



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1276 Vienna, 23 July 2020

EU Statement on the Special Progress Report on the Implementation of the OSCE 2004 Gender Action Plan on the Promotion of Gender Equality

The European Union would like to thank the Ambassador Tuula Yrjölä, Officer in Charge in Absence of the Secretary General, for presenting the Special Progress Report on the Implementation of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan on the Promotion of Gender Equality. Implementing our OSCE commitments on gender equality is vital for reaching progress on our commitments related to human rights and comprehensive security.

The report provides a comprehensive assessment of the progress the OSCE has made during the last three years. It summarizes our achievements, but it also underlines how much still needs to be done. It is unacceptable that in 2020 women and girls continue to face gender-related hurdles and barriers, as well as gender discrimination, stereotyping, and gender-based violence, preventing them from reaching their full potential and fulfilling their aspirations.

2020 is a milestone for gender equality. It marks the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and five years since the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals. As a regional organisation under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the OSCE should continue contributing to the achievement of these commitments. We warmly thank the Albanian Chairmanship for keeping gender issues high on the OSCE agenda and we look forward to the upcoming Gender Review Conference, a timely opportunity to take stock of the implementation of our

OSCE commitments and to reflect on the need to further strengthen them to address existing gaps, as well as new and emerging trends.

We welcome that the OSCE executive structures have stepped up their support to the participating States for the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. In the coming period, we should enhance our efforts towards ensuring women's equal participation in conflict prevention and resolution, including in security sector institutions and policymaking.

2020 also marks 15 years of implementation of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, the OSCE landmark document that outlines the gender equality goals, both for the OSCE structures and institutions and the participating States. We value the work of OSCE Secretariat, autonomous institutions and field missions in supporting participating States in implementing their OSCE commitments. Systematic inclusion of a gender perspective into the monitoring and evaluation of all OSCE activities, programmes and projects is essential.

We welcome the work of the OSCE structures and institutions to change the gender dynamics in the organisational culture. It is of utmost importance that we challenge and address gender-based biases. We stand firmly behind the Organisation's increased standards of integrity, expectations of professional and respectful behaviour and the "zero-tolerance approach" towards harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination and retaliation.

As the Gender Evaluation Progress Report states, accountability and strong leadership are needed for implementing gender mainstreaming. The Executive Gender Coaching programme is therefore a valuable investment for the Organisation, as the number of women in the senior management has remained roughly at the same low level during the last ten years. The EU calls on all participating States to take gender equality into account when making nominations. Gender equality is a core principle of the European Union. It is our common vision and mind-set and we stand ready to work tirelessly, inside the European Union and with our international partners, to make it a reality.

In conclusion, we appreciate the progress made within the Organisation in implementing the commitments in the OSCE Gender Action Plan and we encourage all to take into consideration the recommendations of the report. We would like to thank the Gender team in the Secretariat and the Gender Focal Points

for their dedication and commitment to advancing gender equality in the OSCE from policy to practice.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ARMENIA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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