



**EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Permanent Council N° 1191  
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**EU Statement on the Secretary General's Annual  
Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the 2004 OSCE  
Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality**

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The European Union would like to thank the Secretary-General and the Senior Gender Adviser for their annual evaluation of implementation of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality. Your Report provides a comprehensive assessment of the progress the OSCE has made. It also highlights how far we still have to come to achieve real gender parity and systematic gender mainstreaming across all of the OSCE's programmes and activities. Given the importance of the issue, the volume of information contained within this report and limited PC time, we would welcome an additional opportunity to discuss the Report and the Office of Internal Oversight's evaluation in more detail.

The EU promotes the work towards gender equality in all policy areas including our foreign and security policy and in all activities including conflict-prevention, crisis management and peacebuilding. The incorporation of a gender perspective into, and ensuring the equal participation of men and women in, OSCE activities are essential components of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. So we note with concern the finding of the Office of Internal Oversight evaluation that there is a lack of a shared narrative in the OSCE about how promoting gender equality contributes to comprehensive security. Developing this common narrative would be an important step towards Organisation-wide enhanced effectiveness.

Secretary General Greminger, change has to come from the top and you sent a powerful message to the whole organisation, and to the participating States, when you identified as your priorities a renewed commitment to achieve gender parity; more effective implementation of the 2004 Action Plan; and more accountability for

gender equality. We appreciate your leadership, as demonstrated by your participation in the pilot Executive Gender Coaching Programme aimed at increasing awareness, capacity and accountability of the OSCE's senior leadership to support progress on gender mainstreaming. We would love to hear more from you and your Directors about the impact this programme has had, and the personal commitments you have each made to support gender equality.

We also value the development of other gender focused training and encourage the Gender Unit and the Department for Human Resources to continue to work together to expand and improve this training offer.

The serious issue of sexual harassment merits specific attention so we are pleased to note efforts in 2017 to increase awareness amongst staff and election observers of the issue and of internal processes and complaint procedures. This should remain a priority this year.

On recruitment, we welcome efforts to improve policies and practices to create better gender balance and were pleased that in 2017 the OSCE reached gender parity at Director level within the Secretariat. However, the story elsewhere was less positive, with women accounting for 31% of senior management positions across the OSCE. And here we recognise the responsibility of participating States to put forward more female candidates for senior roles, and of hiring managers to refuse to accept single sex shortlists. It is also important to ensure recruitment panels are gender balanced and we would extend this principle to panels of speakers at OSCE events.

The Report provides a useful overview of the work of the Senior Adviser on Gender Issues and her team in partnership with the Secretariat, the autonomous institutions and field operations. We welcome the fact that 10 OSCE field operations now have Gender Action Plans in place and encourage the others to quickly follow this example. We also support the appointment of gender focal points in executive structures and field operations and look forward to this model being adopted throughout the OSCE – ideally with standardised terms of reference.

The Report provides some great examples from the autonomous institutions, field operations and executive structures of gender focused programmatic activity and of

the integration of gender perspectives into programmes at the planning stage. But progress on this is still patchy and we support the Report's recommendations to improve gender mainstreaming in all three dimensions - with a particular focus on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> - and to improve training for field operations staff. A more structured, mandatory and outcome-oriented approach to mainstreaming gender into all OSCE's activities would be a useful tool in this regard.

We appreciate the focus the SMM has devoted to Gender - from Ambassador Apakan's own prioritisation of the issue, to the work of the Mission's senior management team, Gender Adviser and growing network of gender focal points. We would welcome greater sight of this work, including through thematic reporting on Gender.

We regret that at the 2017 Ministerial Council, we were unable to reach consensus to adopt new decisions on combating violence against women, and on women in the security sector. However, we strongly supported the Austrian Chair's approach to the mainstreaming of gender into other MC decisions and encourage and support the Italian Chair to do the same in 2018. We commend the Italian Chairmanship for choosing the important topic of countering violence against women for the recent Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting.

It is important to also recognise and address the roles of men and boys in the promotion of gender equality and in this regard, we welcome the contribution of the OSCE MenEngage network and urge all participating States to contribute to its work.

Finally, we would like to thank the hard working and currently understaffed Gender Unit for all your efforts in 2017. We support the Report's conclusions and recommendations, and encourage you to build into your 2019 Unified Budget bid the resources required to deliver them.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, SERBIA\* and ALBANIA\*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and 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 Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.