



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1482 Vienna, 11 July 2024

EU statement on the Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the OSCE 2004 Action Plan on the Promotion of Gender Equality

1. The European Union thanks OSCE Secretary General Helga Schmid for her presentation of the Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Sofia 2004 OSCE Action Plan on the Promotion of Gender Equality.
2. Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine continues to have a particularly devastating impact on the security of women and girls. Crises and conflicts deepen pre-existing gender gaps. The growing evidence of sexual and gender-based violence committed during Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, including as a shameful tactic of war by the Russian Armed Forces, is alarming. The EU strongly condemns these illegal, brutal and cowardly actions, documented inter alia in the reports of the Moscow Mechanism expert missions, ODIHR and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine.
3. It is unacceptable that, in 2024, women and girls still face gender discrimination, stereotyping, and sexual and gender-based violence, preventing them from reaching their full potential and fulfilling their aspirations, and hindering their full and equal enjoyment of human rights. We encourage all participating States to implement the commitments in the OSCE Gender Action Plan and take into consideration the recommendations of the report.
4. We value the work of the OSCE Secretariat, autonomous institutions, field missions, and the CiO Special Representative on Gender in supporting participating States in implementing their commitments.
5. Furthermore, we take note of the Independent Evaluation of the implementation of the Action Plan, which highlighted, among other findings, that the OSCE is

well-positioned to support participating States with gender equality commitments, and that it possesses significant assets and a comparative advantage in this field.

6. As stated in this year's Progress Report, integrating gender mainstreaming into the monitoring and evaluation of all OSCE activities, programmes and projects, enhances their effectiveness in all three dimensions.
7. We greatly appreciate the work of OSCE structures and institutions to change gender dynamics in the organisational culture, including the work to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse. We welcome that in 2023 the OSCE achieved gender parity among international staff overall. However, as noted in the independent evaluation, despite this progress and prioritisation of the issue, achieving equitable representation of women remains a challenge in certain positions and locations, particularly for seconded staff, and these gains may be fragile. We strongly encourage participating States to be mindful of gender balance in their nomination processes, to second more female candidates to senior management positions, to keep statistics on female nominations, and to share this information with the Secretariat.
8. We agree on the importance of engaging men for gender equality, and therefore especially welcome activities aimed at doing so.
9. We warmly thank the Maltese Chairpersonship for keeping gender issues high on the OSCE agenda. Gender equality is a core principle of the EU and we stand ready to work tirelessly, both within the EU and with our international partners, to make it a reality.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, and GEORGIA, the EFTA country ICELAND, member of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.