



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°976 Vienna, 19 May 2021

EU Statement on UNSCR 1325

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome the distinguished Speakers to the Forum for Security Cooperation and thank them for their insightful presentations.

We strongly believe that the **OSCE as a whole plays an important role** in promoting and supporting the regional implementation of UNSCR 1325 and its subsequent resolutions. In this regard, we welcome that the AM Chair has decided to dedicate today's Security Dialogue to the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

The WPS Agenda focuses on **women's full, equal and meaningful participation** in peace and security related decision-making processes, including crisis and conflict prevention, peace processes and relief and recovery, as well as on protection from conflict-related violence. The Agenda stresses that gender equality is embedded in peace and security issues, and that gender perspectives are integral to peace and security. In addition, it states that addressing gender-related root causes of violence is critical for conflict prevention. In fact, there is ample evidence indicating chances of implementing peace agreements increase significantly when women are fully involved throughout the peace process.

Within the FSC, there **still remains untapped potential** to advance the work on this landmark resolution. In this context, the EU regrets that no MC decision could be reached last year in Tirana. The strong message given by the 52 participating States

subscribing to the Joint Statement on UNSCR 1325, demonstrates that there is a willingness to advance the work of the FSC in this domain and make additional efforts.

Notwithstanding the efforts and progress already made within the OSCE region, **there is still much work to be done. The 2020 joint statement on UNSCR 1325** lists some concrete ideas on improving our existing commitments, such as:

- The creation of a plan of action for the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of the FSC areas of work, including all levels of decision-making and leadership;
- The facilitation of gender mainstreaming in SALW/SCA controls and in practical assistance work.

The EU Strategic Approach to Women Peace and Security considers the WPS Agenda an essential tool in ensuring that the rights, agency and protection of women and girls are observed and upheld at all times. It confirms that a **meaningful and equitable role in decision-making has to be secured for women, regardless of their age, during all stages of conflict prevention, peace-making, peacebuilding and post-conflict rehabilitation** as well as in the prevention of and protection from conflict-related violence, including all forms of sexual and gender-based violence. Women affected by violent conflicts, as experts of their own experiences, must not be overlooked in this regard. The EU therefore encourages the active use of the OSCE toolkit “Inclusion of Women and Effective Peace Processes”.

Equal opportunity and representation are a **matter of democracy and inclusive security**. Hence, we encourage strengthening the ties to, and working closer with civil society, local, regional and international civil society organizations, grassroots activists, women human rights defenders and women’s rights organizations, as indicated in the EU Action Plan on WPS from July 2019.

Gender stereotypes, negative attitudes and behaviour definitely need to be addressed. Women must be permitted equal access to the traditionally male-dominated public space. The EU thus **commends all the initiatives, including informal networks** such

as Women in the First Dimension, Women Ambassadors and MenEngage, that support the implementation of the WPS Agenda within the OSCE. The latter is crucial since we believe in the importance of engaging men and boys as positive agents for change, addressing gender stereotypes and societal exclusion mechanisms.

The EU remains convinced that a strengthened commitment to **WPS and women's participation in all OSCE activities** contributes to the OSCE comprehensive security approach and thereby strengthens the organization. We must all continue our efforts to identify and remove all barriers to women and men's equal participation, in particular in the sector of peace and security. Therefore, we strongly advocate for balanced panels within our Organization as a starting point to achieve these ambitions. We stress the need for **continued close engagement and cooperation** between the participating States, partners for cooperation, the OSCE Secretariat, the field missions and the autonomous institutions, at all stages of the implementation of the WPS Agenda and throughout the realization process.

In conclusion, the EU calls on the OSCE and the participating States to amplify our efforts on the implementation of the WPS Agenda. After 20 years it is high time that we close the implementation gap.

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, the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, 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 Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.