



EUROPEAN UNION

Economic and Environmental Implementation Meeting Vienna, 15 November 2022

Taking stock of the implementation of the OSCE commitments in the field of women's participation in the economic sphere

EU Opening Statement

1. The European Union is pleased to take part in the 2022 Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting and thanks the Polish Chairpersonship and the team of the Office of the Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities for the organisation.
2. We warmly welcome the keynote speakers to our meeting and thank them for their remarks. Advancing women's economic empowerment is a strong priority for the EU and we have many common goals on which we should join efforts and we appreciate the good cooperation that is already taking place.
3. The topic chosen for this year's meeting is of crucial importance in this period of post-pandemic recovery and security crisis caused by Russia's illegal and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine. Russia's war has not only shaken global peace and our security order, but it also endangers global food and energy security, and puts those fleeing at greater risk when it comes to trafficking in human beings and gender-based violence. War-induced food price hikes and shortages have widened the global gender gap in food insecurity and there are alarming increases in gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and trafficking, affecting women and girls disproportionately, both inside Ukraine and globally.
4. As the Russian war of aggression rages on, the EU remains unwavering in its support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The EU and its Member States will continue to provide protection,

humanitarian, medical and financial, to those seeking shelter, mostly women and children, as well as well as granting access to education and labour market. The EU and its Member States will continue to respond to the global food security crisis and support timely and stable delivery of Ukrainian agricultural products to global markets, through EU solidarity lanes and bilaterally.

5. It is therefore fundamental to prioritize women's and girls' participation and leadership in conflict response, recovery, and peacebuilding.
6. The OSCE with its comprehensive approach to security provides for an ideal platform for facilitating dialogue, sharing practices and supporting co-operation among our countries on this issue. Among its commitments in this field, the OSCE recognises that women's participation in the economic sphere contributes significantly towards economic recovery, sustainable growth and the creation of cohesive societies, which is essential to the security and stability of the OSCE region.
7. We strongly believe that the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in the economic sphere should remain on the agenda of our deliberations and a priority for the work of the whole OSCE.
8. Gender equality is a fundamental human right and a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Persistent obstacles are rooted in structural imbalances, such as the influence of stereotypes in educational and career path choices. Women's freedom of choice in all areas of their lives is nonetheless dependent upon economic empowerment. It not only equips women to fight the obstacles and forms of violence they face, but is also the key to developing their true potential and their independence.
9. The EU is strongly committed to enhance and promote gender equality and empowering women and girls. Further to the EU gender equality strategy 2020-2025, the European Commission has adopted the Gender Action Plan III 2021-2025, which aims at tackling the structural causes of gender inequality by taking a transformative and rights-based approach, and addressing the intersectionality of gender with other forms of discrimination. We work together with EU Member States as Team Europe at multilateral, regional and country level, and fostering partnership with stakeholders, civil society and women's organisations.
10. The economic empowerment of women is key in all societies and we are convinced that incorporating a gender perspective in all OSCE activities is an essential component of a comprehensive approach to security. We welcome your commitment to gender equality and thus inclusive societies

through full and comprehensive gender-mainstreaming across the activities of the OCEEA and all OSCE executive structures.

11. The EU reaffirms its strong commitment to continue efforts to promote the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in the economic sphere, with a view to achieve gender equality. We believe that our discussions will bring a better understanding of where we stand in our efforts of implementing our common commitments in the economic and environmental dimension.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, and the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, the Potential Candidate Countries BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA* and GEORGIA, and the EFTA country NORWAY, 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.