



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council No. 1480
Vienna, 4 July 2024**

**EU statement on the International Day for the Elimination of
Sexual Violence in Conflict**

1. On 19 June we commemorated the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict.
2. As expressed in the Joint Statement by EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, and UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, sexual violence is one of the most devastating forms of violence during armed conflicts, committed mainly against women and girls but also against men and boys. Sexual violence adversely and profoundly affects physical, sexual and reproductive, as well as mental health. It is a grave violation of human rights and a major public health problem.
3. We call for decisive action at the political and operational levels to prevent and eradicate sexual and gender-based violence and to protect civilian infrastructure, including healthcare and educational facilities in conflict zones. Attacks on healthcare facilities severely hamper the access of survivors of sexual violence to life-saving assistance, protection, reporting and reintegration.
4. For the protection of women and girls in conflicts and improved meaningful participation of women in the security sector, we must also strengthen our efforts to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and the subsequent UNSC resolutions forming the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. The OSCE has an important role to play here and we commend the Secretary General and ODIHR for their continuous engagement in this regard. We call on all

participating States to increase their efforts to fully implement all OSCE commitments that support the implementation of the WPS agenda and recall our unwavering support for an OSCE-wide Action Plan on WPS.

5. The growing evidence of sexual and gender-based violence committed during Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, including as a shameful tactic of war by Russian Armed Forces, is alarming. The EU strongly condemns these illegal, brutal and cowardly actions, as documented in the reports of the Moscow Mechanism expert missions, ODIHR and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine.
6. The EU reiterates its steadfast commitment to upholding international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and to ending impunity for international crimes. We call on participating States to conduct effective investigations into these crimes, bring perpetrators to justice, ensure accountability, and provide all victims with safe and unhindered access to justice, adequate redress, and reparations. We commend the tireless efforts and contributions of civil society and human rights defenders to this end.
7. The EU reaffirms its position of zero tolerance towards sexual and gender-based violence. In this vein, the EU recently adopted an EU-wide law combating violence against women. It criminalises physical violence, as well as psychological violence, including sexual violence, both offline and online. The law also requires all EU countries to criminalise female genital mutilation and forced marriage as stand-alone crimes.
8. In closing, prevention, protection, and prosecution should be the driving forces of all our efforts to eliminate sexual and gender-based violence.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, and GEORGIA, the EFTA country ICELAND, member of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA, MONACO 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.

