
OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation Opening Session

8 September 2021

Joint Statement by the Women Ambassadors' Network

Delivered by Amb. Gesa Bräutigam, Ambassador to the Permanent Representation of Germany to the OSCE

Secretary-General Launsky-Tieffenthal,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the current Women Ambassadors and Representatives to the OSCE: Andorra, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, the European Union, France, Georgia, Iceland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Malta, Mongolia, Norway, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkey, the United States and my own country, Germany.

We warmly welcome Austria as new FSC chair and are looking forward to engaging in constructive and fruitful discussions on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPS) in this Forum, also leading up to the Ministerial Council in Stockholm.

21 years after its adoption, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) remains the landmark document for promoting a gender perspective in international peace and security. It is undeniable: Sustainable peace and stability are not possible without the full, equal and meaningful participation and representation of women, including at all stages of conflict prevention, peace negotiations and peace building processes. This is relevant for all levels of decision-making and leadership.

Last year at the Ministerial Council in Tirana, 52 participating States issued a Joint Statement on UNSCR 1325. This statement did not only underscore the critical role of women in matters of peace and security but also outlined necessary steps for the promotion and further implementation of the WPS agenda within the OSCE.

Already in 1999, at the OSCE Istanbul Summit, the Heads of State and Government of the OSCE participating States declared to make gender equality an integral part of State policies and within our Organization.

Our commitment is unwavering. We call upon the participating States that were not part of the joint Tirana declaration to join us on the pathway towards gender equality and a more peaceful future.

There has certainly been progress already with regard to achieving these goals in the OSCE. However, a lot of work still lies ahead of us on the road to equality and non-discrimination and, unfortunately, we have also seen steps back across the OSCE region.

Looking at the comprehensive security approach of the OSCE, it is key that we advance the implementation of the WPS agenda throughout all three dimensions and all bodies and instruments of our organization. Regarding the 1st dimension, a variety of specific measures can and should be taken in order to honor our commitments. The Tirana Statement 2020 has put concrete ideas on the table, on which we can base our next steps. The FSC plays a key part in this endeavor.

In this context, the “Women in the First Dimension” Network (W1D) also contributes to empower and enhance the visibility of women professionals in the first dimension and to serve as a networking platform. We especially welcome the W1D Mentoring Programme that piloted earlier this year and which, as a practical-oriented initiative, can benefit all delegations here in Vienna.

Given the variety of topics and measures related to the WPS agenda to be discussed in the FSC, we would consider it appropriate to have a special FSC session dedicated to UNSCR 1325 and Women, Peace and Security.

Today, we are facing even more complex and new security challenges and threats. At the same time, protracted and armed conflicts continue to adversely affect civilians, in particular women and girls. The recent developments in Afghanistan, which we are highly concerned about, have yet again demonstrated that progress in women’s and girls’ rights can’t be taken for granted, and that we all have to continue our efforts for empowerment as well as for protection of women and girls, including against sexualized and gender-based violence.

In order to contribute to the solution of conflicts and to prevent future suffering of civilians and exacerbated gender inequalities, we need to support an inclusive, gender-sensitive and multidimensional approach in all stages of the conflict cycle. We must also continue supporting and protecting women peacebuilders.

The voice of women and girls has long been silenced and ignored. In the 21st century, it is high time to make room for their perspectives, ideas and input, also accommodating young and diverse voices. Let me underline again that gender equality is in the interest of everyone, not only women and girls. It concerns all of us and the positive effects will benefit everyone.

The Women, Peace and Security agenda provides a strong framework for this important endeavor. Let us make sure that we – as agents of change, including boys and men – provide the necessary means and move forward in a concerted effort by living up to our commitments and advancing the WPS agenda and our vision of gender equality within the OSCE.

I would kindly ask to attach this statement to the journal of today’s meeting.

Thank you.