



REPRESENTATION PERMANENTE DE LA FRANCE
AUPRES DE L'O.S.C.E

**Equality between men and women and the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan for the
Promotion of Gender Equality (Wednesday, 23 September 2015)**

Statement by the French delegation

I stand behind the statement of the European Union and wish to add a few points at national level.

1) De facto gender inequality still exists in France, despite strict laws to combat it. The Act of 4 August 2014 on substantive gender equality addresses inequalities between men and women in all areas where they still exist, such as one's professional, social and private life, and aims to implement the equal rights which have been enshrined in the texts for years by removing, one by one, the real-world barriers which it continues to encounter. Progress in implementing these measures is reviewed every year at interministerial level.

2) At international level, in July 2013 France adopted the Gender and Development Strategy, which makes the principle of gender equality central to French development policies and international advocacy. Our efforts focus more particularly on the following areas: the rights to sexual and reproductive health, women's economic empowerment and political participation, the fight against all forms of gender violence, democratic governance, and climate change. This is to take account of gender inequalities in a cross-cutting manner and encourage development operators to draw up their framework for action.

To do this, France draws on a body of well-established international law. In September 1995, the fourth World Conference on Women brought together 189 countries and some 17,000 participants. They shared a common objective: gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action were adopted at the end of the Conference, marking unprecedented progress for women's rights. As a benchmark for change, the Platform for Action contains complete commitments addressing 12 critical areas. 20 years on, it remains a powerful source of guidance and inspiration. Like the other States, France last March renewed its commitment to the action programmes of the international Cairo and Beijing conferences.

Implementing the sexual and reproductive rights in particular is essential in order to empower women and combat sexual violence. This enables women to decide freely and with due discernment on the number, timing and spacing of their children, and to have the means and information needed to exercise these voluntary choices; and to make decisions on reproduction free from discrimination, coercion or violence.

3) By way of recommendations, we call on the OSCE to continue its efforts to promote universal access to women's rights which constitutes the basis for gender equality and for the fight against violence against women.