



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2012 Warsaw, 28 September 2012

EU statement – Session 9

TOLERANCE AND NON-DISCRIMINATION I, EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN AND MEN; PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Madam / Mr. Moderator,

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The equality of men and women is one of the European Union's founding values; its promotion is an objective of the Union. Equality has become a fundamental right that is reflected by the EU Charter and it must be ensured in all areas. We consider gender mainstreaming to be a strategy that is crucial for reaching the goal of equality and calls on the OSCE and participating states to integrate the gender perspective into every stage of their policy processes.

In March 2011, the Council of the EU adopted a new European Pact for gender equality for the period of 2011-2020, reaffirming the EU's commitment to closing gender gaps in employment, education and social protection, promoting a better work-life balance for women and men, and combating all forms of violence against women.

We welcome the more focused implementation of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality. We look forward to the publication of the Secretary General's Annual Evaluation Report on the implementation of the Action Plan and commend the initiatives of the Gender Section of the OSCE Secretariat and the ODIHR. We would also like to stress the cross-dimensionality of gender issues, welcoming the initiative of the so-called Power Breakfasts in Vienna, where the gender aspect of security issues is being discussed.

In 2008, the EU adopted a Comprehensive Approach for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions No 1325 and 1820. In 2010 the EU, among its activities to implement its Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015, renewed its commitment to continue implementing the EU Comprehensive Approach to these resolutions and to monitor its implementation through the use of dedicated indicators and the regular preparation of a progress report. The importance of the implementation of these resolutions cannot be underestimated. As there is still some way to go to fulfil the commitments, we further encourage both the OSCE and all participating States to incorporate the commitments of UNSCR 1325 and Ministerial Council Decision 14/05 into their respective policies, including by adopting national action plans for the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 as well as by requesting women's participation at all stages of the OSCE's efforts in the fields of peace-building and democratization.

Despite the significant progress in the EU area, inequalities still exist, as indicated by such phenomena as the persistence of the gender pay gap and violence. We will remain actively involved in all OSCE activities promoting gender equality and women's rights. In conclusion, we would like to reiterate the four main recommendations of the EU with regard to promoting gender equality:

- 1) Mainstreaming of gender issues in OSCE policies and activities, with a focus on the cross-dimensionality of gender issues;
- 2) Further involvement of men in gender equality promotion activities;
- 3) Incorporating the commitments of UNSCR 1325, including by adopting action plans for the implementation of UNSCR 1325, as well as developing an OSCE action plan;
- 4) To pay more attention to the issues of tackling violence against women and girls, particularly those that are most prevalent such as domestic violence, and to all forms of discrimination against them, namely in the context of conflict.

Thank you.

The Acceding Country Croatia*, the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland+ and Serbia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

** Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.