



**OSCE Gender Equality Review Conference  
Vienna, 10-11 July 2014**

**Chairmanship Conclusions  
Swiss OSCE Chairmanship and Incoming Serbian OSCE Chairmanship**

**ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE OSCE REGION**

**A ROADMAP**

Ten years after the adoption of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality (MC.DEC/14/04), representatives of the participating States, OSCE executive structures and Partners for Co-operation have gathered on 10-11 July 2014 in Vienna to comprehensively review the implementation of the plan and consider how to enhance the fulfillment of gender-related commitments in the OSCE participating States as well as within OSCE structures.

The first ever held OSCE Gender Equality Review Conference was organized jointly by the Swiss Chair-in-Office, the OSCE Secretariat/Gender Section and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). It addressed achievements in the implementation of the Action Plan as well as gap areas identified by conference participants, also taking into account the Annual Evaluation Reports of the Secretary General over the past decade.

Taking stock of the implementation of the 2004 Gender Action Plan as well as a number of follow-up Ministerial Council Decisions specifying commitments in different areas of the Action Plan,<sup>1</sup> the participants discussed actions to be taken to strengthen implementation and where appropriate, bring OSCE commitments up-to-date, with a goal to achieving *de jure* and *de facto* gender equality across the OSCE region.

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<sup>1</sup> MC.DEC/14/05 on Women in Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation;  
MC.DEC/15/05 on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women;  
MC.DEC/07/09 on Women's Participation in Political and Public Life;  
MC.DEC/10/11 on Promoting Equal Opportunities in the Economic Sphere.

The conference participants recalled that OSCE values and commitments on gender equality and women's rights are based on an international human rights framework that includes the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, and Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, adopted by the United Nations Security Council in 2000 and followed by six supporting resolutions.

It was also recognized that the full and equal exercise by women of their human rights is essential to achieve a more peaceful, prosperous and democratic OSCE region and that the OSCE and its participating States are committed to making equality between women and men an integral part of their policies, both at the level of their States and within the Organization, as laid down in the OSCE Istanbul Summit Document in 1999. Furthermore, equality between women and men was emphasized as an integral part of the OSCE's cross-dimensional, comprehensive and co-operative approach to security and that the inherent dignity of the individual is at the core of comprehensive security, as outlined in the Astana Commemorative Declaration in 2010.

In light of existing challenges, the OSCE and its participating States should strengthen efforts to build capacities, fulfill commitments and enhance implementation in order to achieve gender equality and protect women's rights in the OSCE region, as an integral part of comprehensive security, in the following areas and ways:

## *I. Gender Mainstreaming the Conflict Cycle*

### *OSCE Commitments*

A number of OSCE commitments provide the framework for the inclusion of gender considerations throughout the comprehensive security concept with the aim of achieving gender equality in the Politico-Military Dimension. The OSCE's active role to implement relevant parts of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 is outlined in the OSCE Gender Action Plan, and specified in Ministerial Council Decision 14/05 on Women in Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management and Post-conflict Rehabilitation. Ministerial Council Decision 3/11 on the conflict cycle, inter alia, highlights the significance of UNSCR 1325 throughout the stages of a conflict.

As a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations and with its comprehensive security concept, the OSCE is in a unique position to develop and apply a gender mainstreamed security model that truly addresses the needs and concerns of all citizens in the OSCE region. Being the largest security organization in the world, the OSCE is in a prime position to become a leader of practical implementation of gender mainstreamed security, and it has already made advances in this direction in the ten years since the adoption of the OSCE Gender Action Plan.

### *Achievements and challenges to date*

In the past decade, the OSCE has made strides in implementing measures to achieve gender equality in its policies and programmes in the Politico-Military Dimension. This development goes hand in hand with a steadily growing awareness globally of the importance of the

Women, Peace and Security agenda. The trend is reflected in the OSCE through an increasing number of discussions and activities related to gender aspects of security. The Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC) has appointed a special Focal Point for UNSCR 1325 that ensures that Women, Peace and Security issues are included in the agenda of the FSC. Some 60 per cent of participating States are reporting on the implementation of their commitments on Women, Peace and Security in the Annual Information Exchange on the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. Additionally, the OSCE executive structures are increasingly gender mainstreaming their policies, programmes, projects and activities, in particular those related to the conflict cycle, such as mediation capacities.

However, there is still a considerable lack of women in the security sector, access of women to decision-making in security fields is limited and women continue to be excluded from peace and mediation efforts. Furthermore, security sector actors are still not in a position to recognize and fully address security issues that predominately affect women during conflict or peacetime. There is a need to build on existing training efforts on the implementation of gender equality commitments in the Politico-Military Dimension so as to have the greatest outreach, efficiency and output in OSCE's efforts on reaching and maintaining security and stability.

#### Actions needed

- OSCE tools and mechanisms should be developed to include a gender perspective in conflict analysis as well as in the organizational response to conflict and crisis in order to identify and address women's security concerns.
- OSCE field operations should include gender considerations in their regular activities and reporting. Appropriate training to staff should be provided in this regard.
- The OSCE should identify entry points for women's participation in all stages of the conflict cycle, in particular throughout mediation and peace processes, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation while giving due consideration to the inclusion of women in formal and informal peace initiatives.
- The OSCE and participating States should take into account the needs and concerns as well as the role of Roma and Sinti and displaced women when addressing the different stages of the conflict cycle.
- Participating States are encouraged to identify women working in the Politico-Military Dimension that could potentially be deployed to OSCE executive structures, in particular at decision-making and senior management positions
- Participating States are encouraged to identify senior women leaders, such as former ministers, high level diplomats or prominent women activists, who could serve as members of mediation/peace negotiation teams or as senior mediators/peace negotiators or Special/Personal Representatives.
- Participating States should remove any existing obstacles towards increasing the number of women in all positions and in decision-making throughout their security structures.

- The inclusion of gender analysis in issues related to national security should become standard as should the recognition of women's roles in peace-keeping, mediation and reconstruction efforts.
- Participating States are encouraged to report voluntarily on their gender mainstreaming efforts as part of the information exchange on the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. This would give the participating States an opportunity for information sharing and possible twinning efforts.
- In order to allow for information exchange on good practices and challenges relating to gender mainstreaming the conflict cycle and other women's security issues, a periodic OSCE review conference on Women, Peace and Security should be organized.
- Participating States are encouraged to further consider the adoption of an OSCE-Wide Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security that would foster the implementation of all the above mentioned issues in a more systematic and structured manner.
- As the largest regional security organization in the world, the OSCE should increase coordination and co-operation with other relevant international organizations in the area of Women, Peace and Security, in particular with a view of the progress report prepared by the United Nations Secretary General for the upcoming 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UNSCR 1325 in 2015.

## *II. Equal economic opportunities*

### OSCE Commitments

In its policy framework, the OSCE emphasizes the importance of both women and men having equal access to economic resources. OSCE participating States have recognized that providing equal opportunities for men and women in the economic sphere increases the opportunities for economic prosperity and growth which in turn contributes to the stability and comprehensive security in the OSCE region. The 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the promotion of Gender Equality recognizes the importance of women's economic empowerment and has identified it as a priority area. This is underscored by the OSCE Ministerial Council Decision 10/11, which calls for promoting equal opportunity for women in the economic sphere and specific measures for overcoming obstacles and barriers preventing women from economic empowerment.

### Achievements and challenges to date

Although relevant OSCE structures and participating States have aimed to address some of the OSCE commitments for enhancing women's economic empowerment, much more needs to be done to integrate these commitments into national strategies and OSCE policies, programmes, and activities. Efforts that have been undertaken so far in this area lack a coordinated and strategic approach which would include a better assessment of what still

needs to be done. On a regional level there is a lack of information exchange about policies and good practices for providing equal economic opportunities to women and men.

Against this background, challenges that were identified in the OSCE MC Decision 10/11 remain valid: continued inequities faced by women in the OSCE region in terms of labour market participation, including job segregation; disparities in access to social protection as well as to quality, full-time employment; slow progress in efforts to overcome the pay gaps for work of equal value, resulting in women's reduced lifetime earnings and pensions and increased female poverty; continued under-representation of women in economic leadership and decision-making processes in the public and private sectors; and persistence of constraints on women's effective participation in the economic sphere, in particular with regard to access to and control over economic and financial resources such as loans, property and inheritance rights.

In addition, the persistent financial and social crisis in many countries of the OSCE region, which often affects women differently than men, requires gender-sensitive responses, which are only being recognized by some participating States.

#### Actions needed

- The OSCE should develop a more structured and systematic approach to the implementation of the 2004 Gender Action Plan in the Economic and Environmental dimension. Mechanisms and tools for gender analysis should become an integral part of the activities and policies in the Second Dimension so as to reduce barriers for women in the economic sphere and allow for women's full participation in the labour market. OSCE staff should be offered training in how to utilize the tools and mechanisms developed.
- The OSCE should draw on the experience of mentoring programmes developed for women's economic empowerment, also taking into account the specific needs of marginalized women.
- Participating States should develop policies and awareness raising schemes to reduce the informal/grey economy where a large percentage of women in the OSCE region works without social protection (workers benefits, health insurance etc.).
- Participating States should develop policies to support women's entrepreneurship as well as to remove barriers for women's access to financial markets and banking services.
- Participating States should identify measures to increase the share of women in decision-making and senior management of public and private enterprises. In some participating States gender quotas have been successful tools for achieving a more balanced representation of women and men in management boards of private and public companies.
- Participating States shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they fully participate in and benefit from rural development.

- Participating States should develop employment policies that target women specifically, such as vocational training and job requalification.
- Participating States should develop targeted policies which enable women to have equal access to the labour market. Such measures should include parental leave, accessible child care and non-discriminatory employment practices.
- Participating States should make efforts to remove the remaining barriers for equal access to education. These efforts should target traditional male dominated fields, such as technology and informatics, in order to open up the whole of the labour market for both men and women.
- Participating States should develop mechanisms and policies that recognize the vulnerabilities of women migrants, marginalized women as well as Roma and Sinti women when entering the labour markets, paying special attention to their increased risk of human trafficking.
- Participating States should analyze the existing pay gap between men and women which prevails throughout the OSCE region and establish national mechanisms to tackle inequalities.
- In order to allow for information exchange on good practices and challenges related to achieving gender equality in the economic sphere, the annual meetings in the Economic and Environmental Dimension should include separate sessions on measures to combat inequalities in this area.

### *III. Women's Participation in Political and Public Life*

#### OSCE Commitments

“Concerned that widespread discrimination against women continues to undermine their effective participation in political and public life at all levels,” the OSCE participating States adopted the MC Decision 07/09 on Women’s Participation in Political and Public Life, recommending specific measures to “achieve the goal of gender balance in all legislative, judicial and executive bodies, including security services, such as police services.”<sup>2</sup> To assist participating States in realizing these commitments, the OSCE has been entrusted with a mandate to promote women’s participation in political and public life, through institutional reforms supporting parliaments, political parties and elections.<sup>3</sup> OSCE participating States have further committed to “consider possible legislative measures, which would facilitate a more balanced participation of women and men in political and public life and especially in decision-making.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 07/09 on Women’s Participation in Political and Public Life, Paragraph 3 and Article 1, available at <http://www.osce.org/mc/40710?download=true>.

<sup>3</sup> Specifically, the OSCE/ODIHR has been mandated to assist participating States in ensuring equal opportunity for participation of women in political and public life, 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality (OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 14/04, para 44 (d), available at <http://www.osce.org/mc/23295?download=true>.

<sup>4</sup> OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 07/09 on Women’s Participation in Political and Public Life, Article 2, available at <http://www.osce.org/mc/40710?download=true>.

### Achievements and challenges to date

While constitutional frameworks in the OSCE participating States guarantee equal rights for all citizens, this often does not translate into equal opportunities for women and men to access the ballot and stand for office. Significant advances have been made in promoting gender equality in the OSCE region, yet women continue to be under-represented in public institutions in all three branches of government – executive, legislative and judicial – particularly in decision-making positions at the national and local level. For example, while women’s representation in parliaments in the OSCE region now stands at an average of 25 per cent, there is a wide variation among participating States, from a high of 50 per cent to under 10 per cent in a few states.<sup>5</sup> At the local level, only 13 per cent of mayoral offices are occupied by women.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, a database covering 34 OSCE participating States indicates that only 10 per cent of public prosecutors and presidents of administrative and constitutional courts are women.<sup>7</sup> The low level of women’s political participation is also evident during elections. Trends in women’s political participation in the OSCE region point to unsatisfactory progress towards gender parity in politics, as outlined in the OSCE/ODIHR study *Gender Equality in Elected Office: A Six-Step Action Plan*.<sup>8</sup>

### Actions needed

Gender balance in political and public life is not only required to improve the representative nature, accountability, and quality of democracies, but it has a profound impact on the way politics is done in terms of policymaking agendas. States where women are adequately represented in policymaking and legislative processes gain a better understanding of gender equality and domestic violence, and are more likely to have a substantial, solid and clear legislative basis to address violations of women’s rights. To achieve gender parity in political and public life in the OSCE region, the following actions are needed:

- Participating States should strengthen women’s participation in political and public life in the OSCE region, by identifying and remedying discriminatory laws and policies, and sharing good practices for women’s engagement in democratic processes.
- Participating States should strengthen women’s participation in parliaments, by mainstreaming gender issues into parliamentary procedures, priorities, and budgets. Structures and initiatives that enable women to influence policy and legislative agendas should also be strengthened.<sup>9</sup>
- Participating States should encourage all political actors “to promote equal participation of women and men in political parties, with a view to achieving better

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<sup>5</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union, Women in National Parliaments, data as of 1 May 2014, available at <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> According to the European Commission database of women and men in decision-making positions. The database covers 34 countries, including the 28 EU Member States, four candidate countries, and the remaining EEA countries (Liechtenstein and Norway), available at [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/politics/municipal-councils/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/politics/municipal-councils/index_en.htm).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, available at [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/index_en.htm).

<sup>8</sup> *Gender Equality in Elected Office: A Six-Step Action Plan* is available at <http://www.osce.org/odihr/78432>.

<sup>9</sup> The OSCE/ODIHR *Comparative Study of Structures for Women MPs in the OSCE Region* is a good basis for this (<http://www.osce.org/odihr/105940>).

gender-balanced representation in elected public offices at all levels of decision-making.”<sup>10</sup> Special attention should be paid to the successful experience of some participating States in setting legislative and voluntary measures to enhance women’s representation in national parliaments.<sup>11</sup>

- Participating States should strengthen women’s participation in political parties, by compiling and sharing good practices on measures that have been successful in advancing women’s roles in parties. Special attention should be paid to strengthening internal party democracy and including a gender perspective into political party regulation, so that both women and men are able to access political party structures and resources on an equal footing.<sup>12</sup>
- While recognizing that different electoral systems can offer different avenues for women’s political participation, participating States should ensure that they provide equal opportunities for equitable political competition between women and men candidates.
- OSCE election observation missions should continue to examine women’s participation as voters and candidates; their involvement in leadership roles within election management bodies; and how the legal framework and media structures affect women, as well as men.<sup>13</sup>
- Participating States, OSCE executive structures, international organizations and civil society should strengthen the capacities and confidence of women to stand for public office, through education and training programmes. Furthermore, political actors, voters, media and civil society should publically scrutinize and adequately portray the skills and capacities of both women and men politicians on an equal footing.
- Participating States should promote democratic institutions that are inclusive, representative, and gender-sensitive at all levels, so that women from all marginalized groups, including national minorities and migrants, and particularly Roma and Sinti, are given equal access to policymaking processes that affect them the most.<sup>14</sup>

#### *IV. Combating Violence against Women*

##### *OSCE commitments*

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<sup>10</sup> OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 07/09 on Women’s Participation in Political and Public Life, Article 3, available at <http://www.osce.org/mc/40710?download=true>.

<sup>11</sup> The UN Economic and Social Council originally proposed the 30 per cent target to be achieved by 1995. In its 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, the United Nations recalled that few countries had achieved this goal and urged Member States to take actions to achieve the target as a means to build a ‘critical mass’ of women’s representation in political and public life. Available at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/decision.htm>.

<sup>12</sup> The OSCE/ODIHR *Handbook on Promoting Women’s Participation in Political Parties* is a good basis for this (<http://www.osce.org/odihr/120877>).

<sup>13</sup> Practical steps to be taken by election observation missions to integrate a gender perspective are outlined in the *Handbook for Monitoring Women’s Participation in Elections* (<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/13938>).

<sup>14</sup> Promoting the effective and equal participation of Roma and Sinti women in public and political life is one of the active measures also proposed by the OSCE Ministerial Council Decision 4/13, Enhancing OSCE efforts to implement the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area, with a Particular Focus on Roma and Sinti Women, Youth and Children, available at <http://www.osce.org/mc/109340?download=true>.



The 2004 Gender Action Plan outlines that OSCE structures should continue to assist participating States in developing programmes and activities aimed at preventing all forms of gender-based violence.<sup>15</sup> It also calls for increased efforts to raise public awareness on this issue and to facilitate involvement of civil society in efforts to combat violence against women. Furthermore, the OSCE MC Decision 15/05 on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women encourages participating States to address violence against women through legislative reform, support to victims and their children, access to justice and capacity building of relevant institutions.

Violence against women has manifold causes and requires targeted responses in many areas. The 2004 Gender Action Plan also calls for more awareness-raising of the issue in the public and for the inclusion of civil society in efforts to combat violence against women.

### *Achievements and challenges to date*

Violence against women and girls is one of the most pervasive human rights violations and a significant cause of personal insecurity in the OSCE region. It can manifest itself in psychological, physical, sexual and economic abuse both in the home and in the community, and can be particularly pervasive during periods of crisis, transition, conflict and post-conflict reconstruction. Violence against women has far reaching implications for women's inclusion in society. It is a major obstacle to women's participation in all aspects of social, political, economic and cultural life, ultimately excluding women from the democratic process.

As one of the most widespread and traumatic violations of human rights, the problem of violence against women is compounded by its lack of visibility and the context of institutionalized gender inequality and stereotyping in which it often takes place. Combating violence against women is a fundamental element to achieving comprehensive security.

Over the past ten years OSCE structures, and particularly the OSCE field operations, have been working to assist participating States in preventing and combating violence against women. These efforts included the development of improved legal frameworks on combating domestic violence (a type of violence against women); trainings for police officers, medical and judicial authorities and other first responders to domestic violence calls; supporting telephone hotlines, shelters and resource centres providing protection to all victims, including marginalized groups such as Roma and Sinti women; developing public education campaigns and facilitating knowledge exchanges through roundtable meetings and study tours.

However, monitoring and assessing progress on preventing and combating violence against women in the OSCE participating States remains a major challenge. Recent surveys in many participating States still show high rates of violence against women.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> It refers in this context, among others, to the United Nations resolution on "Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action" (A/RES/S-23/3) of 16 November 2000, which states (paragraph 59): "Gender-based violence, such as battering and other domestic violence, sexual abuse, sexual slavery and exploitation, international trafficking in women and children, forced prostitution and sexual harassment... are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person..."

<sup>16</sup> For example, the survey on violence against women, undertaken by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in all 28 European Union member states and released in March 2014, found that one in three women in the European Union countries has experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15, that one in five women has experienced stalking, and that every second woman has been confronted with one or more forms of sexual harassment.

At the same time, in some other OSCE participating States there is no systematic documentation of the incidence of violence against women and there is no systematic mechanism for exchanging information among participating States, which are not hosting OSCE field operations. New approaches are needed to strengthen OSCE efforts in preventing and combating violence against women.

One of the areas where the OSCE has been innovative in combating violence against women is the establishment of an OSCE MenEngage Network. Engaging men and boys and supporting them to promote positive, non-violent masculinities is a critical aspect of combating domestic violence and other forms of violence against women. A number of OSCE participating States have civil society organizations run by men to promote positive role models and raise awareness of the effects of domestic violence for both men and women. The OSCE Secretariat has launched the MenEngage Network to also provide an opportunity for positive male role models to speak out on issues of violence against women.

### Actions needed

- In order to facilitate more comprehensive, effective and evidence-based approaches to combating violence against women, the OSCE should improve its efforts to collect relevant data by cooperating closer with other international organizations such as FRA and taking advantage of existing methodologies for data collection on violence against women.
- The OSCE executive structures and participating States should have a particular focus on data collection when it comes to violence against women from vulnerable groups, including Roma and Sinti women as well as women from displaced populations, as there are almost no data available for these groups.
- The OSCE should enhance the exchange of information, experiences and good practices among participating States, by organizing exchanges focused on preventing and combating violence against women. This should take into account the cross-dimensionality of the issue.
- At the same time, OSCE executive structures working on policing, anti-terrorism, economic issues and combating trafficking in human beings should also aim to address the inclusion of combating violence against women in their policies, programmes, projects and activities.
- In keeping with the 2004 Gender Action Plan, the OSCE executive structures and participating States should be aware of the gender dimension of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and focus activities by the Strategic Police Matters Unit (SPMU), the Office of the Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA), the Action against Terrorism Unit (ATU) and the OSCE structures working on anti-trafficking issues with a view to protecting women from exploitation and violence.
- Participating States and OSCE executive structures should be encouraged to improve national legislation to combat domestic violence and ensure it is aligned with international standards, OSCE commitments and good practices. Legal opinions produced by ODIHR upon request can strengthen efforts to improve legal and policy

frameworks for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

- Participating States and OSCE executive structures should strengthen efforts to reach out to the public and address public attitudes regarding domestic violence and other forms of violence against women. Activities to change the mind-set of people should include initiatives such as public education, working with youth, awareness-raising campaigns and other efforts to inform society of the serious consequences and costs of such violence, both at the individual and societal level. Outreach activities should also provide information on existing national legislation, referral mechanisms and legal remedy.
- Participating States should continue to invest in capacity building of critical actors in law enforcement and the judiciary in order to best implement legislation and provide victims with access to protection services. In this regard a multidisciplinary and comprehensive approach is needed and sufficient funds and human resources should be allocated.
- Participating States should continue to improve referral mechanisms and access to support services for victims in a way that is free from discrimination and would encourage victims to report the violence they experienced without fear. At the same time, programmes should be developed to work with the perpetrators of gender-based violence in order to avoid the repetition of acts of violence by the same offenders.
- Participating States should work closer with civil society organizations regarding violence against women. NGOs are the grass-root level voices of the silent and silenced ones.
- OSCE participating States and OSCE executive structures are encouraged to promote the signature and ratification of the Istanbul Convention and support its implementation through national legislation. This convention provides the most comprehensive approach to date for addressing gender-based violence. It is particularly relevant to the OSCE's focus on comprehensive security which includes the security of the individual from all types of violence. The Istanbul Convention recognizes many facets of gender-based violence such as forced marriage, female genital mutilation and violence against refugee and migrant women.
- OSCE structures and participating States should continue to promote the inclusion of men in gender equality issues as well as to encourage addressing violence against men and boys in order to break the vicious circle of violence, as many of the perpetrators of violence against women have previously been victims of sexual and domestic violence themselves.

## V. *Institutional Mechanisms for Gender Mainstreaming*

This session discussed the various approaches and institutional mechanisms within the OSCE to promote and mainstream gender equality. Participants identified gaps in the current structures as well as ways these mechanisms can be strengthened. Presentations were made

by representatives of UN Women and the Council of Europe about the new structures that have been created to better address the institutional challenges for promoting gender equality. These processes and the resulting new approaches provide know-how for the OSCE on strengthening and more effectively institutionalizing its own work to promote the implementation of its commitments on gender equality.

#### Actions needed

- The OSCE should consider establishing or upgrading a senior position on gender equality that reports directly to the Secretary General and mandating the person in this position to be a member of all senior OSCE Secretariat decision-making bodies.
- The OSCE should consider establishing a Gender Equality Network with representatives of participating States that would more systematically share information and liaise with the OSCE Secretariat and ODIHR and other institutions and structures on policy related to gender equality and implementation of gender equality commitments in their respective countries. Assessments of achievements, gaps, and future goals towards gender equality in the OSCE region should be organised regularly to be done in an inclusive and consultative manner.
- The OSCE should identify a structure to support the position of the Special Representative on Gender Issues in the future. Models used for other OSCE Special Representatives, including the Special Representative and Co-ordinator on Trafficking in Human Beings, the three Representatives on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination or the Contact Point on Roma and Sinti issues, should be explored as possible approaches to providing logistical and other support for country visits.
- The OSCE should continue to co-operate with other relevant international and regional organizations, such as UN Women, CoE and others, to learn from their experiences in promoting gender equality, to improve exchanges and co-operation, secure synergies and avoid overlap, and engage in joint country visits.
- The OSCE should ensure that the discussion on the institutional mechanisms for promoting and mainstreaming gender equality is maintained within the Helsinki+40 process.
- In 2015, a global review of 15 years of UNSCR 1325 (2000) will be undertaken; the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted by the fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, will be revisited in 2015; and demands on including gender equality as a stand-alone goal in the post-2015 development agenda are growing. This once in a generation opportunity offered by the upcoming anniversaries should be used for fully anchoring gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the OSCE.
- Participating States should consider ways to more systematically follow up on the recommendations of the SR on Gender Issues. Approaches to consider might include using the Human Dimension Committee to report on their implementation of the recommendations after the visit, a follow up discussion or even a follow up visit. OSCE structures should assist participating States in implementing recommendations of the SR on Gender Issues (field operations can develop action plans together with

the participating States, ODIHR can also provide support as appropriate through its gender team.)

- The OSCE should organize a review conference on a regular basis in order to follow up the implementation of commitments and identify further gaps and challenges. Such a conference offers a valuable platform for exchange of good practices and lessons learned.
- The OSCE should continue to promote gender equality as a cross-cutting theme in all three dimensions. To that end, gender mainstreaming efforts should be strengthened and expanded within the various units of the OSCE Secretariat, independent structures and field operations at all levels, including notably the decision-making level.
- OSCE structures should strengthen gender mainstreaming within their own programmes, activities and procedures, by ensuring a systematic inclusion of gender aspects in all phases of project development and implementation, engaging in an assessment of gender activities being implemented, conducting regular review of achievements, identifying future goals, and assigning targets and responsibilities.
- The OSCE should designate a gender focal point in each structure as one of the core staff responsibilities. The OSCE should work toward designating an experienced, full time gender adviser in the field operations and Institutions.
- The OSCE Chairs-in-Office, participating States, the Chairs of the three OSCE Committees and other OSCE bodies should ensure that the agendas of all OSCE events are gender inclusive in terms of participation and substance.