



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°1072 Vienna, 6 March 2024

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#### EU Statement on Women, Peace and Security agenda

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1. Mr Chair, thank you for dedicating today's Security Dialogue to the UNSCR 1325 and the Women, Peace and Security agenda and in particular for choosing the topic on Integrating Gender Perspective when fulfilling the OSCE politico-military commitments and activities. This remains an urgent and relevant matter that we clearly need to continue addressing in this Forum. We also thank the key note speakers and panellists who joined us today for their insightful and valuable contributions to our discussions.
2. The EU and its Member States recognise the important role of women in Armed Forces. Gender mainstreaming to enable more inclusivity and participation of women in planning and decision making at all levels, including in leadership, is an absolute priority. Integration of women's perspectives at all stages of preparation, planning and implementing of policy is proven to have more effective results in both combat and peacekeeping scenarios.
3. We recall the three OSCE ministerial decisions on this topic: MC decision 3/11 on the conflict cycle outlining the OSCE's capabilities in early warning, early action, dialogue facilitation, conflict resolution, mediation support and post-conflict rehabilitation across all three dimensions, MC decision 7/09 that calls for equal opportunities within the security services, including the armed forces, and MC decision 14/05 that acknowledges the need for concrete action by the OSCE to integrate women and women initiatives into all phases of the conflict cycle, including crisis management. These are commitments that we all have agreed on.
4. We also want to highlight the commitments in the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the promotion of Gender Equality, which are yet to be fully implemented – 20 years after their adoption.
5. Unfortunately, not only have these goals not been achieved, but in the meantime, new challenges have emerged. For instance, technologies are currently used extensively to strengthen military capabilities and boost operational efficiency in

several aspects, such as connectivity, lethality, autonomy and sustainability. Emerging and disruptive technologies are highly likely to further transform the way that conflicts are conducted and resolved, as we already see with the use of cyberwarfare. At the same time, we witness that the gender gap remains in fields such as programming, software development or AI research, and even when it comes to basic access to and the use of digital technologies.

6. Mr Chair, Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustifiable war of aggression against Ukraine highlights the importance of the WPS agenda. We see the impressive leadership demonstrated by Ukrainian women, engaging in a strong all of society response. At the same time, the ongoing sexual and gender-based violence, including as a tactic of war by the Russian forces, reinforces the absolute necessity in strengthening mechanisms to prevent and respond to this appalling crime. We will do our utmost, including within the OSCE context, to ensure that perpetrators are held to account, and survivors provided with support and justice.
7. As the largest regional security organisation in the world the OSCE can and should make a strong contribution to the WPS agenda and we recall our unwavering support for an OSCE-wide Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. The EU and its Member States have also endorsed the update of the guidance on voluntary reporting on WPS under the Code of Conduct.
8. In line with the 1999 Istanbul Document, the EU remains committed to making gender equality an integral part of our policies, both at the level of participating States and within the Organisation. The EU policy framework on Women, Peace and Security sets forth policy objectives and actions to make significant progress towards a gender-equal Europe by 2025. It formulates key actions for the coming years and commits to ensure an equality perspective in all EU policy areas, including Foreign and Security policy with a particular attention herein to the EU Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.
9. There are also actions that we can take here, such as the successful Barbershop Conference for Military Advisors and FSC Delegates which took place in October last year and was designed to encourage men to become actively engaged in promoting gender equality, while also increasing their understanding of the WPS agenda, and its role in promoting international peace and security. The side-event

tomorrow organised together by our FSC and OSCE Chairs on the Role of Men in Gender Equality is another very welcome initiative in this regard.

10. Mr. Chair, the campaign theme for International Women's Day 2024 is "Inspire Inclusion", a theme that continues to be valid for our work here: our commitments to full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of women throughout the entire security sector.

Thank you.

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

\* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.