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MISIONI I PËRHERSHËM
I REPUBLIKËS SË SHQIPËRISË
PRANË ORGANIZATAVE
NDËRKOMBËTARE
VJENË

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA TO
THE INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS
VIENNA

Joint Statement on Women, Peace and Security

“Full, equal and meaningful participation of women demystified”

Delivered by Ambassador Eglantina Gjermeni, Permanent Representative of Albania to the OSCE, at the Forum for Security Co-operation, 28 September 2022

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Madame Minister, distinguished panellists, dear Colleagues.

I have the honour of delivering this statement on behalf of three informal networks, the Women Ambassadors to the OSCE of Albania, Andorra, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, the EU, France, Georgia, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Malta, Moldova, Norway, San Marino, Slovenia, Sweden, and Turkey, as well as members of the OSCE Men for Gender Equality network, and members of the Women in the First-Dimension network. These groups are united by our commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda, on national as well as OSCE levels.

First, I would like to express our gratitude to Madame Minister, Lahbib for her insightful and relevant remarks, and we commend the Belgian FSC Chair for placing Women, Peace, and Security where it belongs, at the top of our agenda.

Mr Chair,

The Russian Federation’s continued unlawful, unprovoked, and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine is in blatant violation of international law and OSCE principles and commitments and must cease immediately. We express our full solidarity with Ukraine and its people and deplore the devastating loss of life and human suffering that Russia’s aggression has caused for the whole of Ukraine.

The WPS pillars of prevention, participation, protection, relief and recovery must guide all efforts in response to Russia's war against Ukraine, including in the humanitarian sphere. The disproportionate impact of conflict and crises on women and girls is undeniable, including the heightened risk of sexual and gender-based violence and human trafficking.

We are extremely concerned about reports and testimonies of sexual and gender-based violence committed by Russian troops in Ukraine. We should not have to restate that conflict-related sexual violence is not an inevitable by-product of war. Conflict-related sexual violence is never acceptable and may amount to war crimes. Sexual and gender-based violence is a serious violation of women's human rights, a form of discrimination and an obstacle to their equal participation in public life.

We call for enhanced preventative efforts, prosecution of those responsible and an end to impunity. Survivors must also have access to comprehensive, gender-responsive and human rights-oriented care, support, and protection.

Mr Chair,

We must express our gratitude to Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid, for her instrumental role in advancing gender equality and the WPS agenda within and beyond our organization. We applaud her efforts to support women leaders in the OSCE region with the Networking Platform for Women Leaders, as well as her emphasis on ensuring gender mainstreaming in all three dimensions of the OSCE.

The OSCE has an important role to play in the advancement and implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda, as a regional organization. In the Istanbul Charter for European Security (1999), the OSCE participating States recognised that "the full and equal exercise by women of their human rights is essential to achieve a more peaceful, prosperous and democratic OSCE area." The participating States committed to making gender equality an integral part of our national policies, and a priority within our organization. Although this commitment was made 23 years ago, we still have a long way to go to make it a reality.

Women must have a seat at the negotiation and decision-making table and their voices must be heard. Without the participation of women, there can be no lasting peace or comprehensive

security. We wish to commend Ukrainian women for their bravery and resilience, in their roles in the political, military, and humanitarian response, within civil society organizations, and as human rights defenders, leaders and caretakers. Women, including young women, are strong agents of positive change.

Failing to recognise women's important role in all phases of the peace building process, including as peace negotiators, ignores their demonstrated contributions in securing more durable, lasting peace.

Full implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda would strengthen the effectiveness of our organization, as well as the security, prosperity, and resilience within the OSCE region. Women's full, equal, and meaningful participation in decision-making, leadership roles, all phases of conflict prevention and resolution and peacebuilding is not only a matter of equality and non-discrimination, but also a prerequisite for sustainable, legitimate, and lasting results. The mainstreaming of gender is essential for identifying and addressing the needs of different groups.

Mr Chair,

In closing, we underline our commitment to sustained efforts towards our shared goals of ensuring the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women, including in all activities of the OSCE.

We reaffirm our steadfast commitment to apply a human-rights based approach to fully implement the WPS agenda and urge the OSCE structures, institutions, and field missions to maintain their focus on WPS throughout the OSCE agenda. We must keep our attention on the deeply concerning situation for women and girls and the attack on their human rights caused by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

We stand for the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. We stand for the human rights, safety, empowerment and leadership of women and girls. We stand for accountability and respect for international law and our shared OSCE commitments. I thank you.