN Secretary General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence. We condemn all instances of conflict-related sexual violence, including in the course of Russia's unprovoked, unjustifiable, and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine.

The Moscow Mechanism Report on arbitrarily detained civilians and reports by the UN Independent Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine have documented how Russia uses sexual and gender-based violence to instill fear and quash resistance. The latter reports identified repeated instances of conflict-related sexual violence, in relation to house-searches in the Russia-occupied areas of Ukraine and in detention. We condemn these actions, which add to Russia's catalogue of violations of international humanitarian law, and we call on Russia to implement the Commission's recommendations.

We furthermore commend Ukraine for following up on the Commission's recommendations, including improving its capacity to respond to sexual and gender-based violence and adopting an action plan which takes a human rights-based and survivor-centered approach. It is vital that the international community also comes together to address and prevent conflict-related sexual violence.



Madam Chair,

It is important to note that violence against women and girls, in all their diversity, is not limited to times of conflict. It is a phenomenon endemic in all of our societies. Indeed, almost one in three women globally has been subjected to physical violence. It is also alarming that, according to UNODC, killings of women and girls on the basis of their gender are on the rise.

A key element of the 2004 Action Plan is its recognition of the role of negative gender stereotypes in the persistence of violence against women and girls, and the need to tackle them by empowering women and girls in all spheres of public, political and economic life.

Gendered norms and stereotypes restrict the expected behaviour of both women and men and are harmful for all. For men and boys, this can contribute to high suicide rates, overrepresentation in crime statistics, and violent behaviour. Violence against women and girls, should therefore not be viewed as solely a women's and girls' issue, engaging men and boys is essential in moving forward.

The consequences of violence against women and girls are also not limited to them. Systemic violence prevents women and girls from the full enjoyment of their human rights and, by extension, our societies, from reaching their full potential. This stifles economic development and undermines collective security. The economic empowerment of women is vital for both improving economic prospects and ensuring women's economic autonomy, thereby reducing the risk of gender-based violence and enabling women's full, equal and meaningful participation in the economy. Combined with clear measures that hold perpetrators accountable, and holistic support for survivors, this strengthens our societies as a whole.

Madame Chair,

Violence against women and girls is truly a cross-dimensional issue. The OSCE is therefore well-placed to help participating States address the underlying causes and has done so in numerous ways, including through its WIN project and the work of the autonomous institutions and field presences. The OSCE has provided support to law enforcement, and connected grassroots women's organisations on the frontline of countering gender-based violence.

OSCE efforts alone are not enough to eliminate violence against women and girls. We, the participating States must invest sufficient political will and resources in addressing the root causes of violence by addressing gender equality more systematically, including by enabling women's full, equal, meaningful, and safe access to all spheres and decision-making power.

Madam Chair,

Violence against women and girls is the product of patriarchal attitudes which still permeate much of our societies.

Only by working together, all states, all genders, can we overcome it.