

**Call to renew commitment:
Helsinki Pledges on
Gender-sensitive Parliaments in the OSCE Region**

We, Members of Parliament from across the OSCE region gathered in Helsinki, Finland, on 3–4 June 2025 for the workshop “*Realising Gender Equality in and by Parliaments*”, dedicated to reviewing progress towards gender-sensitive parliaments, hereby acknowledge and reaffirm the following:

- National parliaments, as fundamental institutions of democracy, are uniquely positioned to champion the advancement and full realisation of gender equality in politics, as well as in all spheres of public and private life. This vital role of parliaments has been firmly established in international agreements and commitments, including the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action — whose 30th anniversary we mark this year, and the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality (Decision No. 14/04), whose principles continue to guide our efforts today.
- The concept of *gender-sensitive parliaments* has become the most comprehensive expression of parliaments’ responsibility to promote and uphold gender equality. International and inter-parliamentary organisations have played a leading role in this endeavour, generating both an evidence base and political frameworks to encourage further action. The 2022 Inter-Parliamentary Union’s Kigali Declaration stands as a powerful reminder of the global parliamentary commitment to this agenda.
- Numerous intergovernmental entities are now dedicating resources to eliminate barriers to women’s full and effective participation in parliament and to enable legislatures to deliver on gender parity, gender-equality policies, and gender-sensitive parliamentary oversight.

Over the past three decades, we have witnessed unprecedented progress in advancing gender equality within parliaments. OSCE participating States have:

- Tripled the average share of female parliamentarians, now reaching 31.6%;
- Adopted pioneering gender equality laws aimed at combating gender-based discrimination and promoting gender mainstreaming in policy- and decision-making processes;
- Strengthened ministries, agencies and councils tasked with gender equality policy and the realisation of women’s rights;
- Introduced temporary special measures — including legislative gender quotas and gender-targeted party funding — to reduce male overrepresentation and work towards long-term gender-balanced politics.

However, despite these efforts, progress has stalled across the OSCE region. We are witnessing worrying signs of regression in gender equality, alongside growing resistance and mobilisation against it. Now, more than ever, the development of gender-sensitive parliaments is essential to counteract these negative trends.

In light of this, we, Members of Parliaments from across the OSCE region, call for a renewed commitment to the global gender-sensitive parliaments agenda and to gender parity as a permanent norm and governance principle.

We specifically urge national parliaments across the OSCE area to:

1. Adopt a national political commitment to achieve gender parity within the next decade, supported by a measurable and realistic roadmap and representation targets spanning the next three electoral cycles.
2. Conduct participatory gender audits during each parliamentary convocation to assess how gender equality is being mainstreamed across core parliamentary functions — including representation, lawmaking, and parliamentary oversight.
3. Establish a gender-balanced steering group to follow up on the findings and recommendations of participatory gender audits, lead implementation of concrete, transformative measures as part of parliamentary gender equality action plans, and oversee the institutional transformation process.
4. Introduce legislative reforms aimed at increasing women’s political participation not only in parliament but also in political parties and executive and representative bodies at national and subnational levels.
5. Review and revise parliamentary Rules of Procedure and other regulatory frameworks, on a regularly basis, to promote gender-balanced representation across all parliamentary structures and to enhance the gender sensitivity of legislative and oversight processes.
6. Strengthen the mandates, resources, tools and capacities of parliamentary committees, and other relevant parliamentary bodies, to ensure that the differing needs and perspectives of all genders are integrated into lawmaking and oversight, informed by the use of sex-disaggregated data.
7. Develop targeted programmes to engage more male politicians – including male parliamentarians – as allies and transformative actors so they share responsibility with female leaders in advancing gender equality policy and work towards gender parity.
8. Recognise violence against women in politics as a major obstacle to women’s participation, and prevent and combat it through comprehensive, coordinated policy responses, sanctions, research, training, awareness-raising and reporting measures.
9. Recognise parliament as a workplace, and foster a culture that supports work–life balance and the care responsibilities of both parliamentarians and staff.
10. Ensure that national budgets are developed and implemented in alignment with gender equality policy priorities and international gender-responsive budgeting practices.
11. Identify and remove barriers to the political participation of underrepresented groups — including young people, people from rural areas, persons with disabilities, and individuals from national and ethnic minorities — with a special focus on women from those groups, through empowerment initiatives that promote diversity and inclusion in parliamentary representation.
12. Proactively identify and adopt measures to resist and reverse national and global pushbacks against gender equality through vigilant monitoring, communication, advocacy, and strategic policy action, and continuously work on addressing harmful stereotypes and social norms that hinder substantive equality.

Together, as enshrined in these Pledges, we must forge parliaments that embody equality, diversity, and champion the rights of every citizen — striving for 50:50 parity between women and men, and ensuring that all voices, across generations and backgrounds, are heard and represented.