

OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation
1023rd session

Vienna, 28 September 2022

Statement by the FSC Chair's Co-ordinator on matters relating to
United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325

Madame Minister,
Excellencies,
Distinguished panellists,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear colleagues,

It is a pleasure for me to address this plenary meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation for the first time in my capacity as FSC Co-ordinator for matters related to UNSCR 1325.

I would like to join others in commending our esteemed guest speakers for their valuable contributions, experience-sharing and insights.

Mr. Chairperson,

The issue of Women, Peace and Security has long been established as a topic of high relevance for the work of our organisation and within the FSC. 22 years after the adoption of UNSCR 1325, it is high time for us to step up our efforts to advance its implementation in the OSCE. Therefore, I warmly welcome today's important discussion as a means of moving forward.

So in the spirit of demystification, I would like to underline again why WPS is an important pillar for sustainable peace and security and why we need to strengthen its implementation within the OSCE and the FSC.

First: Sustainable peace and stability are not possible without the full, equal and meaningful participation and representation of women in all their diversity, including at all stages of conflict prevention, peace negotiations and peace building processes. If women are excluded from peace processes – and we have just heard from Minister Lahbib how often this is the case – scientific studies have shown that these tend to fail more easily. At the same time, conflict prevention can only work, if gender-related aspects are taken into consideration.

Second: Women and girls are disproportionately affected by conflicts and crises and particularly vulnerable to conflict-related violence. Protection and accountability need to be ensured, so that women can equally benefit from human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Third, and I want to underline this: Strengthening WPS is not about excluding men's voices, it is not about hearing less voices. On the contrary. It is about including more people and hearing all voices. It is about taking into account all aspects of a conflict and the whole spectrum of perspectives that we have in our societies. Why? Because if we don't, then not only half of the population is not heard, but also the outcome will be less effective, less efficient and less sustainable.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Russian aggression against Ukraine has sadly even further underlined the importance of WPS for lasting peace and security as Russia's actions have increased the toll of women and girls suffering from the brutal ramifications of conflict and war, including displacement, human trafficking and sexual and gender based violence. At the same time, Ukrainian women have shown incredible strength and resilience, those in the armed forces as well as civilians. They are – on all levels – instrumental for the reconstruction of their country and are already actively participating to restore peaceful life in the territories that the Ukrainian Armed Forces have bravely liberated from Russian occupation.

We, as OSCE, have to do our part in making sure that we continue to promote gender equality and the implementation of the WPS agenda within the OSCE, as agreed in 1999 in Istanbul to "achieve a more peaceful, prosperous and democratic OSCE area". A great majority of OSCE participating States has reaffirmed this commitment and their strong determination to advancing the WPS agenda in the FSC's area of work by supporting Joint Statements on UNSCR 1325, made at the 2020 and 2021 OSCE Ministerial Councils, providing concrete ideas and proposals for additional efforts in this regard. Together with the OSCE Action Plan for the promotion of gender equality (2004) these can serve as guidelines for next steps.

Mr. Chairperson,

To wrap up, let me shed some light and add some appreciative words on instruments that we already successfully use within the OSCE in this effect.

We have the voluntary information-sharing on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the framework of the annual Questionnaire on the Code of Conduct, which is a great way to share useful experience amongst participating States.

Another uplifting success is the OSCE Scholarship for Peace and Security training programme. This year, 123 people graduated from the online course with a female participation of 88%. Many thanks to all donors who contributed to this outcome!

As a member of the Women in the First Dimension Network, I would also like to draw your attention to the very popular Mentoring Programme, starting its new round soon. The Network has also compiled a list of more than 180 female experts on politico-military topics to ensure female representation at all events.

Mr. Chairperson,

Women's voices have been excluded for too long. Their needs, their rights, their insights, their expertise, their impact have too often been ignored. To find comprehensive and lasting solutions, we need to address all issues in a comprehensive and inclusive manner. This is what comprehensive security is all about.

We have the facts. We have the proof. We have the guiding resolutions and commitments. Now is the time to act and move forward.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I kindly request that this statement be attached to the journal of today's meeting.