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## OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING 2007

### **EU Statement for the Working Session 10: Gender aspects of security I**

**1<sup>st</sup> October, Warsaw**

Mr/Ms Moderator

Thank you for giving me the floor in this session devoted to the gender aspects of security. On behalf of the European Union I would like to touch upon some points of on the creation of equal opportunities for women and men and the prevention of violence against women.

OSCE countries have made significant progress in achieving gender equality first of all by adopting and implementing OSCE Action Plans. As we all know the 2000 OSCE Action Plan for Gender Issues did not meet anymore the demands of modern society and thus a more comprehensive and strengthened action plan with adequate monitoring and review mechanism was required. Action Plan adopted in 2004 has definitely been a step forward. Furthermore, profound, honest and self-critical evaluation reports indicate that most of the actors in the OSCE structures have understood the importance of gender mainstreaming, however needless to say changes, especially with fundamental character, take time and recourses and this concerns also implementation of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan.

EU started to pay more attention to issues of gender equality already in the early 1990s; however a more consistent approach was taken after the UN Women's Conference held in Beijing in 1995. Since then EU has worked towards the aim of achieving gender equality by adopting equal treatment legislation and action programmes, implementation of gender mainstreaming and taking specific measures for the advancement of women.

Gender equality is a fundamental right and a necessary condition for the EU objectives of growth, employment and social cohesion and EU remains an important partner in the global effort to promote gender equality. At the same time we must not forget about the importance of the dialogue with civil society that significantly helps to promote gender equality in our societies.

Now coming back to the implementation of OSCE Action Plan - it can be said that successful enforcement of gender mainstreaming is possible but requires a long term commitment and efficient cooperation between OSCE institutions and Member States.

I would like to draw your attention to one particular point of the evaluation report. Although representation of women in the professional level posts of the Organization has increased over the last three years, the percentage of women in management positions has not changed significantly, with still around 17 per cent. From the analyses made by the Department of Human Resources it follows that participating States do not nominate women on equal terms with men, especially low is the nomination of women for management positions. This situation creates a difficult position for Department of Human Resources if they try to achieve the gender balance in lists of candidates and recommendations. Therefore, on behalf of the EU, I would like to repeat the recommendation made in the Action Plan that States should re-evaluate their nomination systems in order to foster gender balance of their nominations.

The work within OSCE is extremely important however the co-operation between international organizations should not be underestimated. The implementation of different activities and campaigns greatly benefits from interlinking activities. The on-going Council of Europe's Campaign to Combat Violence against Women, including Domestic Violence carried out in partnership with intergovernmental organisations and NGOs can be one example. It is pleasing to note that gender issues have been included on the agenda of the meetings between the staff members of OSCE and the Council of Europe as well as UN. In this context I would like to mention that in December 2006, the European Parliament and the Council adopted the regulation establishing the European Institute for Gender Equality. The Institute will have its seat in Vilnius, Lithuania and will be

operational by the end of this year. We hope that it will also work in close cooperation with international organisations and NGO-s.

To illustrate the EU's continued commitment to achieving genuine equality between women and men it can be mentioned that in 2006 two major documents were adopted: the Roadmap for equality between women and men for the period 2006-2010, adopted by the Commission and the Pact for Gender Equality, adopted by the Member States. The Pact demonstrates the Member States' determination to implement policies aimed at promoting the employment of women and guaranteeing a better balance between professional and private life in order to meet the challenges of demographic change.

In this connection EU is pleased to note that the OSCE's field operations have during the last year devoted significant attention to the area of equal opportunities for women and men. As the Participating States bear the primary responsibility for the implementation of our commitments on equality between women and men, the host countries should support the OSCE missions and work in close cooperation with them in order to make gender equality a reality in all OSCE countries. Collecting and exchanging of good practices could contribute well to this end.

OSCE Missions and ODIHR have initiated and supported different projects, seminars and awareness campaigns aiming at the prevention of violence against women. OSCE continuously plays an important role in assisting the participating states in developing their legislations and policies aimed at the prevention of violence against women.

EU also welcomes the efforts of ODIHR, especially its Gender Unit in initiating and supporting projects, seminars and awareness campaigns aiming at the prevention of violence against women. Gender-based violence in all its manifestations, including domestic violence, not only impairs the enjoyment by women of their human rights, it is also a serious obstacle to the achievement of equality, development and peace. EU welcomes the active role of ODIHR in assisting the participating states in developing their legislations and policies aimed at the prevention of violence against women.

In conclusion I would like to reaffirm the EU's commitment to the gender equality policy. We are determined to work closely with all OSCE structures and Participating States in achieving the goals laid down in the OSCE's Action Plan.

Thank you, Mr/Ms Moderator.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

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\* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.