

Gender Equality Review Conference

On Occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the 2004 OSCE Gender Action Plan

Date: 10-11 July, 2014

Venue: Neuer Saal, Hofburg, Vienna

Annotated Agenda

Background

The year 2014 marks the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the Ministerial Council (MC.) Decision 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality (MC.DEC/14/04), the key OSCE document on gender equality, developed in compliance with the relevant international legal framework. This gives participating States, OSCE structures, and Partners for Co-operation a unique opportunity to reflect on what has been achieved over the past decade in terms of integrating a gender perspective into comprehensive security, and very importantly, to look at what remains to be done to fulfill agreed commitments.

The Gender Equality Review Conference, to be held 10-11 July 2014 in Vienna, Austria, organized in partnership between the Secretariat's Gender Section, ODIHR and the Swiss Chairmanship, will address gaps in the implementation of the Action Plan that have been identified by the annual monitoring and evaluation reports over the past years. They include activities aimed at establishing more systematic implementation processes (enhancing the institutional effectiveness of gender equality structures, improving coordination, enhancing cooperation with participating States through a national gender equality network); activities targeting priority issue areas in the three dimensions (promoting equal opportunities for men and women with focus on women peace and security, women's economic empowerment, women's public participation and gender based violence).

The Conference will bring together national stakeholders from government and academia, but also civil society will be invited to participate with a strong role. Participating States will discuss progress on their implementation of gender equality commitments across the three dimensions as well as discuss innovative methods to enhance implementation in the future.

Thursday 10 July 2014

1500h-1600h High Level Opening

This opening will set the stage for the discussions over the course of the two days which will focus on the link between the OSCE's unique concept of comprehensive security and the extensive commitments on gender equality. Speakers will make it clear that the purpose of the review conference is to look at the developments over the past 10 years, the strengths and weaknesses of the implementation by participating States and the added value that the OSCE brings to promoting equal opportunities for men and women by addressing them through the comprehensive security framework. The speakers will also introduce the topics of the working session and set out the goal of discussing concrete outcomes.

1600h-1800h Working Session One: A Gender Perspective in Crisis Management

OSCE's comprehensive security approach is fortified by its commitments on gender equality as it renders a holistic perspective of the causes and consequences of crisis and conflict. Additionally it improves the ability of the OSCE to have a positive impact on both state and individual security and it improves the effectiveness of policy and programming. Recognizing this, the OSCE developed a policy framework for implementing the women, peace and security agenda through several Ministerial Council Decisions such as MC. Dec/14/04 on the Gender Action Plan; the dedicated MC. Dec/14/05 on women's participation in crisis management and conflict resolution; as well as MC. Dec/3/11 on the inclusion of gender issues in early warning and early action. Additionally, with regards to the situation of women from marginalized groups, specifically Roma and Sinti women, the OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area (2003) requires participating States to pay special attention to the needs of Roma and Sinti women in crisis and post-crisis situations.

As a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, the OSCE is a key instrument for early warning, conflict prevention and resolution, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. In line with these commitments the promotion of equal opportunities for men and women should be fully mainstreamed and incorporated in the OSCE's conflict cycle policy and programming. But how efficiently has the OSCE been able to identify entry points for the inclusion of a gender perspective in this work? Like many regional and international organizations, and indeed participating States, the OSCE has to some degree struggled to find practical mechanisms and implementation tools to enhance its conflict cycle initiatives in line with the Women, Peace and Security agenda. OSCE structures and participating States are cognizant that the approach to the political-military dimension has not always included a sufficient gender analysis that allows it to best address the challenges of an increasingly divided international community. This realization has led to increasing calls for attention to this holistic perspective in the work of the first dimension.

The OSCE has organized several high-level as well as expert-level discussions on gender perspectives of peace and security issues to enhance understanding in the participating States, as well as internally in the organization. The 10 year anniversary of the Gender Action Plan is an opportunity for the OSCE to consolidate its commitments on gender-mainstreaming into the conflict cycle approach and gender equality as a final objective. This session affords the strategic opportunity to discuss entry points, as well as invigorating on-going efforts.

Proposed Questions for Discussion:

- What mechanisms need to be in place in order for the OSCE to effectively integrate a gender perspective in the conflict cycle approach?
- What can the OSCE do to foster implementation of commitments related to the women, peace and security issues at the regional and international level?
- What are the challenges specific to the OSCE region for implementation of the women, peace and security issues and how can these be overcome?
- What are the main components for supporting an inclusive security sector ? What role does the OSCE have in that process?
- Is the existing OSCE policy framework for women, peace and security issues enough or are there tools yet to be developed and implemented?
- What tools need to be enhanced/developed for the OSCE to achieve an inclusive policy framework in the context of the conflict cycle?
- What support can the OSCE provide to participating States in their efforts to implement the women, peace and security agenda?
- How can the OSCE provide enhance women's participation in the Security Sector?

1800-1930h Reception in the Vorsaal

Friday 11 July 2014

900h–1030h Working Session Two: A Gender Perspective of Economic Empowerment and Social Protection

In MC. Dec/ 10/11 on promoting equal opportunities for men and women in the economic sphere, participating States have recognized that women's participation in the economic sphere contributes significantly towards economic recovery, sustainable growth and the creation of cohesive societies, and thus is essential to the security and stability of the OSCE region. It is also noted with concern the 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 quality, full-time employment; and the slow progress to overcome pay gaps for equal work. All these factors result in women's reduced lifetime earnings and pensions and increased female poverty.

A lack of research and understanding of the complexities as to what interventions are needed and which ones have proven to be efficient have additionally slowed down progress to realize women's economic empowerment. To achieve equal access to opportunities and resources a holistic approach is needed which includes integration of a gender perspective in the early stages of policy and programming design.¹ The goal of this session is to identify key interventions that have been successful in increasing women's productivity and earnings in different economic and country contexts in the OSCE region.

The gender pay gap is an example of a persistent challenge that still exists today throughout the OSCE region due to wider gender inequality issues in the economy and in society. The gender pay gap is the difference between men's and women's pay, based on the average difference in gross hourly earnings of all employees. The impact of the gender pay gap means that women earn less over their lifetimes; this results in lower pensions and a higher risk of poverty in old age. Although the overall gender pay gap has narrowed in the last decade, in some countries the national gender pay gap has actually been widening.

The gender pay gap exists even though women have now achieved equality in school and university enrollment and graduation rates. Expanding and sharing knowledge of the most effective interventions to increase women's economic empowerment can have an important effect on supporting civil society and government policymakers to create better policies, based on evidence, that have an impact on both women and men. In addition to typical obstacles, in times of financial crisis women and men may find they each face specific types of barriers in finding employment opportunities and accessing the labour market. Identifying the vulnerabilities of both men and women is a key part of formulating appropriate solutions that support equality instead of entrenching discrimination.

Social protection becomes crucial in the context of the current economic crisis. Thus implementation of special programmes aimed at protection of unemployed persons, job training courses, integration of the national minorities groups and migrants, with particular focus on women's needs, are key elements for social inclusion and protection. Due attention

¹OECD, *Promoting Pro-Poor Growth: the role of empowerment* – © OECD 2012

should be also paid to social supporting of parents, single parents, victims of violence and trafficking.

Women from ethnic minority groups, such as Roma and Sinti women, additionally face multiple discrimination in access to quality education and employment. OSCE participating States should increase their efforts to combat discrimination against minority women, and encourage their equal access to employment, internships and mentoring opportunities, as affirmed by the Ministerial Council Decision 4/13, focusing on Roma and Sinti women, youth and children.

Proposed Questions for Discussion:

- What are best practices and policies for narrowing the gender pay gap in the OSCE region?
- Which types of special measures are proven solutions to promoting equal opportunity for men and women, including breaking barriers in women's access to decision making positions in the public and private business sector?
- How can policy makers understand the most appropriate policies and programmes for women's economic empowerment for their context? What are the first steps to designing interventions?
- Is there enough data or existing evidence on the gender aspects of economic opportunities and best practices for women's economic empowerment?
- Should there be specific interventions for increasing young women's labor market access?

1030h-1300h Working Session Three: Women's Participation in Political and Public Life

In Moscow in 1991, participating States recognized gender equality as a cornerstone of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. In spite of the progress being made in improving equal rights and opportunities for women and men, a persistently low level of women's participation in decision-making processes is still to be addressed.

In the OSCE region, women remain under-represented in public institutions in all three branches of government – executive, legislative and judicial—particularly at decision-making levels at the national and local level. For example, while women's representation in parliament in the OSCE region now stands at 24.3 per cent, only 12 per cent of mayoral offices are occupied by women. Likewise, a database covering 34 OSCE States indicates that only 10 per cent of Public Prosecutors and presidents of administrative and constitutional courts are women.² Recognizing this imbalance, in Athens in 2009, participating States

²According 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

adopted MC. Dec/ 07/09 on Women's Participation in Political and Public Life, and agreed to consider introducing specific measures to "achieve the goal of gender balance in all legislative, judicial and executive bodies, including security services, such as police services."³ To assist States in realizing these commitments, the OSCE has been entrusted with a mandate to promote women's participation in political and public life.⁴

Women's meaningful representation in public institutions is not only required to improve democratic development, 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 in areas such as employment, marriage, divorce, property and inheritance. Making democratic institutions more inclusive, representative, and gender-sensitive at all levels requires 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.⁵

The OSCE has a key role to play in assisting States with meeting their gender equality commitments by facilitating an exchange of knowledge and experience. Only by working together - participating States, OSCE executive structures, Partners for Co-operation and civil society - can we achieve full and true equality between women and men in the OSCE region.

Proposed Questions for Discussion:

- What challenges do participating States face in providing equal opportunities for women and men to participate in all aspects of public life, including in decision-making?
- What specific measures have participating States taken to address the under-representation of women in the government, the legislature, and the judiciary, as well as in security services such as law enforcement?
- What tools should the OSCE and participating States use to better track women's representation in public life in all three branches of government?
- How can the OSCE better analyse and publicize the impact of women's representation in public life, particularly in the sphere of policymaking?
- What measures can government and other actors introduce to support access to policymaking processes of women from all marginalized groups, including national minorities and migrants, and particularly Roma and Sinti?

(Liechtenstein and Norway). Please see: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/index_en.htm.

³OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 07/09 on Women's Participation in Political and Public Life, para 1.

⁴Specifically, 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 (Decision No. 14/04), para 44 (d).

⁵ 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 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.

- In the next few years, how should participating States undertake to review and measure progress in implementing the 2004 OSCE Action Plan and other OSCE commitments as regards women's participation in public life?

1300h-1400h Lunch Buffet, Vorsaal

1400-1530h Working Session Four: Combating Violence against Women

Combating gender based violence, including domestic and sexual, the most pervasive human rights violation and one cause of personal insecurity in the OSCE region, is a fundamental element of achieving comprehensive security. Violence and insecurity prevent the effective participation of many women in political, economic and social spheres, and also results in significant costs for government and society.

The MC. Dec/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. OSCE participating States and OSCE Executive Structures have undertaken a range of activities to implement not only OSCE commitments, but also take into account, where appropriate, international conventions and legal standards on gender based violence, such as CEDAW and the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention. Examples include adopting new national legislation training for police officers, medical and judicial authorities; supporting telephone hotlines, shelters and resources centers that support victims, including marginalized groups such as Roma and Sinti women, with legal and psychosocial services; developing public education campaigns and sharing of experiences and best practices through roundtable meetings and study tours.

Recently various international organizations have adopted documents on gender equality issues that could be of a particular interest for the OSCE as well. For example, the Istanbul Convention of the Council of Europe, which embodies the most comprehensive approach to addressing gender-based violence and came into force this year, highlights four critical areas of action: prevention, protection, prosecution and integrated policies. Effectively addressing each of these requires developing a legal framework and co-ordination of policy and action; the full participation of women and men within public institutions; and the sensitization of public officials and the broader society as to the underlying gender dimensions of this crime. It also, for the first time, recognizes the transnational nature of some types of gender based violence, such as forced marriage, female genital mutilation and violence against refugee and migrant women. In May 2014 the Istanbul Convention achieved the ten ratifications required to come into force and a large number of OSCE participating States are in the process of reforming national legislation in preparation for signature and ratification. Interested countries could make good use of similar documents. It is critical that next steps do not stop at adoption but that they actually lead to implementation, and also serve as a guide even those States outside of the Council of Europe or other international organizations.

The OSCE has a key role to play in supporting participating States to meet their gender based violence commitments by convening and facilitating exchanges of knowledge and experience. This session seeks to highlight both the success and challenges of addressing gender based violence over the last 10 years and situate it strongly within the comprehensive security agenda.

Proposed Questions for Discussion:

- What measures have participating States taken to prevent and combat gender based violence (such as adoption of a comprehensive legal framework (criminal and civil), services to victims and their families, training, public education, etc.) and what more can be done?
- What challenges do participating States continue to face in preventing and combating gender based violence?
- What information-sharing mechanisms could the OSCE and participating States use to better track prevalence of gender based violence and implementation and effectiveness of laws, policies and programs?
- How can the OSCE promote greater engagement by men and boys in initiatives to prevent and combat gender based violence?
- How can the OSCE better analyse and publicize the costs of gender based violence and the need to address it as a critical element to achieve comprehensive security?
- How can the OSCE make use of the relevant documents of other international organizations, in particular, promote the use of the comprehensive approach of the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention, as a mechanism to enhance implementation of commitments to prevent and combat gender-based violence in the OSCE region?
- In the next 10 years, what would be the most effective ways for participating States to review and measure progress in implementing the 2005 OSCE MC. Decision on Combating Violence Against Women and other relevant OSCE decisions?

1530h-1700h Working Session Five: Institutional Mechanisms for Gender Mainstreaming

The goal of this session is to discuss the institutional gender equality mechanisms within the OSCE and how gaps in current structures can be more effective. Participating States use various approaches to create special structures aimed at promoting national gender equality policy. The exchange of their best practices related to national institutional mechanisms could significantly contribute to the implementation of the relevant OSCE commitments. Moreover, a number of regional and international organizations have recently undertaken processes of assessing their gender mainstreaming structures in order to understand their institutional challenges and identify new strategies and solutions. These processes provide good examples for the OSCE Secretariat, Institutions and Field Operations on how its gender mainstreaming approach can be improved, strengthened and institutionalized.

The OSCE executive structures will discuss how they organize their efforts to mainstream gender into their policy and programming, as well as how they cooperate with other regional

organizations on gender and comprehensive security issues in order to improve their efficiency and effectiveness.

Proposed Questions for Discussion:

- What trends can be identified across other international and regional organizations of how and where to situate gender expertise in the structure for best results?
- What are common challenges across national and international institutional mechanisms to effectively gender-mainstream its policy and programming work?
- What types of strategies have proven to be effective in supporting gender mainstreaming efforts within the OSCE executive structures?
- What mechanisms or policies could improve efforts to gender mainstream policy and programming, including the best practices of the participating States?

1700h-1730h Thoughts on the future

- In order to ensure follow-up to the ideas and outcomes during the conference the presenters will present a summary of these findings and based on these map possible ways to enhance the implementation of OSCE gender commitments in the future.

1730h-1800h High level Closing

The goal of this session is to discuss follow-up and next steps on the outcome document.