



Delegation of Canada  
to the OSCE

Délégation du Canada  
auprès de l'OSCE

**JOINT STATEMENT DELIVERED BY AMBASSADOR VÉRONIQUE PEPIN-HALLÉ  
UNDER AGENDA ITEM:**

**The International Day of the Girl Child**

**1538<sup>th</sup> SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

**16 October 2025**

Mr. Chair,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of Andorra, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and my own country Canada.

On October 11th, we observed the International Day of the Girl Child. In 2025, the focus of the Day is on girls as leaders and change-makers on the frontlines of crisis. This compelling theme highlights the strength and resilience of girls who are not just enduring crises but are actively engaged in finding solutions.

We are once again reminded that the active and meaningful participation of women and girls in society, in decision-making and in peace processes will put us all on the path to a more peaceful, more prosperous and more sustainable future.

This theme is particularly relevant in the OSCE region, where girls continue to be disproportionately impacted by conflict and crisis, and are among the most vulnerable to conflict-related sexual violence.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has had a terrible impact on the children of Ukraine. Ukrainian children - girls and boys - have had their childhoods and education disrupted. Girls have faced displacement, as well as an increased risk of trafficking and gender-based violence.

The Russian Federation has also unlawfully deported and forcibly transferred Ukrainian children, many of them girls, to its territory and from temporarily occupied areas of Ukraine; thousands of these children remain separated from their families and communities.

Ukraine's children must be protected in line with international humanitarian law and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Russia must end efforts to alter the identity of Ukrainian children, including changes to their citizenship, placement in Russian families or institutions, and exposure to militarization. International humanitarian organizations must have unhindered access to these children to assess their situation and safeguard their rights and well-being.

Mr. Chair,

We welcome that the OSCE, its field offices and the autonomous institutions continue to play a constructive role in empowering girls and young women across our region through a range of impactful initiatives which seek to further gender equality, promote and safeguard human rights, end violence against women and girls and further the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

There are numerous examples of this work including the OSCE Networking Platform for Women Leaders Including Peacebuilders and Mediators; the Young Women's Political Academy; the Girls Talk Programme organized by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo; the OSCE Scholarship for Peace and Security training programme for youth; and, of course, the comprehensive work of the Gender Issues Programme's flagship WIN Project.

Just this week, the OSCE Office in Dushanbe, in partnership with the Government of Tajikistan, marked the International Day of the Girl Child with a high-level forum that amplified girls' voices and leadership, bringing together youth, officials, and civil society to shape a shared vision for empowerment.

As participating States, as we mark thirty years since the Beijing Declaration, as well as twenty-five years since the adoption of UNSC Resolution 1325, we must remain committed to advancing gender equality and supporting the role of women and girls in finding sustainable solutions.

Thank you,