



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 974
Vienna, 28 November 2013**

**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**

The European Union and its Member States thank the Secretary-General for the Annual Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality. We welcome the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General during the reporting period. We also highly value the contributions made by various OSCE structures, in particular the Secretariat's Gender Section and the gender focal points in field operations, as well as the ODIHR, HCNM and RFoM.

We strongly support the efforts to promote gender equality in the OSCE. Equality of men and women is a major objective for us. Equality is one of the founding values of the EU and a fundamental right reflected in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Gender equality is also highlighted in the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, adopted last year.

We welcome the continued efforts to mainstream a gender perspective in all structures, policies, programmes, projects and activities of the OSCE. We see gender mainstreaming as a key strategy to achieve equality between women and men. We therefore strongly encourage further efforts for ensuring comprehensive and effective gender mainstreaming. In particular we would like to underscore the importance of this work in the field missions, including by strengthening gender advisor arrangements and gender focal point network as well as developing mission specific gender action plans.

This year's Annual Report of the Secretary-General takes a detailed look on the work of the FSC relating to Women, Peace and Security issues. We would like to once again underline the importance of implementation of Women, Peace and Security related commitments within the OSCE in a holistic manner, and we continue to believe that the FSC should further step up its efforts in this field.

One of the focus areas should be the voluntary reporting on the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 as part of the information exchange on the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military aspects of security. All EU Member States have voluntarily committed to enhanced reporting on Women, Peace and Security in the Code of Conduct and we call on participating States to consider formal acceptance of this initiative. Furthermore, we would like to reiterate our support for the development of an OSCE-Wide Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

The year 2014 will mark the tenth anniversary of the Gender Action Plan. We concur with the Secretary-General that the anniversary provides an excellent opportunity to take stock of our efforts and to explore ways of addressing remaining challenges. We would like to reaffirm our support for the plans of the Secretary-General in this regard and we stand ready to actively engage in this work.

We are convinced that it would be highly important and timely to develop and adopt an implementation strategy for the Gender Action Plan, as proposed by the Secretary-General. The implementation strategy should be comprehensive in nature and set out concrete measures, goals, activities and performance indicators, thus ensuring the effective implementation of our commitments.

Furthermore, we share the view of the Secretary-General that holding a Gender Equality Review Conference under the auspices of the Swiss Chairmanship would provide a valuable opportunity to assess the implementation of our commitments, raise awareness on them and identify ways to further enhance the gender equality work of the OSCE. We agree that

the event could also be an opportunity to modernize and complement elements of the Gender Action Plan.

In conclusion, we reaffirm our strong commitment to the OSCE work on advancing gender equality. We wish to thank the Secretary-General, the Senior Advisor on Gender Issues and their teams for their efforts undertaken so far and look forward to working further on these issues.

The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and SERBIA*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates ALBANIA and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, as well as the Republic of MOLDOVA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO, align themselves with this statement.

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.