

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
October 2014, Security Council Chamber

Statement by **Mr. Mayr-Harting**, *Head of the Delegation of the* **European Union**

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

Fourteen years after the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), we note an extraordinary level of political commitment and activity in the field of women and peace and security. That would merit a longer statement than I am able to make here today, and therefore I ask members to refer to the full, written version that we are distributing.

We have been witnessing a series of deeply troubling conflict-related developments leading to mass displacements, humanitarian catastrophes and serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, from which women suffer disproportionately. That challenge should strengthen our resolve to implement the commitments we have made in a systematic and sustainable way at the national, regional and global levels. Neglecting the rights and needs of women and girls threatens our goals with respect to peace and security, development and human rights.

We welcome the focus of today's debate on refugee and displaced women and girls, who often face multiple discrimination and multiplied risks to their lives, health, rights and livelihoods. Displacement frequently threatens to reverse gains that have been made in terms of gender equality and the empowerment of women in general. In addition, we have recently experienced the phenomenon of gender-specific displacement — women and girls fleeing their homes to avoid violent extremist groups that especially target and discriminate against women and girls.

Women's limited access to resources, services, financial independence and decision-making processes in situations of displacement can have consequences that last across generations. Nothing demonstrates this more clearly than the lack of access of displaced women and girls to education. The European Union continues to focus on ensuring access for all children to education and protection in crises as a cornerstone of its strategy, including through the European Union's Children of Peace initiative, which has reached over 100,000 children in situations of conflict worldwide.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/693), which provides continuous and comparable information on the global implementation of the Council's resolutions on women and peace and security. We think that the availability of that continuous and comparable information is an important step forward. We also emphasize the importance of regular briefings by UN-Women Executive Director Mlambo-Ngcuka and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bangura to the Security Council on specific country situations.

We share the Secretary-General's emphasis on the need for enhanced engagement with civil society, human rights defenders and women peacebuilders, as well as support for their capacity-building, which is a part of our action on women and peace and security. We also strongly condemn the continuing attacks and threats against women political leaders, media personnel and human rights defenders.

In addition, the resilience of women and girls in situations of conflict and displacement must be acknowledged as well as their capacity to be active agents in conflict resolution and in building lasting peace harnessed.

We note with serious concern the continued sexual violence — rape, forced marriage, forced prostitution, trafficking and sexual slavery — that characterizes an increasing number of conflicts and the continuing use of sexual violence as a method of war. We welcome the clear global, regional and national commitments taken to tackle that, including those made at the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict and the framework for cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union.

We must end impunity for crimes of sexual violence, which must be properly investigated and prosecuted. In that regard, we emphasize the significant advancement in international law provided by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, as well as non-permanent international criminal tribunals, in combating sexual violence in conflict. We also welcome the increased use of the criteria related to human rights and sexual violence in the Security Council's sanctions regimes.

Attention to the protection of women and girls and their participation in conflict resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding must be transformed from an exception to a standard practice through systematic inclusion in policy guidelines, codes of conduct and training. It should also receive the attention of senior management in missions and other conflict resolution and peacebuilding mechanisms. Gender advisers must be deployed in all United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions. We also call for the further deployment of United Nations women protection advisers.

We continue to implement a EU systematic plan on women and peace and security. We have also defined the EU priority areas for the next reporting period, 2013 to 2015, which include transitional justice, women's political participation and economic empowerment, women's involvement in peace processes and preventing sexual violence in conflict. Seventeen of the 28 European Union member States have adopted national action plans on resolution 1325 (2000).

To improve the situation of women and girls, we need to make better use of the international legal and policy instruments. General recommendation No. 30 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, on tackling challenges to gender equality in situations of conflict, is a landmark achievement and underlines the importance of reviewing our progress on women and peace and security in the context of the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. We further welcome the upcoming entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty on 24 December.

We look forward to the global review of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) next year. We hope that it provides an additional push to make all commitments on women and peace and security

a reality — an overall effort, to which such a meeting as you, Madam President, have organized today is making a very important contribution.