

Regional Conference and Consultations on UNSCR 1325 Implementation in the OSCE region

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Opening speech by
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Check against delivery!

Madam President, Secretary General, Ambassador Beham, distinguished representatives of international organizations, governments and civil society, ladies and gentlemen.

On behalf of ODIHR, I would like to express my appreciation to both UN Women and the Gender Section for the opportunity to be one of the speakers opening this very important conference. Allow me also to thank our Lithuanian friends for hosting us.

UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 was a groundbreaking document, passed in order to recognize and formally acknowledge the nature of warfare, in which civilians are increasingly targeted, specifically women and girls, as well as the different impact conflict has on women and men.

Today, the Resolution remains a relevant and necessary tool to be utilized by all relevant actors as a guide, a reminder if you will, to the identification of the most common effects of conflicts on women and girls. Ultimately, it remains important to recognize the need for women's full and equal participation in all phases of conflict prevention, resolution and peace-building.

Last week, ODIHR co-organized the Inter-regional Forum on Women's Leadership in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, in Belgrade. We brought together women parliamentarians and politicians, civil society representatives, and women in business and academia from 15 OSCE participating States to discuss priorities for women leaders in these regions, as well as to provide them with an opportunity to exchange their views and experiences.

During this event, more than 50 women agreed on the need to understand the issue of security as comprehensively as possible. To them, as they pointed out, security does not

assume only the absence of violence, but also the presence of an entire system that works not only to protect them when needed, but to support their efforts to be part of discussions on constitutions, elections, transitional justice strategies, laws, policies and many small scale initiatives that may ultimately have a different impact on women and men.

In order to adequately respond to the complexity of the task facing OSCE structures when it comes to gender equality and implementation of the Resolution, I would therefore underline the need to recognize different approaches that members of the OSCE family can take to address the implementation of the Resolution at both the OSCE regional level and the national level.

Through its activities, ODIHR seeks to demonstrate that integrating a gender perspective in security matters addresses the different needs and priorities of men and women and strengthens overall security. We work with participating States to promote equal participation in decision-making, to ensure improved security sector oversight and to create institutions that are representative of societies at large.

As we work with a myriad of interlocutors, including parliamentarians, police services, and representatives of the armed forces, relevant ministries and civil society organizations, we pay particular attention to ensuring gender balance, so that everyone has the opportunity to contribute to the debate and offer their views.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At ODIHR we recognize the need to broaden the debate on the Resolution. During the last decade, we were able to see the role women parliamentarians can play in the creation of National Action Plans to implement the Resolution. We have worked with human rights defenders and built the capacities of National Human Rights Institutions, to assist them in responding to the increasing need for promotion and protection of human rights in the OSCE region.

ODIHR stands ready to assist participating States in the process of drafting National Action Plans on UNSCR 1325 and its implementation. We do this by organizing thematic workshops and roundtables for the exchange of information, experiences and best practices. We take into consideration the know-how of civil society organizations and involve them in gender-sensitizing exercises and overall reforms.

In addition, we are ready to deliver training on Women, Peace and Security. Last year 18 civilian members (14 women and 4 men) working with the Moldovan Ministries of Defense, Interior, and Foreign Affairs and European Integration were introduced to Women, Peace and Security standards. ODIHR trainers underlined the importance of UNSCR 1325 and helped participants identify different steps authorities can take to implement UNSCR 1325 goals in their countries.

Allow me to conclude by reiterating ODIHR's dedication to the issues of gender equality, including implementation of UNSCR 1325. ODIHR plans to continue to contribute to the discussion not only on increasing women's participation in peace processes, but also in strengthening the role of women in decision-making by creating an environment in which their views are accepted and taken seriously.

Last but not least, I welcome the commissioning of the Global Study on Resolution 1325 by the United Nations Secretary General. I am convinced that the findings of the Study will represent a valuable contribution to the work international actors, such as ODIHR, to enhance women's participation in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace-building efforts.

Thank you for your attention.