



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1286 Vienna, 22 October 2020

EU Statement on the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325

The EU welcomes Amb. Melanne Verwee, Special Representative on Gender, to today's Permanent Council. On 31 October 2000, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325, the foundation of what has become the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Today, 20 years later, this document is as relevant as ever.

The promotion of equality between women and men is a fundamental value of the EU and we strive to remain a frontrunner in the global arena in engaging, empowering, protecting, and supporting women and girls to achieve peace and security. The WPS agenda broadens the scope of traditional security by highlighting the importance of the gender dimension in peace and security. It focuses not only on protecting women and girls from conflict-related violence, including sexual and gender based violence, but also emphasizes the need for women to participate in peace and security related decision-making processes. Gender perspectives are an integral part of peace and security. In addition, the WPS agenda states that addressing the gender-related root causes of violence and protecting all women and girls' rights are critical for conflict prevention.

It is of greatest importance that the OSCE continues to enable and stand up for women's full, meaningful and equal participation in all forms of conflict prevention and resolution, not just those related to women or gender-related matters. The EU recognizes gender equality and women's empowerment as a prerequisite for dealing with the conflict cycle, including conflict resolution, mediation, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and post-conflict

reconstruction, including demobilization, disarmament, reintegration and security sector reform. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic further illustrates the need for gender responsive crisis mechanisms.

On this 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, we can compliment ourselves on the efforts made to implement the WPS Agenda and the above mentioned success stories, but at the same time, we should remain ambitious: there is still much work to be done. Continued and robust engagement, including at the OSCE senior level, enhancing women's full, meaningful and equal participation and the systematic integration of the gender perspective throughout all policy areas is an unfinished task and all of us must continue to work on this. For example, the ambition of establishing an *OSCE wide Regional Action Plan that addresses our specific regional dimensions of the WPS Agenda and its implementation* was launched in 2013. The EU still believes in the value of this plan and believes this anniversary should be seized to move forward on this.

We call on the OSCE and its participating States to continue their efforts to ensure equality of women and men at all levels with the aim to achieve a gender balance, especially at senior and decision-making levels, across all OSCE structures and field operations. We must all continue our efforts to identify and remove all barriers to women and men's equal participation in the sector of peace and security. Equal opportunity and representation are a matter of democracy and inclusive security. The EU underlines the role of the participating States on this matter in relation to the seconded positions in the OSCE. Furthermore, we encourage strengthening the ties to, and working closer with civil society, local, regional and international civil society organizations, grassroots activists and women's rights organizations.

The EU remains convinced that a strengthened commitment to WPS as well as to enhancing women's participation in all OSCE activities would contribute to the OSCE comprehensive security approach and thereby strengthen the Organization. Neglecting to carry out gender analysis and to integrate a gender perspective would negatively impact the ability to achieve peace and security and thus on the OSCE's

role as a regional security organization. With this in mind, the EU stands ready to support making this important topic a priority for the upcoming Ministerial Council.

In conclusion, the EU calls on the OSCE and the participating States to amplify our efforts on the implementation of the WPS agenda. After 20 years it is high time that we close the implementation gap.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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