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1050<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the  
Forum for Security Co-operation

Security Dialogue

“UNSCR 1325 – Women’s leadership in times of conflict and war  
and their role in the armed forces, diplomacy and beyond”

Vienna, 21 June 2023

**Statement by Ambassador Gesa Bräutigam, Permanent Representative of Germany to the  
OSCE,**

**On behalf of the Women Ambassadors’ Network, members of Women in the 1<sup>st</sup> dimension  
and OSCE Men for Gender Equality**

Madam Chair,  
Distinguished panelists,  
Dear colleagues,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of three informal networks: the Women Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives to the OSCE of Albania, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, the EU, France, Georgia, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Malta, Moldova, Norway, San Marino, Slovenia, Sweden, and Türkiye, as well as members of the Women in the 1st Dimension and members of the OSCE Men for Gender Equality. These groups are united by their commitment to the full, and effective implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, nationally, as well as in the OSCE.

On the occasion of the International Day of Women in Diplomacy, we join others in highlighting the importance of women’s leadership in times of conflict and war, including in the armed forces and in diplomacy. This is the first year we mark this international day in the OSCE, and the first year these networks come together to celebrate women in diplomacy.

It is therefore with great pleasure that I deliver this statement on a topic most timely, and most personal to the majority of women in this room and equally important for their male colleagues. I would, in this regard, like to thank the FSC chairpersonship of Bulgaria for having accorded such high importance to this topic. I would also like to thank the distinguished speakers for their insightful presentations.

Madam Chair,

One year ago, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the resolution on the “International Day of Women in Diplomacy”. The 24th of June, from then on, has marked the celebration, and acknowledgement, of women’s critical contribution to diplomacy throughout history. On this day, we pay tribute to the women who have paved the way for women diplomats today, including the ones sitting in this room. While women have historically been excluded from diplomatic institutions, we must recognize that women have neither been absent from diplomacy, nor been insignificant to the shaping and strengthening of the multilateral system which we have today. Despite systematic barriers, women have made indispensable contributions to peacebuilding and peacemaking efforts, as well as to creating the normative and legal international frameworks that constitute and define our international system. On this day, we recognize their agency, their resilience, and their contribution to international relations.

Yet, this day also serves as a stark reminder of women’s systematic underrepresentation in diplomatic institutions and processes. Across the world, women hold only a fifth of ambassadorial positions<sup>1</sup>. Between 1992 and 2019, women made up only six percent of mediators, and six per cent of signatories in peace processes worldwide. They, furthermore, remain underrepresented in senior positions in the majority of foreign ministries. Despite their chronic, and systematic underrepresentation, evidence shows that women’s participation in political processes, especially in diplomatic processes, is essential in matters of peace and security, including in building lasting and sustainable peace. Women’s inclusion is therefore not just a matter of what is right, but what is the proven way to create peace and stability.

Madam Chair,

Nothing exemplifies the crucial role of women’s leadership in times of war and conflict quite so clearly as Ukrainian women’s resilience and bravery in the face of Russia’s unprovoked, unjustified, and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine.

Ukrainian women play an indispensable role in Ukraine’s diplomatic, political, military, and humanitarian response, within civil society organization, and as human rights defenders and leaders.

Since Russia’s invasion, tens of thousands of Ukrainian women have volunteered for the armed forces, serving in both combat and non-combat roles, as well as on the front lines. Integrating women in the security sector, particularly in leadership positions, is essential to not only creating a representative and legitimate security sector, but it is also crucial in ensuring that women’s experiences during crises are adequately addressed. This forms an essential pillar of the WPS agenda, and constitutes a prerequisite for international stability and security. It is essential, therefore, that we continue these discussions on the WPS agenda in the FSC.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy’s (AGDA) Women in Diplomacy Index

The OSCE, as a regional security organization, has – and continues to – play a crucial role in implementing the WPS agenda. The Networking Platform for Women Leaders, the Scholarship for Peace and Security programme, and practical instruments such as ODIHR’s “Gender and Security Sector Reform toolkit” are but some of countless examples of the ways the OSCE works to strengthen women’s leadership, empower female professionals, and strengthen a gender perspective in the security sector, all of which contribute to promoting women’s role in crisis management, and the WPS agenda more broadly.

As we have previously expressed in this forum, we must recall that promoting gender equality and implementing the WPS agenda in the OSCE’s activities is a commitment agreed to by all participating States. It is imperative that we live up to our commitments to advance the WPS agenda, and the SDG goal of gender equality in the OSCE. Doing so not only ensures equality between the genders, but also strengthens the effectiveness of our organization, as well as security, prosperity, and resilience within the OSCE region.

Madam Chair,  
Dear Colleagues,

Let me stress that we cannot solve today’s global challenges without women – not without women diplomats, not without women politicians, soldiers, police officers, human rights defenders, and not without women peacebuilders. Nor can we attain gender equality without the support, engagement, and accountability of men. We must remember that gender equality is not to the benefit of some, but to the shared benefit of all.

The Women Ambassadors Network, Women in the 1<sup>st</sup> dimension, and OSCE Men for Gender Equality will continue to support the OSCE’s work to promote and strengthen women’s leadership. Together, 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 principles and commitments.

Thank you!