

The 1072nd Meeting of the
Forum for Security Co-Operation

“Women, Peace and Security”:

Integrating Gender Perspective when fulfilling the OSCE politico - military commitments and activities”

**As Delivered by Ambassador of Georgia Her Excellency Ketevan Tsikhelashvili
at the Forum for Security Co-Operation, 06 March 2024**

Mr. Chair,
Distinguished panellists,
Dear colleagues,

I have the honour of delivering a joint statement on the subject of Women, Peace and Security. The following 45 participating States have aligned with this statement: Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States, and my own country, Georgia.

We would like to commend Cyprus in its role as FSC Chair for keeping Women, Peace, and Security where it belongs: at the top of our agenda.

Mr. Chair,

We thank the distinguished panellists for their valuable insights today, particularly with respect to best practices for integrating and mainstreaming gender perspectives into the politico-military dimension of security and for assessing national progress in implementing our women, peace, and security commitments.

Achieving gender equality and integrating gender perspectives into politico-military affairs is not just a moral imperative, but it also is a strategic one that benefits us all. According to the McKinsey Global Institute, women’s equal labour force participation could increase global GDP by roughly 25 percent. Research also has proven that increasing the number of women in decision-making roles can increase the legitimacy of a government and its ability to effectively, successfully and sustainably manage conflict.

Ensuring the full, equal, meaningful, and safe participation of women at all levels of policy- and decision-making about peace and security is a constant endeavour, which requires sustained engagement. There is no box to check to say that we are done and that there is no more work to do. Even when we can close the gap between our commitments and implementation, like the scientific principle of entropy, without the application of continuous effort, the gap will widen again. For example, 107 countries around the world have developed national action plans since the year 2000, but almost 30 percent of these national action plans are now outdated, having expired in 2022 or before.

The OSCE region, however, does much better than the world as a whole with respect to its national action plans. Thirty-six out of 57 OSCE participating States have one, and most of these are current. Why is this so? There are many factors at play, but one thing is for sure, we regularly discuss and prioritize this topic. We are here today, doing just that.

Even in the midst of defending itself against Russia's war of aggression, Ukraine has made Women, Peace, and Security enough of a priority to develop and implement an updated national action plan in the middle of a full-scale war. The determination to meet their commitments to the WPS agenda in the face of adversity is one worthy of both praise and emulation.

However, without effective implementation, national action plans are just words on paper. Without understanding and buy-in from the implementers and responsible agencies, national policies become "window dressing" at best and so-called "pink-washing" at worst. Without constant vigilance, there will be backsliding. And because women's rights and democracy go hand in hand, backsliding in one will inevitably lead to backsliding in the other.

How can we avoid these pitfalls and create the necessary buy-in and understanding to achieve and maintain progress? Thanks to Finland's work as Chair of the Structured Dialogue, there is now an app for that. The OSCE's very extensive toolbox of documents, reports, decisions, best practices, and guidelines can be easily searched and resourced. The OSCE WIN Project is making significant progress in developing participating State capacity in the OSCE region to implement their commitments in this field.

We also have each other. In this very room, there are at least 36 participating States with different experiences in implementing our Women, Peace, and Security commitments and in integrating and mainstreaming gender

perspectives. Organizing meetings to share those experiences in a regional or OSCE-wide context is relatively easy to do, and we should do it more often. Furthermore, submitting information related to the indicative list of issues pertaining to Women, Peace and Security in the Code of Conduct questionnaire can help fill the significant gaps we have in the data needed for more effective implementation. Thanks to the efforts of Belgium and the United Kingdom, we now have a reference guide to help us all submit this questionnaire data more easily.

Mr. Chair,

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality. What better way for us to mark this anniversary than by renewing our individual and collective commitments to implementing the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda through a region-wide action plan. Working together with a common purpose is the simplest and most effective way to transform our commitments from words on a page into tangible, meaningful, and measurable progress.

Thank you, Mr. Chair