



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council 1429 Vienna, 22 June 2023

EU Statement on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict

1. On 19 June, we commemorated the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict. As mentioned in the Joint Statement by EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, and UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, conflict-related sexual violence is deeply rooted in inequalities. It has devastating long-term physical, psychological and social consequences, and impedes sustainable peace and security, social cohesion and economic development.
2. The European Union reaffirms its position of zero tolerance towards sexual and gender-based violence and calls on the international community to accelerate its efforts to eliminate all forms of sexual and gender-based violence, including as a strategy and a tactic of war.
3. The impact of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine on all women and girls is of grave concern, and the growing evidence of sexual and gender-based violence, including as a tactic of war by Russian Armed Forces as well as paramilitary entities controlled by Russian Armed Forces, is immensely alarming. The EU strongly condemns these illegal, brutal and cowardly actions, as substantiated in the reports of the Moscow Mechanism expert missions, ODIHR and the Independent International Commission of

Inquiry on Ukraine. The EU reiterates its steadfast commitment to uphold international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and to end impunity for international crimes, not least when rape is used as a weapon of war. We commend the tireless efforts and contributions of civil society and human rights defenders to this end.

4. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, along with subsequent UN Security Council Resolutions representing the Women, Peace and Security agenda, point to the increased need to protect women and girls in times of armed conflicts, and the importance of preventing gender-based violence, including through the prosecution of violations of international law. They also underline the importance of the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention and resolution, throughout the conflict cycle, and in recovery and reconstruction. Inclusive decision-making processes are vital for comprehensive security for all.
5. We reiterate the important role of the OSCE in the implementation of the Women Peace and Security agenda and commend the Secretary General and ODIHR for their continuous engagement in this regard. We call on all participating States to increase their efforts in achieving full implementation of the WPS agenda, at national, regional and global levels. We commend Ukraine for the adoption of its updated National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325.
6. The EU will apply a coordinated approach to risk-mitigation and prevention of all forms of sexual and gender-based violence and will ensure that responses are victim- and survivor-centred and trauma-sensitive, including by access to sexual and reproductive health care services, as well as to mental health and psychological support.
7. We call on participating States to conduct effective investigations into these crimes, bring perpetrators to justice, ensure accountability, and provide all victims with safe and unhindered access to justice, adequate redress and

reparations. Prevention, protection, and prosecution should be the driving forces of all our efforts.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, the Potential Candidate Country GEORGIA, as well as ANDORRA, MONACO and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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