

Key recommendations and conclusions of side-event¹

“Right down to the roots – what does it take to prevent violence against women?”

On 21 September 2017, The OSCE Gender Section, UN Women and UNFPA brought together experts, international actors and civil society organizations in Warsaw to identify successful approaches to prevent violence against women and provide recommendations to the OSCE participating States and executive structures.

Key recommendations proposed by panel members and participants to combat violence against women:

- Gender-based violence against women is a **fundamental violation of human rights**. It is widespread and prevalent in every country in the OSCE region, and participating States should take comprehensive measures to eliminate it, in line with the CEDAW Convention and the new General Recommendation 35 of the CEDAW Committee.
- **Additional knowledge and analysis is needed** to identify the root causes of gender-based violence, namely harmful gender norms and behaviours across the board and at all levels, and to develop innovative and effective approaches.
- The OSCE executive structures can play an important role by **creating a platform for exchange of best practices on a regular basis and supporting policy reform to prevent** all forms of gender-based violence against women. In particular, the OSCE can play a strong role in building awareness and capacity within the security sector to prevent violence against women.
- The OSCE participating States are encouraged to **strengthen the commitments** on combating violence against women, establish clear goals in line with international conventions including the CEDAW convention and the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention.
- In order to transform deeply rooted social norms and behaviours that are harmful to women and girls, a **comprehensive and co-ordinated approach is needed**. The OSCE, UN agencies, other international organizations and civil society have to work closely together at the regional and national level, building on each other’s added value, expertise and mandate.
- **Working with men and boys** is an important component of combating violence against women and they should be involved as allies and role models on non-violent masculinities.
- **Innovative prevention programmes need to be developed** to be sustainable, long-term and continuous, take into account those who are often left behind, like minorities, youth, migrants and women with disabilities and target non-traditional actors like the private sector, religious leaders and other influencers.
- Awareness raising of **senior leadership** on the impact of deeply embedded gender norms in the organizational culture and emphasizing zero tolerance policies is important in all sectors, especially the security and defence sector.
- Strengthen **partnerships with civil society organizations** which assist victims of GBV thus making the perspectives of survivors an integral part of policy and law making
- Promote the **inclusion of women in the decision making** process of security, including at leadership level
- Effective prevention of gender-based violence **goes hand in hand with the establishment of strong protection mechanisms** for women and girls, and accessible and quality services for survivors of violence.

¹ These recommendations reflect opinions expressed individually by participants in the context of the side event on preventing violence against women on 21 September 2017, and do not necessarily imply an official endorsement or acceptance by OSCE, UN Women or UNFPA.