



Organization for Security and
Co-operation in Europe
Presence in Albania

HEAD OF PRESENCE'S REMARKS AT PRESENTATION OF RESULTS OF OSCE- LED SURVEY ON WELLBEING AND SAFETY OF WOMEN FOR ALBANIA

8 October 2019

Dear Ministers, dear UN and EU partners,

When I read the survey, the only thing I did not like was the title: Wellbeing and safety of women. It was quite about the contrary.

But thank you for inviting me to be part of the opening of this important event.

Violence against women often occurs in hiding - shielded from the eyes not only of the public, but even from the eyes of the victim's closest friends and families. The invisibility of the victims obscures the true dimension of the problem.

This important OSCE report shines a bright light on the issue. It illuminates the true scale on which women are being subjected to violence. Almost 9 in 10 women consider violence against women to be common in Albania – 9 in 10. More than half of the victims of sexual harassment stay silent about it – more than the half. And 97% of victims of intimate in-house violence never report it to the police – 97%.

Each instance of violence against women, be it physical violence or psychological violence, is a human rights violation, as it represents an infringement of basic human dignity, of basic human right to physical safety or in extreme cases the infringement of the right to life.

Almost half of all respondents report that they consider violence against women to be a private matter - imagine. Human rights are never a private matter, never. They always are a public matter, and, especially in this case, a matter that lies squarely within the mission of the OSCE.

I would like to congratulate you for your interest and devotion, for your contribution, to this joint effort to better understand gender-based violence. I hope that the OSCE-led survey that is presented today will inform and improve your important work to put an end to gender-based violence.

The first step to solving any problem is knowing it. This is the first survey that provides for robust, comprehensive evidence of violence against women and girls that are comparable regionally. The research is based on the methodology used by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, thus allowing for data comparison on the phenomenon continent-wide.

The data clearly show the need for action. Cultural norms and attitudes support women's obedience to men, and sexual violence in intimate partner relationships is widely accepted. These beliefs are closely interlinked. They contribute to an environment where violence against women is rampant. Both men and women must participate in changing these cultural norms. At the same time, women must be empowered to report violence; their reports must

be taken seriously by the police, by the prosecutors and judges, and the perpetrators must be brought to justice, as simple as that.

I am hopeful that this report will mark the beginning of a concerted cultural, political, and legal effort in Albania to tackle the issue of gender-based violence. I am confident in saying that the OSCE is determined to continue to work in this area with our Albanian partners and is ready to provide further support and expertise.

Thank you very much for your interested attention!

Ends