

Austrian OSCE Chairmanship

SEC.GAL/12/00/Rev.7

1 June 2000

ENGLISH only

To: All OSCE delegations, missions, institutions

Vienna, 1 June 2000

Please find enclosed the final text of the OSCE Action Plan for Gender Issues, which was approved by today's PC decision PC.DEC/353.

ACTION PLAN FOR GENDER ISSUES

ENGLISH only

PREAMBLE

The OSCE participating States recognize that equality of women and men and the protection and promotion of the human rights of women are essential to sustainable democracy and to security and stability in the OSCE region. The participating States of the OSCE bear primary responsibility for implementation of commitments referring to equality between women and men in their territories.

The Document of the Moscow Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE (3 October 1991) and the Charter for European Security (18 November 1999) list specific commitments of the participating States with regard to opportunity for full and equal participation of men and women in all aspects of political, social and economic life. OSCE commitments¹, *inter alia*, encourage the strengthening of national machinery for the advancement of women. The participating States are called upon to comply with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) if they are parties to it or, if they have not already done so, to consider ratifying or acceding to this Convention. States that have ratified or acceded to the Convention with reservations are urged to consider withdrawing them.

The Action Plan has been established in order to ensure that the OSCE commitments concerning equality in rights and equality of opportunity for women and men are taken into account by participating States and in the practical work of OSCE institutions and field missions. It describes the tasks related to the implementation of these commitments, and outlines the responsibilities of the various actors of the OSCE institutions, field missions and participating States, taking note of the recommendations compiled in the Final Document of the OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Gender Issues (ODIHR.GAL/24/99, 24 June 1999).

The Action Plan will be reviewed every two years and updated as necessary. On the basis of regular evaluations, progress in its implementation will be made public in the framework of the implementation meetings on human dimension issues and review conferences of the OSCE.

ACTIONS RELATING TO THE EQUALITY OF WOMEN AND MEN IN
THE ORGANIZATION1. Opportunities for women in the OSCE

The Chairperson-in-Office, participating States and the Secretariat will take positive action to promote the nomination and appointment of women candidates in the OSCE's institutions and also in field activities.

All participating States are called upon to make substantial efforts to nominate qualified women for future openings, particularly for field activities and visible positions such as head of mission or head of institution.

¹ See SEC.GAL/16/00, 17 February 2000, OSCE documents referring to equality between women and men.

The Secretariat will continue to include a statement in its vacancy notices and post descriptions to encourage women candidates to apply, and should seek other ways to improve the gender balance in the OSCE.

All post descriptions in field missions will be reviewed in order to ensure that the qualification requirements are not gender-biased. In this regard, particular attention will be paid to the establishment of the REACT (Rapid Expert Assistance and Co-operation Team) database. If appropriate, the post descriptions will be adapted in order to include a gender dimension.

The Secretariat will regularly issue statistics on women and men working for the OSCE in institutions and field activities, which will indicate, in particular, the number of women by grade in each institution, and the percentage of women seconded to OSCE field activities.

The Secretariat will analyse the factors leading to the low representation of women in the OSCE, in particular as heads of field activities and in senior executive positions, in order to improve the situation. Such a report should describe the different steps and actors involved in decisions concerning the recruitment, nomination and appointment of women.

2. Professional Working Environment Policy

The OSCE institutions and field activities commit themselves to preventing discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment. To this end, and in order to provide a just and fair work environment free of discrimination and harassment for all OSCE staff and mission members, the Professional Working Environment Policy (Organization Directive No. 11/99, issued on 9 June 1999) will be fully implemented through the prompt establishment of its working procedures, training and appointments.

All mission members and staff at institutions will be informed about the Professional Working Environment Policy, either through the induction course for new mission members or through the distribution of concise information material. The appointment of mediators for each field activity and institution will be followed by training in mediation skills. In addition, gender awareness guidelines for mission members working in post-conflict situations will be developed and will be introduced through specific training courses in the field.

The Secretary General will report regularly on the implementation and effect of the Professional Working Environment Policy.

3. Gender specialists in the Secretariat and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)

In order to ensure a consistent approach and continuity in implementation of projects and policies in respect of both gender mainstreaming and activities addressing discrimination against women, the gender specialists will have the strong support of the heads of institutions and missions as well as other senior staff. With support from all sections and departments of the OSCE institutions, the gender specialists will assess the implications for women and men of any planned action, policies or programmes.

The Gender Adviser in the Secretariat will analyse the situation of women within the OSCE Secretariat, institutions and field missions, regularly prepare gender-disaggregated statistics of OSCE staff, develop any material regarding gender issues for the Secretary General, in particular the topical annual report, monitor the implementation of the Professional Working Environment Policy, and carry out the training on gender issues of new mission members and staff members of institutions with material developed to this end.

The Gender Adviser and the Gender Officer at the ODIHR will develop and implement specific projects to promote the human rights of women and the equality of women and men, on the basis of assessment visits and consultations with OSCE representatives in the field, governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). They will develop and implement a comprehensive framework for gender mainstreaming in all activities of the ODIHR and work for an enhanced implementation of the OSCE commitments on non-discrimination and the equality of women and men.

4. Training

Within the OSCE Strategy on Capacity-Building through Training (SEC.GAL/25/99 Rev.1), and under the overall guidance of the Co-ordinator, the Secretariat will ensure that all new mission staff receive training that will enable them to recognize and address gender aspects to the extent needed in their work. Since December 1998, all new mission staff and new staff of the Secretariat have been receiving gender training within the Secretariat's induction course.

In order to reach all the mission staff, the Secretariat will adapt the current training module and make it available to field activities. In the light of special requirements, regional training courses will be organized for staff members in the field. In addition, all OSCE institutions will be required to incorporate a gender aspect into the training of their staff in order to introduce the policy of gender mainstreaming, to raise awareness of gender issues, and to facilitate the work of, and co-operation with, the gender advisers.

All senior staff at OSCE institutions and field activities will receive gender training. Mission staff members working with human rights issues, democratization and the rule of law will receive specialized training.

Within the framework of REACT, comprehensive curricula, standards and materials will ensure that a gender aspect is reflected.

The gender advisers, in liaison with the Co-ordinator for Capacity-Building and Training and the focal points for training in field missions, will develop specific training activities, such as:

- Training for human rights officers and NGO liaison officers: Specific information and training will be developed to ensure awareness and training in work with women who have experienced human rights violations and trauma, including rape. For this, field staff must be made aware of the obligation to co-operate with specialized agencies that are competent in this field. The training material must include comprehensive instructions for a concerted approach to victims and perpetrators of such violence, including their referral to competent organizations.

- Training for the local non-governmental sector and local staff members in field missions: In accordance with the mandate and focus of activities of OSCE field missions, material and, if possible, trainers will be provided for courses for local NGOs and the OSCE's local staff. If necessary, training material will be translated into the local language.
 - Training for police monitors, police officers and other field staff: Gender awareness will be a compulsory component of police training programmes. Training will include modules on violence against women and trafficking in human beings, especially in women and children, and on the needs of victims.
5. Periodical review of challenges and achievements

The Informal Group on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men will meet regularly to discuss gender issues that need the support and response of the OSCE, involving representatives of the participating States and the gender advisers in the Secretariat and the ODIHR. Representatives of international and non-governmental organizations dealing with the subject may be invited to participate. The Informal Group will review the Action Plan every two years or as necessary.

All OSCE institutions and field operations will report to the Secretary General on an annual basis about their achievements related to gender mainstreaming in their work. The Secretary General will issue a comprehensive report based on this information to the Permanent Council. This report will take into account suggestions from the Informal Group.

The gender specialists will report on a regular basis to the Informal Group on the implementation of the Action Plan.

In the context of the annual implementation review meetings of the OSCE, the Action Plan will be taken into account.

EQUALITY OF WOMEN AND MEN IN OSCE PARTICIPATING STATES

1. General Provisions

Individually and collectively, the participating States of the OSCE bear primary responsibility for implementation of commitments on equality of women and men. Paragraph 23 of the Charter for European Security states that:

“The full and equal exercise by women of their human rights is essential to achieve a more peaceful, prosperous and democratic OSCE area. We are committed to making equality between men and women an integral part of our policies, both at the level of our States and within the Organization.”

Participating States are accountable to their citizens and responsible to each other for their implementation of OSCE commitments and for assisting each other in achieving compliance. Participating States will ensure the full use of the appropriate OSCE forums for review of implementation of OSCE commitments on equality of women and men.

Participating States will increase their efforts, or initiate new measures, to ensure equality of opportunity between women and men in fact and in law. Suggested initiatives for participating States may include review of existing and draft legislation, policies and practices and development of appropriate and enforceable legal remedies against discrimination on the basis of sex.

Participating States will give their full support to the implementation of the present Action Plan.

2. Monitoring compliance with OSCE commitments

The OSCE will monitor the full range of OSCE commitments, in particular the Moscow Document and the Charter for European Security, taking into account all international standards of human rights and humanitarian law, including those on equality, non-discrimination and the human rights of women.

The participating States will support national and international efforts to bring to justice those who have perpetrated those crimes against women which under applicable rules of international law are recognized as war crimes or crimes against humanity.

The ODIHR will include in its regular monitoring and reporting activities the issue of implementation by participating States of OSCE commitments concerning the equality of women and men and will ensure scrutiny of violations of the human rights of women. Participating States will provide the ODIHR, as required, with the necessary information.

3. Co-ordination and co-operation

Long-term and consistent commitment by the OSCE to promoting and ensuring equality of women and men requires co-operation between participating States, OSCE institutions, other international organizations and NGOs. Where appropriate, the Secretariat will ask OSCE field activities that have not yet done so to participate in or establish an expert co-ordination body for gender issues, following consultations with the host government and relevant organizations present in the field. Such a body should consist of representatives from relevant international and local NGOs and governmental institutions, and from the OSCE and other international agencies. The co-ordination body should define its terms of reference and activities; it is suggested that these should include the following:

- Ensuring co-ordination in the development and implementation of gender projects in the field by the international community and by local NGOs in order to avoid unnecessary duplication;
- Reviewing initiatives by the international community to ensure gender mainstreaming across the OSCE area;
- Evaluating gender projects and activities;
- Developing co-ordination with other gender expert bodies in the OSCE area.

The Secretary General will promote close co-operation with other organizations on issues related to the full and equal exercise by women of their human rights at headquarters and field levels. The gender advisers in the Secretariat and the ODIHR will continue to

develop and maintain contacts with international organizations and institutions, NGOs and women's networks, in order to organize a regular exchange of information on topical issues and new developments and also on equality measures implemented by participating States. They will circulate regular reports on gender issues in order to facilitate a direct exchange of information and increase the awareness of relevant gender issues within the region of the OSCE.

They will continue to contribute to activities, such as seminars, concerned with the advancement and the human rights of women organized by international, governmental and non-governmental bodies, as appropriate.

The OSCE supports the activities of the Gender Task Force of the Working Table on Democratization and Human Rights of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, and the projects proposed in this framework.

At the special session of the United Nations General Assembly in June 2000, the OSCE delegation will be headed by the President of the Parliamentary Assembly and assisted by the Secretariat to share the OSCE's experience in gender mainstreaming. It will further develop co-operation with relevant United Nations bodies to make use of their expertise.

4. Data on the status of women

In order to contribute to project development and design and the development of strategies to assess issues in a systematic way, the gender specialists in the OSCE will analyse available data and research material on the situation of women, including data collected by the participating States in accordance with paragraph 40.13 of the Moscow Document, data from the UNDP's gender-related Human Development Index and data from the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Participating States will make relevant reports available, such as reports prepared pursuant to existing treaty obligations relating to the status of women, including reports on legislative, judicial, administrative and other measures adopted to fulfil their commitments to respect human rights of women and ensure equality between women and men. The gender specialists will share information on gender issues with other international organizations.

As a measure to facilitate the open exchange of views and to contribute to the compilation of topical data, the Chairperson-in-Office, the ODIHR and the Secretariat will ensure that the planning of OSCE seminars will take a gender dimension into account and, as appropriate, include topics related to the theme. These considerations will apply for any seminar organized under the auspices of the OSCE.

5. Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

The protection and promotion of human rights, including those of women, form an integral part of the work of the OSCE. The ODIHR will therefore continue to initiate and to implement gender-related projects and to take into account the gender perspective in its Memoranda of Understanding.

The ODIHR will continue to implement projects and activities to advance women, further equality of women and men and promote and protect the human rights of women throughout the OSCE area. On the basis of assessment, analysis of data and research, and

project evaluation, the ODIHR will develop methodologies and best practice for projects and activities in respect of all the participating States. Areas of activity will include:

- Increasing access for women to all areas of political and public life and helping NGOs and women political leaders to develop effective coalitions and networks for lobbying for equality of women and men and the human rights of women;
- Developing education programmes to increase knowledge of the human rights of women, and of views of their role in society;
- Enabling women to participate actively in conflict resolution and conflict management;
- Assisting authorities and NGOs in analysing social structures, the economy and national legislation from a gender perspective;
- Supporting the development of legal frameworks for equality and non-discrimination, and protection of the human rights of women and effective mechanisms for their implementation;
- Developing capacity for protecting and enforcing the rights of women, including provision of legal aid;
- Preventing all forms of crime and violence against women, including domestic violence;
- Assisting persons affected by gender-related violence in conflict and post-conflict situations;
- Awareness raising at national and international levels concerning trafficking in women, and co-operation with affected countries in addressing the human rights aspects and other components of this problem.

The ODIHR will also ensure that a gender perspective is taken into account in the work of the democratization and election sections. Technical assistance for elections should seek to increase women's participation in the electoral process.

6. High Commissioner on National Minorities

The High Commissioner on National Minorities is encouraged to pay special attention to the status of women belonging to national minorities.

7. Representative on Freedom of the Media

The Representative on Freedom of the Media will:

- Encourage increased participation of women in media throughout the OSCE area;
- Be alert to instances of intolerance by States which utilize media to advocate violation of equal rights for women and the practice of gender discrimination.

8. Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

The Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities will:

- Spread awareness of commitments and the human rights of women in the economic sphere as described in paragraph 40.6 of the Moscow Document and develop guidelines for the approach to these issues;
- Together with participating States, analyse obstacles hindering women from fulfilling their potential in the economic sphere, and develop approaches to overcome these obstacles;
- Encourage international donor organizations and lending institutions to support projects that will enhance the role of women in economic activities;
- Analyse obstacles to the economic empowerment of women in participating States and make recommendations for action to the participating States;
- In review meetings on economic issues, include the gender dimension and seek to promote women's full and equal participation in economic life;
- Support the development of employability and entrepreneurial skills of women through the establishment of training, retraining and special education facilities.

9. Parliamentary Assembly

The Parliamentary Assembly, at its annual sessions and various subsidiary levels, including the meetings of its main committees, its Standing Committee, and its Bureau and at the Meeting of OSCE Women Parliamentarians, intends to:

- Continue to emphasize the important role that women should play in the development of democratic institutions and practices throughout the OSCE area;
- Encourage OSCE leadership to ensure that women are appointed to management positions in all OSCE structures and institutions and also in OSCE field missions and offices;
- Continue to monitor the implementation by the participating States, the structures and institutions of the OSCE and OSCE field missions and offices of their OSCE commitments to ensure gender equality, including the implementation of these commitments under the Action Plan for Gender Issues;
- Continue to address gender equality and gender mainstreaming issues in its deliberations and resolutions.

Furthermore, considering the importance of the advancement of equality between women and men in actions at field level, including efforts to ensure gender equality in the internal work of OSCE field operations, the Parliamentary Assembly will ensure that the gender aspect is taken into account in its own field activities, notably in its participation in election monitoring and in the activities of its democracy teams.

10. OSCE mandates and field assignments

In the planning of new field operations, a gender dimension will be taken into account not only in the definition of the mission's work, but also in planning necessary posts. Field operations should consider problems related to the full and equal exercise by women of their human rights in the society of the host country and, if deemed necessary and relevant to their general work, integrate appropriate tasks into relevant posts.

11. Focal points for gender issues in field operations

The Secretary General will ask field operations, as appropriate and taking into account the views of host governments, to appoint a member of their staff as focal point for gender issues to, *inter alia*, support or supplement the activities of the ODIHR. In large missions such as the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the OSCE Mission to Croatia, a post for a field co-ordinator for gender issues will be created through the reassignment of a mission member from the human dimension to the work on gender-related projects and initiatives. The work of these gender specialists will include, in accordance with the mission's mandate and activities, tasks such as:

- Monitoring and assisting the implementation of gender-sensitive policies and projects within the OSCE;
- Identifying potential projects relevant to the advancement of women and the protection and promotion of the human rights of women in the area covered by the field operations, and implementing projects in co-operation with the ODIHR and the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities;
- Promoting co-operation with and awareness of other relevant international organizations and instruments;
- Providing support to women's NGOs and facilitating relevant programmes;
- Assisting local actors in identifying appropriate bodies and mechanisms directed at achieving compliance with State obligations concerning equality of women and men;
- Paying particular attention to the situation of women in conflict and post-conflict areas;
- Organizing gender training for mission staff members and monitoring the implementation of the Professional Working Environment Policy;
- Ensuring inclusion of gender and women's human rights issues in the reports of missions and field activities;
- Maintaining contact with gender advisers in the Secretariat and the ODIHR.