



EUROPEAN UNION

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EU Statement for the Security Dialogue: Women in armed forces: challenges and perspectives

We warmly welcome the distinguished speakers to this meeting and thank them for their presentations and for sharing their experiences with us. We also commend the FSC Chairpersonship for addressing the critical issue of “Women in armed forces: challenges and perspectives”.

Madam Chair, the EU and its Member States recognise the important role of women in Armed Forces. Gender mainstreaming and enabling more inclusivity and participation of women in planning and decision making at all leadership levels is an absolute priority. Integration of women’s voices and a gender perspective at all stages of preparation, planning and implementing of policy is proven to have more effective results in both combat and peacekeeping scenarios.

In this context, we commend the participation of Ukrainian women soldiers in all positions in the rightful self-defense of Ukraine against Russia’s war of aggression. The significant role of women in political-military processes, peacebuilding and security structures has been recognised by participating States in the OSCE Action Plan for the promotion of Gender Equality from 2004 and in three further OSCE ministerial decisions. We call for the effective implementation of these: MC decisions 3/11 and 14/05 on the conflict cycle and MC decision 7/09 that calls for equal opportunities within the security services, including the armed forces, and to allow for balanced recruitment, retention and promotion of men and women.

These are commitments that we all have agreed on and we must move forward to ensure that they are properly implemented in practice. As High Representative Kallas said at the High-Level Meeting on Women, Peace and Security in the margins of the 80th session of the UN General Assembly, “At a period when there are more international conflicts ongoing since the Second World War, we must not let the work on women in peace and security fall through the cracks. On the contrary. Our focus on advancing the role of women in peace and security should

be laser sharp.” “The European Union’s goal is to ensure that women are fully involved in defense and security policy at every stage.”

The WPS agenda represents an essential framework for ensuring full, equal and meaningful representation and leadership of women in the security sector. We therefore welcome the OSCE-wide Roadmap on Women, Peace and Security that was launched last year. The Roadmap contains options for concrete, tangible actions that participating States can undertake on a voluntary basis to further the implementation of the WPS agenda.

Other helpful OSCE tools are the ODIHR produced compendium on Human Rights of the Armed Forces personnel that presents concrete actions to increase women’s participation in the armed forces and the respective institutional compliance to human rights norms and standards. We also acknowledge the guidance on voluntary reporting on WPS under the Code of Conduct, which helps to improve the exchange of data and best practices on WPS amongst participating States.

We commend the ODIHR, the field missions and the Secretariat for their continuous engagement in the implementation of the OSCE commitments in this regard and underline the importance of a strong cooperation between key stakeholder and civil society organisations in implementing gender equality and WPS commitments. Civil society organisations, women-led organisations, women human rights defenders, women peacekeepers and women peacebuilders have a crucial role to play as agents of change. And as the High Representative highlighted, we also need men to engage to make a difference.

Madam Chair, gender equality and human rights are at the core of universal values and constitute stand-alone priorities mainstreamed across all European Union policies. The EU will continue to support women and youth’ equal full, effective and meaningful participation, in all their diversity and in all spheres of public and political life, as per the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2027.

Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Ukraine align themselves with this statement.

Thank you.