



STATEMENT BY TURKEY

2014 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting Working Session 8 – Violence against women and children Warsaw, 26 September 2014

Thank you, Mr. Moderator.

Women and girls all over the world suffer disproportionately from violence in all spheres of life. Unfortunately, the failure to recognize the rights of women leads to perpetuation of gender-based violence. No country is immune from violence against women, and in the OSCE area much more needs to be done to put an end to the cycle of such violence.

Turkey takes the issue of violence against women very seriously. We have carried out extensive legislative and practical protective work for combating violence against women. We recognize that there are still challenges ahead to eradicate the problem but we are resolved to maintain our efforts to that end.

Turkey actively contributed to the elaboration of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence – the Istanbul Convention – and it is the first country to sign and to ratify the Convention.

In order to transpose the provisions of the Istanbul Convention into our domestic legislation, the Law on “Protection of the Family and the Elimination of Violence against Women” was put into force in 2012. This is a groundbreaking piece of legislation, as it is the first law in Turkey that defines and tackles domestic violence, broadening the scope of previous legislation to cover all women victims regardless of their marital status, as well as other members of the family. The law also establishes “Centers for Monitoring and Preventing Violence”, offering support and monitoring services 24 hours a day, with pilot projects launched in 14 provinces.

At the Parliamentary level, the Committee on Equality of Opportunity for Women and Men, which was established in Parliament in 2009, has been complemented with sub-committees to address issues such as “Early Marriages” and “Psychological Violence Exercised on Women”.

Drafting national action plans is another useful policy tool. The “National Action Plan on Combating Domestic Violence Against Women” for the years 2012-2015 was prepared with

the participation of NGOs and women research centers, and it targets the improvement of the implementation of legislative measures, awareness raising, protective services, delivery of health services and cooperation between relevant institutions.

As Ms. Logar also pointed out in her introductory remarks, women's shelters are one of the most important mechanisms in protecting and supporting women victims of violence. Women's shelters have been spreading rapidly in Turkey, and currently a total of 129 shelters are available. Women counseling centers and hotlines are among other protection and support mechanisms.

In sum, Turkey perceives violence against women as a flagrant violation of human rights which cannot be justified on any social, cultural or religious grounds whatsoever. We intend to do our utmost to prevent such violence at all levels.

Thank you.