



EUROPEAN UNION

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EU statement on Gender equality in the Armed Forces: best practices

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome the speakers, Rear Admiral Jonas Haggren, Captain Anna Björsson, Dr. Louise Olsson, Brigade General Slobodan Joksimović and Ms Hanna Helene Syse, to the FSC and thank them for their interesting and comprehensive presentations. Our thanks also go to the Chairmanships of Serbia and Norway for arranging this important discussion. Dialogues such as this are important in emphasizing that gender equality affects the whole society, including the armed forces in international and national functions.

This year marks a particularly important year for women's rights and gender equality. We celebrate 40 years since the first world conference on the status of women (Mexico 1975), the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 15th anniversary of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. In this context, we note advancements made and highlight gaps in many areas requiring political will and resources.

For the European Union the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women is an important priority among the EU's OSCE priorities. The EU stresses the importance of addressing gender equality and empowerment of women as a cross-dimensional topic; in economic, environmental, human dimension and especially from a politico-military viewpoint as per today's theme. Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and related resolutions remain highly relevant. We support the adoption of an OSCE-Wide Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security initiated by Austria, Turkey, Kazakhstan and Finland. The findings and recommendations of the Global Study on Women, Peace and Security, to be presented next week in New York, will also be of high value to our work in the OSCE.

Military and civilian crisis management are important areas where gender equality can be mainstreamed. We recognize that integrating gender issues into armed forces' international and domestic functions is a challenge. The Gender Coach Program serves as a good

example of best practice, by showing us a concrete way to implement these important questions in different organisations while using clear common goals, realistic timeframe and a deliberate top down approach. We emphasize that crisis management operations and missions must operationalize gender in their activities and that all deployments including senior management, receive training on gender mainstreaming, prevention and response to sexual violence and sexual exploitation and abuse. We encourage all participating States to continue training and deploying women as civilian crisis management experts and as military experts.

The EU strives to ensure that strategic and operational planning documents for CSDP missions and operations include references to gender or UNSCR 1325, through the work of gender advisers based at the EU headquarters. Moreover, all current CSDP missions and operations, as well as CSDP headquarters, have human rights and/or gender advisers or focal points. We work on specific training modules on human rights and gender in crisis management, including a focus on sexual violence in armed conflicts. We are currently conducting a baseline study on human rights and gender in CSDP, in order to develop clear recommendations for the way forward.

Women and girls continue to suffer from violence before, during and after conflicts. We must aim to prevent and eliminate sexual violence in conflict. Fight against impunity is of crucial importance. It is therefore essential to promote women's access to justice.

Women's active participation and leadership is crucial in all parts of decision-making and implementation in reaching sustainable peace and security. When women and girls are empowered, educated, and contributing to their societies, it will lead to prosperity on a larger scale as well as to sustainable peace. We encourage women's participation throughout the conflict cycle, including in decision making and mediation, and are looking forward to an exchange of views on how the OSCE could improve its activities and show leadership in this regard. We also look forward to timely adoption of an Addendum to the Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, as tasked by the Basel Ministerial Council.

We warmly welcome that the Secretary General is organizing a Security Days event on resolution 1325 in November to mark the 15th anniversary of this landmark resolution. We look forward to actively engaging in this important event.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY,

members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania 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.