



Finland's EU Presidency

United Nations Security Council
Annual open debate on women, peace and security (SCR 1325)
UNITED NATIONS

Statement on behalf of the European Union

H.E. Minister Ms. Elisabeth Rehn
Finland

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(check against delivery)

Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

Mr. President,

This year marks the sixth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325: Women, Peace and Security. On behalf of the European Union, I would like to extend my thanks to the Japanese presidency for holding this open debate on the roles of women in the consolidation of peace. I would also sincerely like to thank all the speakers, especially those of you who shared your personal experiences.

Men and women are affected differently by war. War and conflict are always horrific, but the effect on women and girls is often particularly devastating. Women and men also experience peacebuilding differently and may have different priorities - and solutions - for peace. Women's equal participation and full involvement is a prerequisite for achieving, maintaining and promoting sustainable peace. The importance of SCR 1325 cannot thus be emphasised enough.

SCR 1325 is, in many ways, a milestone in the recognition of women's role in peace consolidation. The resolution demands protection of women and girls in conflicts, but also calls for giving women a voice and an active peacebuilding role during and in the aftermaths of armed conflict. Foremost, the resolution places the issue of gender firmly on the agenda of the Security Council itself.

However, six years after the adoption of SCR 1325, there are still serious gaps in its implementation. There is an urgent need to take more and concrete steps to change the way we see women, war and peace. First of all, we need to understand why women have been sidelined and analyse existing gender gaps. Second, we need to prioritise women's role throughout the peace process. Third, we need to show leadership that ensures women's empowerment and participation as well as protection.

Mr. President,

Women remain marginalised in peacebuilding. This marginalisation starts during ceasefire negotiations and continues throughout the peace process. The European Union believes that it is critical to move from marginalisation to action. Women at

both grassroots and national levels provide important insights and analysis to the consolidation of peace and we urge the Security Council to increasingly invite and utilise these voices. We encourage increased attention to facilitating women's equal and active participation from the first stages of negotiating peace through reconstruction and political participation. Without women in decision-making there will be no sustainable peace.

The number of women in UN peace operations remains low. We urge the Secretary General to continue to identify and nominate women for senior posts, including as peace envoys. We also urge all other parties, Member States and regional bodies alike, to increase the number of women staff in peacebuilding and peacekeeping.

However, simply increasing the number of women is not going to be enough. We must also engage in gender-specific institutional reform to make the institutions more responsive to women, both regarding women who serve the institutions as well as women served by the institutions.

Mr. President,

Post-conflict reconstruction provides an opportunity for legal and justice reform. It is crucial that this reform takes full consideration of women's special needs regarding reviewing the legal framework and judicial system so that they can better protect the rights of women and girls, ensure their access to justice and remove gender-discriminatory statutes and practices especially concerning rights to land, property, and inheritance. Promoting the Rule of Law and true access to justice for women is crucial.

The European Union is reiterating its support for the establishment of the Rule of Law Assistance Unit as anticipated by the Secretary General and endorsed by the world leaders at the Summit 2005, and requests the Unit to be established without further delay. We hope that the Unit, once established, will adopt a strong gender focus and for instance, carry out analysis of gender gaps in existing Rule of Law practices and assistance.

Mr. President,

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration are cornerstones of transition from war to peaceful coexistence. The EU emphasizes that DDR programmes should allow women and girl combatants as well as supporters to combatants to register and participate in these programmes. Reconstituted police and armed forces should seek gender balance in personnel, and should be reformed to introduce gender-equality to their mandates, incentive systems, performance measures, oversight mechanisms and organizational cultures. Security forces also need to be particularly alert to the increased violence against women, which often follows demobilisation.

We also believe that gender should be an integral part of Security Sector Reform programmes, including activities to reform defence forces and the police. We need

to improve the participation of women at all levels of the security forces as well as the dialogue between the security sector and civil society.

Mr. President,

The EU is pleased to see the work of the Peacebuilding Commission progressing with the first country-specific meetings having successfully taken place. We believe that the PBC provides a unique forum for strong institutional and strategic leadership and prioritisation regarding the implementation of SCR 1325.

We are very pleased to see that women's role and SCR 1325 are included in the outcome documents of the first country-specific meetings. It is important that this is now operationalised and converted into concrete action. The EU believes that gender should be incorporated into every aspect of the work of the PBC and the PBSO, including the appointment of specific advisory staff. We also encourage the development of a gender policy as well as continuous gender analysis of all aspects of work of the PBC and PBSO, including regarding the use of the Peacebuilding Fund. We also believe that the PBC and PBSO should ensure open and inclusive participation and representation of women's organizations and civil society in the work of the PBC, both at the country level as well as in the discussions here in New York.

Mr. President,

The interlinkages of development, peace and security and human rights are, as outlined in the World Summit Outcome, the foundation of collective security and well-being. The EU strongly believes in gender equality as a prerequisite for peace and security. Within the framework of the European Consensus on Development, adopted in December 2005, the EU supports conflict prevention and peacebuilding by addressing the root-causes of violent conflict, including gender inequality.

SCR 1325 is currently being implemented also within the context of the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). The EU is committed to increase women's representation at all decision-making levels, increase the dialogue with local and international women's groups, protect women and girls affected by conflict, and incorporate a gender perspective into all ESDP operations.

Gender inclusion has to start at the highest levels and it has to be done in a systematic, coherent manner through every stage of peacekeeping operations. The EU is currently working towards a more gender-sensitive atmosphere in order to encourage more women to apply for ESDP missions and positions. The EU has also adopted a checklist to ensure gender mainstreaming and implementation of SCR 1325 throughout the planning process and conduct of ESDP operations. In addition, all ESDP operations are bound by the Generic Standards of Behaviour that prohibit any involvement in sexual exploitation, trafficking in women and prostitution. Furthermore, the OSCE decision on ensuring the highest standards of conduct and accountability of persons serving on international forces and mission highlights the importance of preventing sexual harassment and trafficking in persons, as well as protecting victims of such trafficking. We believe that all

peacekeeping personnel should act in an exemplary manner and encourage training of all UN personnel - at all levels. We are pleased to see the newly established Conduct and Discipline Team at DPKO and hope that it will be successful in ensuring a policy of zero tolerance of sexual exploitation by peacekeeping missions.

Mr. President,

The armed conflicts of the last decade have increasingly been characterised by the use of sexual violence against women and girls. Sometimes the violence escalates in the post-war period. Violence against women in and after armed conflict constitutes a grave human rights violation and leaves women and girls disabled, scarred and traumatised for life. To add to their trauma, often those committing violations in conflicts or post-conflict environment are not investigated, prosecuted nor punished. The EU, in line with the Security Council, strongly condemns all gender-based violence in situations of armed conflict, and further condemns all violations of the human rights of women and girls.

We urge the ending of impunity for all perpetrators by strengthening the legal and judicial systems and by enacting and enforcing legislation to ensure investigation, prosecution and punishment of perpetrators. Gender-based violence must be included in the mandates of transitional justice mechanisms, tribunals, reparations, vetting and truth commissions. The EU stresses that impunity must be excluded from all war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, and gender-based crimes and reiterates its support for the International Criminal Court in this regard. The Justice Rapid Response Teams could provide a novel mechanism for ensuring investigation and securing evidence for prosecution of sexual violence during armed conflict.

The response to sexual violence in conflict and beyond and the protection of victims is inadequate when compared to the scope of the phenomenon. The response to gender based violence requires long-term, holistic and coordinated efforts, including protection, health-care, education and psychosocial, social, economic, and legal support. In December 2005 the OSCE Ministerial Council approved decisions on preventing and combating violence against women and on women in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. The EU underscores the importance of developing preventive measures in relation to gender-based violence in conflicts. Mechanisms for prevention against and protection from gender-based violence need to be well planned in advance and included also in the inter-agency contingency plans and strategies as well as in all peacebuilding and reconstruction plans.

In line with the proposal outlined in the recent report by the Secretary General on all forms of violence against women, the EU supports the establishment of monitoring mechanisms within the Security Council to address the prevention and redress of violence against women in armed conflict.

Mr. President,

The European Union takes note of the Report of the Secretary-General on the review of the UN System-Wide Action Plan for implementing SCR 1325 in the UN system. We are pleased that progress has been made in several areas and that the UN system continues to show a wide range of good practice. We encourage strengthened coordination between UN agencies both at Headquarters and in the field in order to avoid overlap and duplication of efforts and to maximise existing capacity and expertise. In addition, in order to increase accountability, there is an urgent need to develop a regular reporting and monitoring mechanism for the UN System-Wide Action Plan.

Incorporating SCR 1325 into the Security Council's work in order to ensure a gender-sensitive approach in all its work is crucial, but there is often a lack of understanding of the concept of gender mainstreaming. The EU therefore welcomes the current efforts by the UN and Member States to train permanent missions and SC members on how to translate SCR1325 in to concrete action. Additional measures to include SCR1325 in the work of the Security Council should also be considered, such as establishing a working group or focal point to assist in the mainstreaming of SCR 1325.

More needs to be done also on a national level. The integration of SCR 1325 has to be country-driven. Member States need to take responsibility for the success of SCR 1325 through ensuring that it is integrated into national policy and training programmes. A number of EU Member States as well as other countries have developed national action plans and strategies on the implementation of the resolution. We encourage countries to develop such plans and to apply a broad gender mainstreaming approach across government, for instance through a system-wide approach that links development, humanitarian and defence issues. However, all plans should include civil society consultations as well as monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

Finally, Mr. President,

The implementation of SCR 1325 is closely linked to achieving gender equality and women's equal participation at all levels of society. In post-conflict societies women constitute more than half of the population. Women are entitled to an active role in rebuilding their society. By ensuring that all aspects of SCR 1325 are implemented we will give women the chance to use their voice and their agency in ensuring sustainable peace.

I thank you, Mr. President.