



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

22 October 2008

**Experts' seminar on innovative approaches to combating violence
against women**

20-22 October 2008 - Dushanbe

Closing note

**By Ambassador Mara Marinaki, permanent representative of Greece
to the OSCE and incoming Chairperson in Office**

These two and half days, our debates have focused on how to prevent violence against women, how to protect those among them who become victims and how best to have effective laws and regulations to punish and prosecute the aggressors. We also debated how best to establish constructive relationships, raise awareness and involve men in the whole cycle of combating violence against women.

We might think it is logical and obvious to reject and combat gender based violence, be it in its forms of family violence or in the context of armed conflicts. We might think that since the platform of Beijing and since the ratification by the big part of the international community of the CEDAW that the problem is known and that strategies have been deployed to address it. But the immense number of women who continue to be seriously affected by this phenomenon, reminds us that we are far from reaching our goal of a safe world, and that a lot of efforts are still ahead of us.

In 2004, the OSCE participating States have highlighted the importance of the subject through the adoption of the Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality. The OSCE considers violence against women a serious constraint for the

realisation of gender equality. International and national researches show that women are disproportionately victims of male-perpetrated violence. It is important to see this violence as a violation of women's human's rights, it is important to address this violence holistically and to see it as an integral part of promoting gender equality.

In 2005, the OSCE Ministerial Council of Ljubljana adopted a specific ministerial decision for preventing and combating violence against women.

While we have come a long way in recognising the scope, nature and consequences of this problem, there is indeed still a lot of work to be done. Among the most crucial areas of work is the involvement of men and the youth, research and data collection, and the exchange of knowledge about what works. It is my firm belief that we need to increasingly engage men in the efforts to eliminate violence against women. Not only do we need to hold offenders accountable and help them with treatment and prevention programmes, but we also need to think about how to enhance positive male role models and engage men in both prevention and advocacy. While several studies have been conducted in different parts of the world, there still exists a need to strengthen our knowledge not only of women's experiences of male violence but also of practitioners and policy makers' strategies that proved to be effective.

I am therefore very pleased to see that the OSCE has dedicated such an event to exactly that: learning from the innovative and effective approaches on the way to eliminate violence against women. The importance of this initiative cannot be highlighted enough and I want to ensure you of Greece's support, as a current member of the OSCE troika and as the incoming Chairmanship of the OSCE for the exchange of good practices and the intensification of efforts to end violence against women. In times of scarce resources, we need to have the choice to invest these resources in strategies and approaches from which we know they are working, in other similar environments.

Data and exchange of information on good practices are a prerequisite for evidence-based policymaking and they are crucial to end violence against women.

The international community, the UN and the OSCE call for the intensification of improved data collection and improved knowledge on practical responses that can drastically reduce the violence against women. The Seminar we are closing today was developed to respond to this need.

Violence affects all of us. It is not only a women's issue, but a joint issue for the humanity as a whole. A strategic and continued effort is a necessity.

I wish you a safe return home and invite you to the Vienna Symposium on innovative approaches to combat violence against women in next spring.

Thank you.