



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

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Joint Nordic-Baltic Statement on International Women's Day
Vienna, 6 March 2025

Mr. Chair,

In addition to the statements already delivered on our behalf, I have the honour of delivering this statement on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries.

Across the globe, women successfully contribute to building robust democracies, driving social progress, and fostering sustainable peace. Yet progress remains slow, and global challenges – including war and conflict – threaten to erode hard-won gains.

Mr. Chair,

In Ukraine, women and girls are facing the devastating impact of Russia's unprovoked, unjustifiable and illegal war of aggression on a daily basis. Despite the harrowing realities of war, Ukrainian women continue to demonstrate extraordinary courage, determination, and agency. They have assumed key roles as aid workers, community leaders and entrepreneurs. Today, one in every two businesses in Ukraine is founded by a woman and more women are entering traditionally male-dominated fields, such as the security sector and demining efforts. We commend their unwavering courage, resilience, and resourcefulness.

Mr. Chair,

Ensuring women and girls, in all their diversity, central roles in matters of peace and security is not only a moral imperative but also a necessity for lasting peace and stability. Too often, women face intersecting forms of violence and discrimination that not only undermine their security but also impede their active participation. Protection and participation are intrinsically linked – without safeguarding their rights and security, we cannot ensure their full, equal, and meaningful participation in matters of peace and security.

The OSCE has long recognised sexual and gender-based violence as a major barrier in this regard. Despite OSCE commitments, including the 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality and Ministerial Council decisions on combating violence against women, much remains to be done. Conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence remain at alarming levels, not least in Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. This is duly reported on by international agencies such as the UN Human Rights

Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. We must strengthen efforts to prevent and respond to sexual and gender based violence, ensuring accountability, justice, and survivor-centered approaches across the OSCE region.

Mr. Chair,

In our countries, we have seen firsthand that investment in gender equality leads to both social and economic benefits for all citizens. Men and boys, in all their diversity, must engage in this work – as agents of change as well as beneficiaries of gender equality - investing in inclusive and positive definitions of masculinity. Ensuring fairness and non-discrimination is only possible when applying a gender transformative approach in all policy- and decision-making.

Gender equality is under threat from regressive, anti-gender movements that accompany global democratic backsliding. These forces seek to roll back decades of progress and undermine fundamental rights. In the face of rising authoritarianism, we must stand firm in defending democracy, freedom, human rights, and gender equality. If we fail to counter these setbacks, we risk watching hard-won gains disappear.

Mr. Chair

To conclude, gender equality is a human right and our shared obligation and commitment. Without it, there can be no lasting peace, comprehensive security, or true democracy.

I thank you.