



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY  
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT ON THE PROGRESS REPORT ON THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OSCE GENDER ACTION PLAN

Delivered by Chargé d’Affaires a.i. Henning Hj. Johansen to the Permanent Council  
Vienna, 18 July 2019

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chair,

In reviewing the progress of implementation of the Gender Action Plan, we begin with recognising the current, sad state of affairs. We have received the 15<sup>th</sup> progress report concluding that we have yet fully to implement the Gender Action Plan. While important in our context, this Action Plan is hardly among the most ambitious and should have been implemented long ago. We must consider recalibrating our approach to increase the rate of progress toward the full implementation of the plan.

The OSCE should have exemplary gender equality practices that are also reflected in the outcomes of its recruitment. However, the percentage of women in senior management remains approximately the same as in 2010, hovering around the 30 percent mark. Among the Heads of Missions and Institutions, women fill less than one position in five. We expect the Executive Structures to use new Gender Parity Strategy for 2019 to 2026 to revitalise their efforts to ensure the recruitment of women to senior positions.

Nonetheless, gender parity is not sufficient for gender equality. Equality goes beyond mere numbers. It requires a conducive working environment, both physically and psychologically. It requires that we adapt our values and our mind-sets, and develop inclusive processes and incentives that benefit women as much as they do men. We should do all we can to recruit more women, but the lack of gender parity is not the reason we are not doing better. Most managers in the OSCE are men, and men must do more to bring gender equality forward.

In 2017, the Office of Internal Oversight (OIO) determined that the OSCE is an organisation where many officials have “very limited understanding (or no understanding at all) of how the integration of a gender perspective could contribute to achieving the mission and larger objectives”. Did we make progress on this in 2018? It is hard to tell from the report. One way to contribute to building understanding and capacity for further gender mainstreaming within the OSCE is through the WIN project of the Gender Section, which Norway supports. We look forward to learning about its progress.

The report presented today contains much important information. Still, we should further improve the report as an aid for both executive structures and states to assess and improve the OSCE’s progress toward gender equality. In order to do so, the report must be further oriented around results and how we reach them.

To be an effective tool, the report must clearly identify the progress made, or lack thereof. It is not sufficient to state that recommendations are being implemented or that this-or-that roadmap, or plan, was developed. A highlight of 2018 is reported to be the Secretary General’s inter-office memorandum on zero-tolerance for sexual harassment and sexual exploitation. This is good, but a policy has value only when implemented. We expect the participating States to be kept updated on the results of this and other administrative policies.

The reporting must be concrete and the choices made should be well argued. The OIO made ten recommendations in its 2017 report. Reporting on the implementation of these is both general and scattered around the report. This makes it hard to assess how we are doing.

The report should include reasons why we have, or have not, achieved progress. This way we can learn which measures work most effectively to bring about results. Nearly all of the highlights of 2018 in the report are mere activities. We are impressed by the level of activity, but it has been harder to assess their impact.

The findings should be presented so that they can be compared across structures. That way both states and other structures may better learn from the experiences of others. The reports from the institutions and the SMM provide much important information. The use of the gender marker is one way to compare the level of gender mainstreaming for projects across structures. It is a helpful tool.

We would encourage the institutions further to collaborate with each other and with the Gender Section to provide reporting that is as comparable across the executive structures as can be. We also increasingly expect all projects and activities to be properly gender mainstreamed and have a gender perspective well integrated.

There are many officials in the OSCE fighting the good fight for gender equality, both in the institutions and field operations. We are grateful to them for their efforts. Still, in 2019 we mark 15 years since the adoption of the Gender Action Plan and 15 years of insufficient implementation. May this serve as a reminder that anniversaries in themselves bear little significance, but that the totality of the OSCE's efforts for implementation must be strengthened in order to be worthy of celebration. Let us do so and finally implement this Gender Action Plan.

Thank you