



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Secretary General's Report on Implementation of the 2004 Gender Equality Action Plan

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Katherine Brucker
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 11, 2024

Secretary General Schmid, dear Helga, thank you for your comprehensive report on the OSCE's efforts to advance gender equality, both within OSCE structures and amongst participating States.

Gender equity and equality, or fair and equal treatment, and gender inclusion undergird the stability and security of all participating States. As Secretary of State Blinken said in October at the launch of the 2023 U.S. Strategy and National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security, "When women's rights are respected... societies are safer. They're more stable. They're more prosperous. Peacekeeping and security forces that include women can better build trust with the communities that they're protecting... When women participate in negotiating peace agreements, those deals are 35 percent more likely to endure."

The OSCE's Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality is an important first step. That said, gender perspectives are so vital to our work across all three dimensions to promote stability, peace, and democracy, that we must mainstream gender in everything we do. We need gender perspectives at the ASRC, the Economic and Environmental Forum, and at our Human Rights conferences, just to name a few. As an organization, we must also model our values by striving to make OSCE panels gender diverse.

In all participating States we must do more to ensure women can participate fully in political, social, and economic spheres. Unfortunately, gender-based violence throughout the OSCE region undermines equality and impedes women's participation at all levels, depriving women of the ability to freely exercise their human rights and depriving their countries of untapped potential.

There are some encouraging developments towards greater gender equality in the OSCE region. We welcome Kazakhstan's recent passage of a law criminalizing battery and intentional bodily harm as an important step in strengthening protections from violence for women and children.

The United States is committed to advancing gender equity and equality globally. In Kosovo, we supported the launch of a "Women, Peace, and Security Center of Excellence" this past April. We also welcomed France and Spain into the Global Partnership for Action Against Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse. We are proud to partner with the OSCE on a

vast array of projects and initiatives: the Secretariat's WIN project to advance women, peace, and security in Ukraine and Central Asia; ODIHR's Change project to mainstream gender perspectives in its work; and the field missions' activities to strengthen women's economic empowerment and political participation in their countries.

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