

GENDER BALANCE REPORT

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A Gender Sensitive Response to the Migrant and Refugee Influx in Europe is Needed

Presented by

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I. Introduction

Since 2001, the Special Representative on Gender Issues of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA) has issued an annual report, as well as a study of the OSCE's gender disaggregated statistics.

This year's thematic report focuses on the need for gender mainstreaming in the response to the refugee and migrant influx in Europe. Specifically, it identifies a number of gendered differences in the situation of men and women who are part of this group in their travels to and within Europe, in how refugee claims are treated and in integration into host countries. The report suggests a number of actions to ensure that the responses to the situation are gender sensitive. In addition, it calls for the root causes of these movements of people to be addressed so that people are able to stay in their homes. The report suggests that there is potential for gender-sensitive conflict resolution mechanisms and humanitarian and development aid to improve the situation in countries of origin, which should result in fewer people wanting and needing to flee to Europe.

Considering the OSCE's gender disaggregated statistics, the 2016 Gender Report concludes that, despite continuing efforts, the 2004 OSCE Gender Action Plan has attained only moderate success. The gender balance in the OSCE governmental structures is stagnating; overall female representation in the OSCE has remained stable, and women occupy only 35% of filled senior management positions. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly continues to be characterized by an overall male majority. However, the OSCE PA Bureau has a nearly balanced gender composition, and female parliamentarians have become more active in OSCE PA election observation missions as compared to the previous reporting period.

Today, although comprehensive gender-related commitments have been put in place in OSCE structures and in most participating States, their implementation is often lagging. More needs to be done to translate commitments on paper into positive effects on the ground.

II. Gender Mainstreaming in the Response to the Influx of Migrants and Refugees in Europe

Europe received more than 1 million people arriving by sea in the Mediterranean area in 2015. The numbers often overwhelmed communities hosting the refugees and migrants, with sometimes dangerous results for female refugees and migrants. Gender has a significant role to play throughout the voyage of a refugee or migrant – from having an impact on who gets to leave, to experiences while travelling, to how far a person goes and what life is like upon arrival in a new country. It is important that all responses to the migrant and refugee influx – whether we are talking about service provision for the affected individuals, determination of their refugee claims or security responses – consider the gendered aspects of this situation through gender-based analysis, as it is known in Canada, or gender mainstreaming as it is better known internationally. Policies, programs and services must be gender sensitive to ensure that women and girl refugees and migrants are safe and are able to integrate successfully into their new countries. The importance of such efforts is only going to increase, as growing numbers of women and girls are fleeing violence in countries such as Syria and heading to Europe.

But it is not enough to only think of the situation in Europe. Gender must also be considered when addressing the root causes of recent movements of migrants and refugees into Europe. In addition to discussing the situation of female migrants and refugees, this section of the report will also outline the importance of integrating a gender lens throughout the conflict cycle in countries at war in order to more effectively prevent and resolve conflicts and to build sustainable peace, and in humanitarian and development programming. Many migrants and refugees would prefer never to leave their homes and part of the solution to the current situation in Europe is to ensure that it is safe to stay in or return to their countries. Everyone needs opportunities to be educated, to work and to have fulfilling lives. For women and girls, in particular, gender mainstreaming of conflict resolution efforts and humanitarian and development assistance programs will provide lasting change and opportunity.

Terminology

This report discusses both migrants and refugees so it is important to understand what is meant by these terms from the outset. Refugees flee persecution, whereas migrants leave their country for other reasons. Migrants may leave to seek better economic opportunities, reunite with

families or even to flee discrimination which does not reach the level of gravity to satisfy the definition of a refugee. Both refugees and migrants may face great dangers in trying to reach Europe. This report deals with both groups, though with a greater focus on refugees.

In addition, it is important to have a clear understanding of what is meant by “gender mainstreaming,” the term most commonly used internationally for gender-sensitive planning and program delivery. Gender mainstreaming has been defined as follows by the United Nation’s Economic and Social Council:

[T]he process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.¹

The Situation Faced by Female Migrants and Refugees

a- Challenges for Women and Girls During the Journey to Safety

Although there are just as many female as male refugees in the world, far more men are able to reach Western countries. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports that there were more than one million arrivals in Europe by sea in the Mediterranean area in 2015, with more than 3,600 dead or missing at sea. Less than 20% of arrivals were women (25% were children).² However, though they remain the minority, it appears that the number of women refugees and migrants arriving in Europe is increasing, including single women and unaccompanied children. From January until May of 2016, there were more than 200,000 arrivals, with approximately 2,500 dead or missing. Twenty percent were women, 35% were children.³ In a recent report, UNHCR, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and

¹ Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues, [Gender Mainstreaming: An Overview](#), United Nations, New York, 2002, p. v.

² United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], [Refugees/Migrants Emergency Response – Mediterranean](#) (note that figures on the website change regularly so the figures used here will not be the same when the website is accessed by the reader); European Commission, *Compilation of Data, Situation and Media Reports on Children in Migration*, 18 December 2015, pp. 4–5 (information from UNHCR Information Portal for the Mediterranean).

³ UNHCR, *Refugees/Migrants Emergency Response – Mediterranean*.

the Women's Refugee Commission suggest that one possible explanation is growing perceptions that these populations will be prioritized for services and registration and may have greater success in receiving asylum.⁴ Others are following men who arrived earlier.

As they travel to their destination, the women and girls that *are* able to leave their country may experience various forms of violence that differ from men. Women may also leave their country of origin because of experiences of gender-based violence or in fear of such violence, particularly in situations of conflict where sexual violence may be used as a weapon, or where female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage are practiced.⁵ Women and girls heading to Europe have also experienced sexual assault by officials, smugglers, traffickers and other refugees.⁶ Last fall, UNHCR expressed concern about reports that refugee and migrant women and children were facing various forms of abuse while “on the move” in Europe. The agency was alarmed by reports of “children engaging in survival sex to pay smugglers to continue their journey.”⁷ Women and children are providing sexual services in exchange for various forms of assistance, such as necessary documentation as well.⁸ Europol reported in February 2016 that more than 90% of refugees and migrants arriving in the EU use smugglers, with many of the smugglers also involved in human trafficking.⁹ The International Organization for Migration says that refugees and migrants are some of the most vulnerable groups of individuals when it comes to trafficking, with women and girls at particular risk of sexual exploitation.¹⁰

Violence and abuse, including sexual abuse, have also been risks in reception sites that are overcrowded and in locations where refugee and migrants gather, including parks, train and bus stations and on roadsides, according to UNHCR spokesperson Melissa Fleming.¹¹ Reception centres also may lack lighting and separate spaces for women and families with children, which

⁴ UNHCR et al., [Initial Assessment Report: Protection Risks for Women and Girls in the European Refugee and Migrant Crisis: Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia](#), January 2015, p. 6 [UNHCR Assessment report].

⁵ Rosamund Shreeves, [Gender aspects of migration and asylum in the EU: An overview](#), European Parliamentary Research Service, March 2016, p. 3.

⁶ European Women's Lobby, [“Asylum is not gender neutral: the refugee crisis in Europe from a feminist perspective,”](#) *EWL News*, 21 September 2015.

⁷ UN News Centre, [UN refugee agency appeals for protection against sexual abuse of women and children on move in Europe](#), 23 October 2015.

⁸ Shreeves (2016), p. 3.

⁹ Europol, [Migrant Smuggling in the EU](#), February 2016, p. 5 and 11.

¹⁰ International Organization for Migration, [Addressing Human Trafficking and Exploitation in Times of Crisis: Evidence and Recommendations for Further Action to Protect Vulnerable and Mobile Populations](#), July 2015.

¹¹ UN News Centre, [UN refugee agency appeals for protection against sexual abuse of women and children on move in Europe](#), 23 October 2015.

magnify the risks they face.¹² Women and children are put in difficult situations, having to share washrooms with men, to sleep in tents with strangers. Even the simple act of going to the washroom can be terrifying, with the risk of being assaulted on the way to the toilet.¹³ Some reception centres are so unsafe that refugee women have chosen to sleep in the open on the beach because that felt safer. Some women have stopped eating and drinking so they did not have to go to washrooms shared by men, where sometimes they are watched by the men, according to Amnesty International.¹⁴ Women and girls accompanied by family members may also be victims of domestic violence as the experience of migration is disempowering for men in the family and affects their self-esteem, causing them to lash out.¹⁵

In addition, many of the women entering Europe are unable to access basic services. Many are pregnant but are not receiving medical attention. Even basics such as sanitary products may be lacking en route. A 2015 Save the Children report notes that food distribution is often poorly organized, meaning that young men, who rush to distribution points, are accessing the food while others, such as women, go without.¹⁶ According to the UNHCR, “unaccompanied women and girls, women heads of households and pregnant, disabled or older women may face particular challenges.”¹⁷ This is an important reminder that not all women have the same vulnerabilities.

In response to these many challenges for women and girl migrants and refugees, Tirana Hassan, Amnesty International’s Crisis Response director, has said:

If this humanitarian crisis was unfolding anywhere else in the world we would expect immediate practical steps to be taken to protect groups most at risk of abuse, such as women travelling alone and female-headed families. At a minimum, this would include setting up single sex, well-lit toilet facilities and separate safe sleeping areas. These women and their children have fled some of the world’s most dangerous areas and it is shameful that they are still at risk on European soil While governments and those who provide services to refugees have started to put measures in place to

¹² European Commission, p. 17 (information from UNHCR Briefing Notes 23 October 2015).

¹³ Save the Children, [Multi-sector Needs Assessment of Migrants and Refugees in Greece, Athens, Lesbos, Chios, Kos](#), 5–18 July 2015, p. 5; see also Human Rights Watch, [Greece: Chaos, Insecurity in Registration Center: Information, Attention to Vulnerable Groups Urgently Needed](#), 12 October 2015.

¹⁴ Amnesty International, [Female refugees face physical assault, exploitation and sexual harassment on their journey through Europe](#), 18 January 2016.

¹⁵ Shreeves (2016), p. 3.

¹⁶ Save the Children (2015), p. 5; see also Human Rights Watch, [Greece: Chaos, Insecurity in Registration Center: Information, Attention to Vulnerable Groups Urgently Needed](#), 12 October 2015.

¹⁷ UNHCR, [Who we help](#).

help refugees, they must up their game. More steps need to be taken to ensure that refugee women, especially those most at risk, are identified and special processes and services are put in place to ensure that their basic rights, safety and security are protected.¹⁸

b- Challenges for Women and Girls in Having Refugee Claims Recognized

In addition to the difficulties outlined above, women and girls can be at a disadvantage when their asylum claim is assessed. Persecution based on sex or gender is not explicitly listed as a ground for refugee status in the 1951 Refugee Convention, which forms the basis of most states' refugee law, and it took some time, and hard work by advocates to integrate such persecution into understandings of the refugee definition. There is still much to be done to ensure that women's and girls' refugee claims are adequately addressed.

To be considered a refugee according to the 1951 Refugee Convention a person must have a "well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion."¹⁹ Gender-based violence or persecution is not a listed ground for refugee status. As noted in the European Parliamentary Research Service publication *Gender aspects of migration and asylum in the EU: An overview*:

Consequently, women's experiences of persecution, and forms of harm that only or mostly affect them, have tended to be excluded from the dominant interpretation of the Convention, and they have been unable to benefit consistently and equitably from its protection.²⁰

However, over time, the convention has been interpreted to integrate gender in a number of ways. For example, gender-related violence such as rape, dowry-related violence, FGM, domestic violence and human trafficking may be considered as forms of persecution. A gender-related claim may be made under any of the convention grounds (race, religion, national, membership of a particular social group and political opinion), but this requires a gender sensitive approach to refugee determination. However, such an approach is not always used. Once they make a refugee claim, female refugees may have difficulty having their claim recognized because the activities that led to their persecution were not the same as the traditional male claims, or because they experienced gender-specific forms of persecution which are not

¹⁸ Amnesty International (2016).

¹⁹ UN General Assembly, *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 28 July 1951, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 189, p. 137, Art 1.A(2).

²⁰ Shreeves (2016), p. 7.

recognized in law or in practice in some states.²¹ Credibility assessment is extremely important in refugee determination hearings because, so often, refugees have not been able to bring documentary and other forms of external evidence with them. As explained by Debora Singer from Asylum Aid in the United Kingdom:

Compared to men, women encounter additional hurdles in showing that their asylum claim is credible. Women are more likely than men to have claims based on persecution suffered in the private sphere. Thus, due to the nature of the harm they have suffered, it may be more difficult for women to obtain documentary evidence of the agent of persecution and of their activities and place in society. There are particular difficulties in providing evidence of certain types of harm such as domestic violence or forced marriage It is also more difficult to access country of origin information on the status and treatment of women.²²

Women and girls who experience sexual torture or gender persecution may not want to tell their stories, even if they may provide justification for being granted asylum, due to trauma, shame or the presence of members of their family at the asylum interview.²³

The European Women's Lobby has said that,

[w]ithout integrating a gender perspective throughout the asylum process, the adherence to a male adult heterosexual norm risks resulting in many women and girls, including lesbian and bisexual women and girls, being wrongfully denied refugee status and protection under international human rights and refugee law.²⁴

This is an issue of life and death. If we do not successfully integrate a gender perspective into refugee determination processes, women and girls who have been persecuted may be returned to their country of origin with horrible consequences for their security.

The 2004 Gender Action Plan, already more than 10 years old, called on participating States to ensure "proper consideration is given to women claimants in refugee status determination procedures and that the range of claims of gender-related persecution are accorded due

²¹ UNHCR, [*Guidelines on International Protection No. 1: Gender-Related Persecution Within the Context of Article 1A\(2\) of the 1951 Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*](#), 7 May 2002, HCR/GIP/02/01, paras. 5, 9, 22–34.

²² Debora Singer, "Assessing the credibility of women's asylum claims in Europe," in *Gender in Refugee Law: From the margins to the centre*, ed. Efrat Arbel et al., Routledge, New York, 2014, p. 100.

²³ Shreeves (2016), p. 4; Silvia Sansonetti, [*Female refugees and asylum seekers: the issue of integration*](#), commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizen's Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee, 2016, p. 7.

²⁴ European Women's Lobby et al., [*Asylum is not gender neutral: Protecting women seeking asylum, a Practical advocacy guide*](#), November 2007, p. 4 (must download report).

recognition.”²⁵ So why is this still not happening consistently throughout the OSCE region in 2016?

The situation is worrying. A 2012 study that analyzed asylum and gender issues in nine EU states concluded that, “[t]here are vast and worrying disparities in the way different EU States handle gender-related asylum claims.”²⁶ Issues relating to both policy and implementation were identified in that study. Sometimes simple changes, such as providing childcare during interviews, can make a big difference. The study found that childcare was provided in only two of the nine countries during asylum interviews, meaning that women were forced to choose whether to fully disclose their experiences in front of their children or risk withholding important information for the outcome of their claim.

This summary of the situation is not intended to put blame on particular countries. Governments and civil society actors are being put under incredible strain. However, as we seek solutions to the refugee and migrant influx, we must recognize the gendered differences in experiences to be able to adequately meet the needs of both men and women. Currently, we are not doing that often enough and women’s and girls’ security is being put at risk.

This is despite the existing tools. UNHCR has issued non-binding *Guidelines on Gender-Related Persecution* and interprets the definition of a refugee to include gender-related claims.²⁷ Many national refugee systems have guidelines as well and other relevant international guidelines exist, but not all countries have guidelines and their use is inconsistent. All OSCE participating States must use existing guidelines or adopt new ones to ensure the security of women and girl refugees. Otherwise, they may be returned to their home countries, not because they are not refugees, but because the asylum determination is not adapted to recognise their claims.

c- Challenges for Women in Integrating into Host Societies

For those women and girls that make the dangerous journey to Europe and are able to stay as refugees or for other reasons, integration can be challenging. There are a number of recognized elements for successful integration into the labour market, which is very important for overall integration. These include language training, recognition of foreign credentials, methods to assess informal learning and work experience, assistance in looking for work and mentoring.

²⁵ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe [OSCE], [Decision No. 14/04: 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality](#), 7 December 2004.

²⁶ Hana Cheikh Ali et al., [Gender Related Asylum Claims in Europe](#), European Parliament, 2012.

²⁷ UNHCR, [Guidelines on International Protection No. 1: Gender-Related Persecution Within the Context of Article 1A\(2\) of the 1951 Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees](#), 7 May 2002, HCR/GIP/02/01.

Social integration is enhanced through the provision of information about local values and customs (for example, through language training), and through recreational activities and engagement with civil society groups.²⁸ However, women can experience barriers in all of these areas, requiring gender-sensitive settlement and integration policies.

For example, women are often responsible for childcare, which limits availability for other activities such as language classes. It also leaves them reliant on family members and reduces their access to education, training and the labour market.²⁹ The difficulty is accentuated by the fact that daycares in some countries give priority to parents who are working, making it very difficult for a refugee mother who is unemployed and looking for work or wanting to take language or other training to have access.³⁰

The result is often poor labour market outcomes, particularly in the short and medium term.³¹ Women refugees that are employed, tend to be employed at a level below their skills and qualifications in the “domestic services sector,” including childcare, elder care and house cleaning. One recent report noted that women refugees face greater job segregation than male refugees.³² However, a recent study of refugee labour integration in host countries found that social policies such as subsidized childcare and generous parental leave benefits may improve employment outcomes for immigrants, presumably including women refugees.³³ Conscious actions to address women and girls’ integration are needed to address their unique challenges.

The Response to the influx of migrants and refugees

Many OSCE participating States have been overwhelmed by the needs of the new arrivals in addition to their own domestic issues. However, there is no justification for gender mainstreaming to remain a secondary concern or worse, ignored. OSCE participating States have all made international commitments with respect to refugees and the equality of women and girls that must be respected. Along with the provision of basic needs such as food and shelter, there must be consideration of gendered differences in need. Women and girls need safe shelter

²⁸ Regina Konle-Seidl and Georg Bolits, [Labour Market Integration of Refugees: Strategies and good practices](#), prepared for the European Parliament, 2016, p. 9.

²⁹ Sansonetti (2016), p. 10.

³⁰ Sansonetti (2016), p. 30.

³¹ Konle-Seidl and Bolits (2016), p. 24.

³² Sansonetti (2016), p. 34.

³³ Konle-Seidl and Bolits (2016), p. 24.

separate from men. They need access to food. And, as noted in the introduction to this section of the report, they must be given the opportunity to contribute to the development of their home countries, whether that involves peacemaking and peacebuilding or economic and social development. The security of thousands of women and girls in the OSCE region depends on it.

a- The Importance of Sex-Disaggregated Data

The first step in gender mainstreaming is to ensure that the right data is available. Data is essential to effective planning and program delivery. Without sex-disaggregated data on the migrants and refugees arriving in Europe, it is impossible to plan in a way that meets the needs of both genders. Data is needed about arrivals and experiences in transit, but also throughout the asylum and integration processes to be able to know whether men and women are faring differently in the success of their refugee claims and integration into host countries. As a recent document prepared for the European Parliament noted:

Gender-disaggregated data are needed to identify specific protection needs, ensure that asylum policy and practice are not discriminatory and inform social inclusion and integration policy.³⁴

This is particularly the case as the demographic trends change and more women and children are arriving in Europe than previously:

According to UNHCR data, of the total of 1 015 078 refugees and migrants who arrived in the EU by sea in 2015, 58% were men, 17% women and 25% children (gender not specified). However, the balance appears to be changing. On 1 March 2016, UNHCR figures showed that of the 130 110 arrivals by sea since 1 January 2016, 47% were men, 20% women and 34% children. Demographic profiling by REACH in February 2016 also shows that the majority (65%) of groups travelling on the Western Balkans route were families, whilst men travelling alone represented one fifth (21%) of the total. This shift has implications for the targeting and organisation of support.³⁵

Having this sort of data about the people that are arriving allows for better planning and response.

b- Promoting Women and Girls' Safety and Well-being

³⁴ Shreeves (2016), p. 4.

³⁵ Shreeves (2016), p. 4.

A recent majority report of the European Parliament’s Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM Committee report) called for a number of changes to address the needs of women and girl refugees, including for legal routes to be established to counter smuggling networks and to provide safe alternatives.³⁶ Others are also calling for legal routes to Europe to stop the deaths in the Mediterranean. Because asylum seekers are primarily coming from countries that require visas to enter Europe and they cannot prove that they will return to their home country in order to be granted such visas, they pay smugglers 2–10,000 € and risk death in precarious boats instead of simply paying 35 € for a ferry ride. Legal alternatives would also allow for better planning and more orderly arrivals.³⁷ One possible alternative is the private sponsorship model used in Canada, which allows individuals to sponsor refugees instead of placing the financial burden on the state.

A 2014 study of sexual and gender-based violence in asylum reception centres in eight countries concluded that such centres are violent places for both asylum seekers and staff, both male and female. It called for prevention and better screening of personnel “on attitudes towards conflict and violence, human rights and discrimination, power indifferences and their coping skills and intercultural competence,” as well as ongoing training and a code of conduct focused on prevention instead of repressive measures once events occur.³⁸

In addition, female interpreters are needed, as is medical care for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. Case management and cross-border coordination is also required for migrants and refugees who are on the move.³⁹ Having services on-site is necessary for effective assistance for women and girls who are moving quickly through transit sites.⁴⁰ The Inter-Agency Standing Committee, which coordinates humanitarian assistance between United Nations (UN) and non-UN actors, provides a useful guide to address the safety of women in humanitarian crises: *Guidelines for Integrating Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action:*

³⁶ Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality, *Report on the situation of women refugees and asylum seekers in the EU*, A8-0024/2016, 10 February 2016 [Parliamentary Report].

³⁷ Elspeth Guild et al., [The 2015 Refugee Crisis in the European Union](#), Centre for European Policy Studies Policy Brief, No. 332, September 2015, pp. 4–5.

³⁸ Ines Keygnaert et al., “Sexual and gender-based violence in the European asylum and reception sector: a perpetuum mobile?” *European Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 25, Issue 1, pp. 90–96.

³⁹ Shreeves (2016), p. 10.

⁴⁰ UN Women, [UN Women assesses the needs of women migrants and refugees in Serbia and FYR Macedonia](#), 13 January 2016.

Reducing Risk, Promoting Resilience and Aiding Recovery.⁴¹ A recently announced OSCE initiative in conjunction with the Centre of Excellence for Stability Police Units also looks promising. Simulation exercises will be offered to 200 experts including law enforcement, prosecutors, labour inspectors, financial investigators and civil society members to be able to better address human trafficking along migration routes.⁴²

Beyond improving safety, there are other ways to protect the dignity of migrant and refugee women during their journey. Hygiene kits, also known as “dignity kits” with basic items such as sanitary napkins, soap, underwear and towels must be provided along known migration routes.⁴³ Women and girls also need separate distribution lines for food, WASH (water, sanitation, hygiene) facilities, separate accommodation where appropriate and safe and secure childcare.⁴⁴

The affected women must also be involved in decision-making related to services. The FEMM Committee report called for gender parity on any committees or bodies representing refugees, to ensure that the voice and needs of female refugees is not lost, and for minimum standards and monitoring of overcrowded reception centres to mitigate the risk of gender-based violence.⁴⁵

c- Fair Treatment of Women and Girls’ Asylum Claims

Though obligations to consider gender in responding to asylum claims exist, implementation is where the challenge often lies. Maria Hennessy of the Irish Refugee Council explained in a chapter for a recent book on refugees and gender:

Apart from the European Union asylum *acquis*, there is also a wealth of international and European standards and recommendations that provide guidance to states on the examination of asylum seekers with gender-related claims. Despite these important gains in the formulation of human rights standards to address gender-related asylum claims there remains a significant gap in the practice at the national level Studies ... illustrate that there is serious inconsistency between the law and practice in Europe.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Inter-Agency Standing Committee, *Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action: Reducing risk, promoting resilience and aiding recovery*, 2015.

⁴² OSCE, “[OSCE launches innovative project to combat human trafficking along migration routes](#),” *Press Release*, 17 June 2016.

⁴³ UN Women, [Key considerations for hygiene or “dignity” kits](#).

⁴⁴ Shreeves (2016), p. 10.

⁴⁵ Parliamentary Committee, paras. 1–2, 4, 46 of the motion.

⁴⁶ Maria Hennessy, “Training and strategic litigation: Tools for enhanced protection of gender-related asylum applicants in Europe,” in *Gender in Refugee Law: From the margins to the centre*, ed. Efrat Arbel et al., Routledge, New York, 2014, p. 178.

The FEMM Committee report also called for asylum claimants to be registered and assessed individually and given documentation. Asylum systems must recognize gendered forms of violence and discrimination, such as sexual violence, FGM, forced marriage and domestic violence as persecution. In addition, gender-based analysis is crucial when establishing lists of safe countries of origin, as is increasingly common in OSCE participating States. Individuals originating from such countries may be fast tracked for return as they are considered as unlikely to produce refugees. However, the situation for women and girls may be completely different than it is for men and boys in a country. For example, where FGM is practiced, this may be considered reason to grant asylum to a girl, even where the political situation was stable and it would otherwise seem like a safe place to return.⁴⁷ The EU–Turkey deal to return “irregular migrants” to Turkey must also be assessed using gender-based analysis to ensure that returns of women and girls are not putting them in dangerous situations.⁴⁸ As one recent report noted, “generalising about safety risks could lead to specific instances of persecution being disregarded and women’s rights are often unreferenced in assessments of safeness.”⁴⁹ Gender-sensitive Country of Origin information about Chechnya and Nigeria published by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) is a positive sign and such initiatives should be expanded to other countries.⁵⁰

In addition, education and outreach is essential. Women must know that the forms of harm that they have experienced may be grounds for a claim or they may not think to mention the necessary details in asylum interviews.⁵¹ The European Parliament report mentioned above stresses the importance of ensuring childcare and care for dependents during interviews to ensure that caregivers receive a fair hearing. Asylum seekers should not have to choose between a chance at asylum and avoiding trauma to their child from hearing the experiences of their parent. Guarantees of female interviewers and interpreters for asylum interviews are needed too.⁵² In addition, interviews should be held away from other family members.⁵³

⁴⁷ Parliamentary Report, paras. 3, 13, 18 of the motion.

⁴⁸ Note that the legality of this agreement more generally has been challenged by organizations such as Amnesty International. See Amnesty International, [No Safe Refuge: Asylum-Seekers and Refugees Denied Effective Protection in Turkey](#), 2016.

⁴⁹ Shreeves (2016), p. 9.

⁵⁰ Shreeves (2016), p. 10.

⁵¹ Shreeves (2016), p. 4.

⁵² Parliamentary Report, paras. 25, 26 of motion and pp. 16–17.

⁵³ Shreeves (2016), p. 4.

Training is also required to ensure that interviewers, interpreters and decision-makers are familiar with issues surrounding sexual violence, trauma and memory. Such measures are all the more important because women's claims tend to rely on oral testimony and credibility assessments for a number of reasons, including the types of persecution that they fear.⁵⁴ Where the harm takes place in the private sphere or political activities are undocumented, it may be more difficult to establish the claim and decision-makers need to understand the reality of women's experiences and their impact on the claim. One way to assist women and girls through the process is to assign them an advocate who is familiar with the system and can play a support role. For example, such advocates can ensure that the asylum interviewer and the interpreter are female, suggest breaks when the woman being interviewed is distressed and put clients in contact with psychosocial supports.⁵⁵

1- Gender Guidelines

Gender guidelines are needed to guide decision-makers and ensure that gender is integrated both in the assessment of claims and to ensure procedures are gender-sensitive as well. The European Parliament report mentioned above calls for EU-wide gender guidelines. Currently, the EU has gender guidelines for humanitarian assistance which are relevant in responding to the current flux of migrants and refugees, but none for the assessment of asylum claims. At the same time, as noted above, those countries with existing gender guidelines must ensure that they are applied, which is often not the case. It is a positive sign that EASO is developing training on gender, gender identity and sexual orientation and gender mainstreaming its entire curriculum.⁵⁶

d- Women and Girls' Integration into Host Countries

We must not see the needs of women simply as a burden. Female migrants and refugees will become contributing members of our communities and countries if we make the effort to integrate them successfully. In Canada, two recent appointments to the position of the Governor General, the Queen's representative in Canada, have been refugees: Adrienne Clarkson and Michaëlle Jean. Refugee and migrant women and girls can make significant social, economic and political contributions to their host countries, as well as playing roles in resolving conflicts in their home countries.

⁵⁴ Parliamentary Report, paras. 18, 25, 26 of motion and pp. 16–17; Hennessy (2014), p. 181.

⁵⁵ See, for example, a program in Australia explained here: [Michelle Dimasi, *Women's Rights and Gender Equality: Best Practices for Refugee Protection Services*](#), Maximus, 12 April 2016.

⁵⁶ Shreeves (2016), p. 10.

Women need to have information in order to integrate. Information about their rights, about expectations of them in their host country and community, about services and what is needed to be successful in the new society and new culture. Language acquisition is essential for many reasons. It allows mothers to better support their children through schooling, removes the burden on children to act as interpreters and helps to fight isolation and segregation as women can communicate outside of their ethnic/religious/language community.⁵⁷ In a study of integration of female asylum seekers and refugees for the European Parliament, Silvia Sansonetti explains that:

[W]omen who receive a proper language course can more easily integrate into society, autonomously procure the goods they need, use public transportations with more self-confidence, obtain a driving licence, and get to understand their rights without men's mediation.⁵⁸

The FEMM Committee report calls for specific measures to facilitate labour market integration for women refugees and asylum seekers, suggesting language classes, literacy programmes and other training and to ensure that refugee girls have access to education as well. Recognition of foreign credentials is another issue that is highlighted. Funding for settlement and human rights organizations to work with refugee women is crucial. Finally, again, childcare and care for other dependents is necessary in order to empower refugee women both socially and economically.⁵⁹ Whatever training is provided for women, it must take into account the schedule of busy mothers and include childcare.⁶⁰ Another suggestion has been for the training of female cultural mediators to assist refugee women in their integration.⁶¹

To ensure that programs are useful and culturally appropriate for their users, refugee and asylum-seeking women should be involved in the development, implementation and evaluation, "as the best experts on their own story and experience" according to Ms. Sansonetti.⁶² This is also the best way to support their own empowerment and independence in their new homes.⁶³

Integration is also about ensuring a welcoming environment, where refugees and migrants do not face serious barriers such as discrimination, hostility and negative interactions with officials,

⁵⁷ Sansonetti (2016), p. 27.

⁵⁸ Sansonetti (2016), p. 30.

⁵⁹ Parliamentary Report, paras. 54–57 of the motion.

⁶⁰ Sansonetti (2016), p. 29.

⁶¹ Sansonetti (2016), p. 10.

⁶² Sansonetti (2016), p. 9.

⁶³ Sansonetti (2016), p. 10.

service providers and so forth. To have a positive experience and want to integrate, they must feel safe, welcome and like they have opportunities.⁶⁴

e- Women's Involvement in Conflict Resolution

To really make a difference in the lives of the women and girls fleeing conflict that are arriving on the shores of Europe, the wars they are fleeing must stop. Most would prefer to stay at home if they could. Women's involvement in peacemaking and peacebuilding has been demonstrated to assist in producing lasting peace and ensuring that women and girls' needs are integrated into agreements. However, since United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSC 1325) was adopted in 2000, efforts at gender mainstreaming in response to conflict resolution have been mixed. Women make up only 3% of the military in UN missions and the majority of women in those missions are support staff. Only 6% of bilateral aid is for gender issues and 2% of aid for peace and security relates to gender. Out of 24 peace negotiations from 2000 to 2011, more than half involved 5% or less women's participation, with nine having no women involved.⁶⁵ However, there have been some improvements. From 1990 to 2000, 11% of peace agreements mentioned women. This has increased to 27% since UNSC 1325 was adopted and four of the six peace agreements signed in 2014 referred to women, peace and security.⁶⁶ The references to women have also become more substantive, with stronger commitments such as legislative quotas for women and a new criminal offence for sexual harassment, for example.⁶⁷

As the 15-year review of UNSC 1325 states:

Women have always participated in peace negotiations and peacebuilding, but always at the informal level and rarely visible to the formal peacemakers and keepers of peace. Women have surrounded buildings to make leaders stay in the room, such as in Liberia; they have elected themselves as a third force, such as in Northern Ireland; they have demanded that justice be part of any peace process, such as the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo; they have rallied the country with calls for peace, like the Women in Black in Serbia.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Sansonetti (2016), p. 9.

⁶⁵ Freedom House, [The Exclusion of Women from Peace Negotiations](#), 28 January 2014.

⁶⁶ Radhika Coomaraswamy, [Preventing Conflict Transforming Justice Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325](#), 2015, pp. 14–15.

⁶⁷ Coomaraswamy (2015), p. 45.

⁶⁸ Coomaraswamy (2015), p. 40.

Research studying peace processes since the Cold War ended shows that peace processes where women exercise significant influence are more likely to end in agreement, be implemented and last. Though concerns are sometimes expressed that adding women will overburden negotiations, in a study of 40 peace processes the researchers found that:

[T]here was not a single case where organized women's groups had a negative impact on a peace process, an observation that does not hold true for other social actors. Quite the contrary, one of the most repeated effects of women's involvement in peace processes was pushing for the commencement, resumption, or finalization of negotiations when the momentum had stalled or the talks had faltered.⁶⁹

An example of positive outcomes can be found in Northern Ireland, in our own OSCE region:

[I]n Northern Ireland during the negotiations for the Good Friday Agreement (1998) the top ten political parties represented at the negotiation table had no female representation at all. That was the trigger for a few committed women to form a separate women's political party (the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition NIWC), which eventually won support and was given a seat next to the other parties at the negotiation table. Although the NIWC was outnumbered by male-dominated parties, their decision-making power was enhanced because they were negotiating on the same level as the other political parties, and they were able to push for the inclusion of many issues, which ultimately made it into the final agreement. The NIWC pushed for equality, human rights and broad inclusion. They promoted an inclusive, cooperative process, and put women's participation and women's rights on the top of the political agenda. The NIWC also focused on preventative measures against violence, and on prosecutions of cases on violence against women.⁷⁰

Though Yemen has not been as successful in maintaining its peace process, the country's National Dialogue Conference in 2013 was able to establish a quota for participation of 50% Southern Yemeni, 20% youth and 30% women. The "package" nature of the quota may have kept the quota system in place, as the percentage of women and youth were tied to the percentage of Southern Yemenis. Though the Salafis left seats open instead of including women, women still made up 28% of participants and there were quotas for committee leadership positions as well. The Office of the UN Special Advisor on Yemen also set up a meeting place for female

⁶⁹ Coomaraswamy (2015), p. 41.

⁷⁰ Coomaraswamy (2015), p. 50.

delegates to meet together and connect with local non-governmental organizations.⁷¹ All of this despite the fact that Yemen ranked second to last on the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index in 2013.⁷² Unfortunately, the Syrian peace process has not had the same sort of openness to women's involvement.⁷³

Another example of interest is Burundi, where a national network of women mediators was established by the UN with government and civil society. They share verifiable information to challenge rumours and fears, advocate and promote dialogue at the local level.⁷⁴

These are only some of the concrete examples of women involved in conflict resolution, both in formal peace processes and on the ground, that are taking place around the world. As the Founder and Chair of the Institute for Inclusive Security, Swanee Hunt, has said, "Women can work below the radar, because if they were men coming out and saying the same things, they would probably be shot on the spot."⁷⁵

The inclusion of women in peacebuilding after conflict ends also provides dividends for communities:

We know that when women are placed at the center of security, justice, economic recovery, and good governance, they will be more direct recipients of a range of peace dividends including job creation and public services. This means that the pay-offs of peace will be delivered more rapidly to communities. For example, without livelihoods and economic empowerment, as the percentage of female headed households surges during and after conflict, women and girls are forced into low-reward, high-risk work like survival sex, slowing community recovery and normalization, and deepening the poverty and resentment of children. With access to income generation and economic security as a result of just peace agreement outcomes, however, women tend to be quicker to invest in child welfare and education, to build food security, and to rebuild rural economies, greatly contributing to longer term stability ...⁷⁶

⁷¹ Coomaraswamy (2015), p. 52.

⁷² [World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2013*](#), p. 103.

⁷³ Coomaraswamy (2015), p. 51; Freedom House (2014).

⁷⁴ Coomaraswamy (2015), p. 55.

⁷⁵ "[Can Women Stop War?](#)," *Harvard Magazine*, 16 January 2014.

⁷⁶ Coomaraswamy (2015), p. 42.

To promote the important roles that women can play across the stages of the conflict cycle, supports must be put in place. This includes funding, particularly given that women are not generally representing warring parties and do not benefit from their resources. They may also need assistance with childcare, transportation, accommodation and security.⁷⁷

For the 15th anniversary of UNSC 1325, the United Nations Secretary General requested a study on implementation of the resolution to date. That study concluded that there has been a “persistent failure to adequately finance the women, peace and security agenda” and that this must be addressed as “perhaps the most serious and unrelenting obstacle to implementation of women, peace and security commitments over the past 15 years.”⁷⁸ The report calls for 15% of funding for peace and security to be allocated to address women’s needs and advance gender equality.⁷⁹

In addition, the choice of mediator plays a crucial role in the design of peace processes and, thus, the “quality” of women’s participation.⁸⁰ So do the feedback systems set up as part of the process for civil society and other actors to feed into the negotiating parties.⁸¹ The development of a common, unified position of women’s groups expressed in document form has also proved to be very effective in countries such as Kenya and South Africa, where such documents influenced outcomes and final texts.⁸² As will be discussed further below, the OSCE is well placed to promote such initiatives, which could have lasting impacts and allow many more people to stay in their homes and avoid the dangerous and difficult journey to Europe.

f- Development and Humanitarian Assistance

Where there is no conflict, but poverty and other issues cause women and children to take the risky road to Europe, socioeconomic improvements are needed so that they feel there are opportunities for them at home and they do not need to go to far away countries. Economic opportunities for women are needed as part of economic development plans. Societies must be open to changing women’s roles and increased independence.

⁷⁷ Coomaraswamy (2015), p. 47 (citing Sarah Taylor, Coordinator, NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, at the UN Security Council Debate on Women, Peace and Security, 2008).

⁷⁸ Coomaraswamy (2015), p. 16.

⁷⁹ Coomaraswamy (2015), p. 16.

⁸⁰ Coomaraswamy (2015), p. 51.

⁸¹ Coomaraswamy (2015), p. 56.

⁸² Coomaraswamy (2015), p. 56.

Many OSCE participating States are donor countries and how they allocate funds has important implications for women and girls. Here too, gender mainstreaming allows donors to assess the gender implications of funding, policy and program choices. This must be done at multiple levels (national policy and legislation, at institutional level, on the ground) and also across the various stages of a program from analysis to design, budgeting, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.⁸³ For example, often food security assessments consider the household. In order to do a gender sensitive analysis, the different types of households must be considered rather than basing policy and programs on a “typical” family to ensure that different vulnerabilities are identified for different types of families. Another example is women’s safety audits. Originally developed in Toronto, Canada, these are now used around the world. The audit involves municipalities, other community institutions and women themselves. Women receive training and walk around, usually in the evening, to assess the level of safety they feel in their communities, take photographs and collect testimonies. They use these findings to provide recommendations to municipal authorities. Audits include diverse women who may have different physical, intellectual or cultural barriers.⁸⁴

Again, like with conflict resolution, providing safer, more secure communities with opportunities for socioeconomic development in countries of origin has the potential to be positive for the countries involved and address the root causes of recent mass movements of people into Europe. Using a gender sensitive approach simply increases the chances of success and ensures that both genders benefit from such developments.

g- Roles for the OSCE and OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Though the OSCE has taken an increased interest in migration and refugee issues since the influx of large numbers to Europe, it has also addressed these topics in the past, particularly in relation to migrants. The Ministerial Council called on participating States to incorporate gender aspects to migration policies in 2009.⁸⁵ There is an OSCE *Guide on Gender-Sensitive Labour Migration Policies* that can be used as a resource. The guide addresses the issue from a number of angles, offering advice for consideration in both countries of origin and destination countries, and in

⁸³ UN Women, [Guidance Note: Gender Mainstreaming in Development Programming](#), 2014, p. 21 [Guidance Note].

⁸⁴ Guidance Note, p. 24.

⁸⁵ OSCE Ministerial Council, [Decision No. 5/09: Migration Management](#), MC.DEC/5/09, 2 December 2009.

developing bilateral and multilateral labour agreements.⁸⁶ The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly had a resolution about gender and migration in the 2013 *Istanbul Declaration*.

But more can be done. The OSCE can play a role in sharing best practices and existing tools for gender mainstreaming in the refugee and migrant context, as well as creating new guidance documents where needed. The OSCE's Informal working group on the Issue of Migration and Refugee Flows and the Parliamentary Assembly's Ad Hoc Committee on Migration both provide opportunities for gender mainstreaming. During site visits and the work of these committees, gender implications should consistently be considered in the questions asked and the recommendations provided. Implementation of the recommendations outlined in *Migration Crisis in the OSCE Area: Towards Greater OSCE Engagement*, the thematic report prepared by the Bureau of the OSCE PA General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions, should be done in a gender sensitive manner as well. Participating State representatives and OSCE Parliamentary Assembly delegates can also share experiences and learn from each other, returning home with new ideas about how to approach the large numbers of migrants and refugees arriving in Europe in a way that integrates considerations of gender.

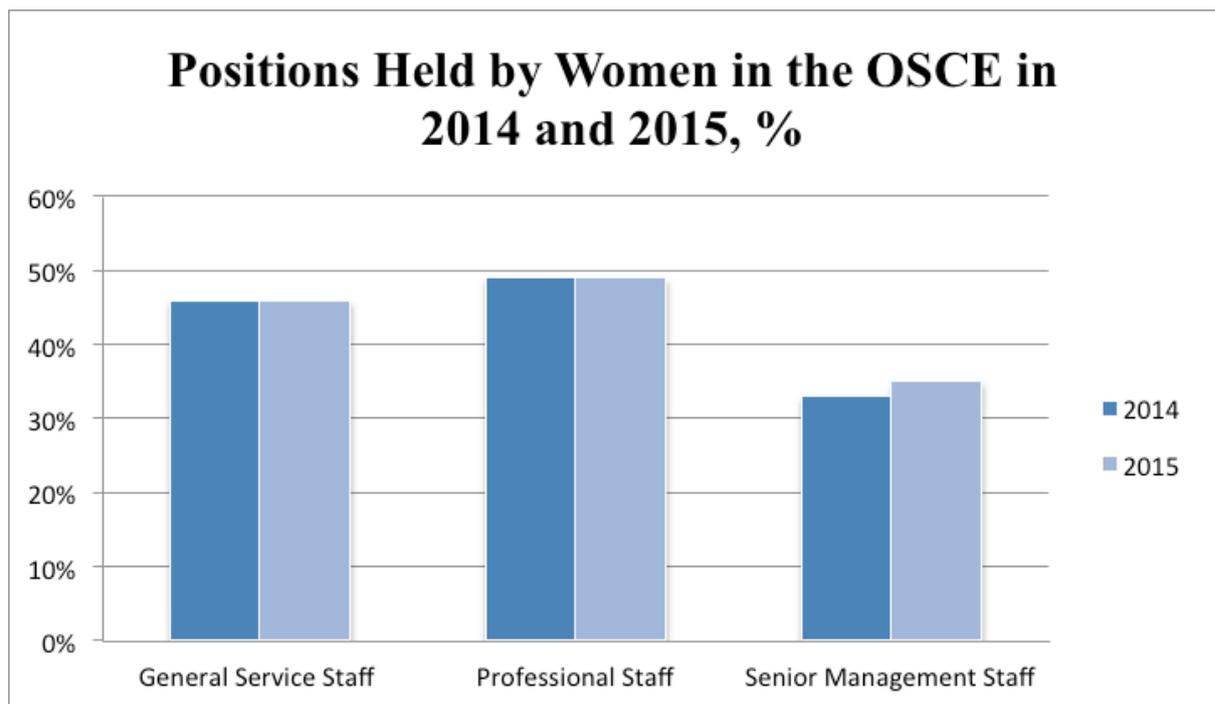
The OSCE is involved in border management and conflict resolution, both important areas in addressing the influx of migrants and refugees. The organization can take the lead in promoting gender mainstreaming to ensure that women and girls are treated appropriately at borders, and to ensure that peace processes in which the OSCE is involved are gender sensitive and include women. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights works to fight discrimination and could help with the growing negative perceptions toward refugees and migrants that are growing today in Europe. By integrating gender mainstreaming into all of this work, the OSCE, including the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, can act as a role model exemplifying the best in crisis response. This will have meaningful impacts on the ground for women and girls, who should not have to fear for their safety in Europe.

⁸⁶ OSCE, [Guide on Gender-Sensitive Labour Migration Policies](#), 2009.

III. Gender in the OSCE Governmental Structures

The analysis of gender balance throughout the OSCE governmental structures discussed in the following pages is based on the statistics provided by the Gender Section of the Office of the Secretary General of the OSCE, which show the representation of women and men in the OSCE Secretariat, Institutions and Field Operations as of 29 December 2015.

The OSCE maintains a staff of 2,229, with women representing 46% of the total workforce, the same share as in the previous four years. The percentage of women in professional positions (National Professional Officers, P1 to P4 and S, S1 and S2) has slightly increased, from 48% in 2012 and 2013 to 49% in 2014 and 2015. However, women continue to be severely under-represented in senior management positions. This category (S3+ and P5+) has returned to the 2013 level of 35% of senior management positions being held by women, after a 2% deterioration of the gender balance to 33% in the 2014 reporting period.⁸⁷



⁸⁷ See Table 1 in Annexes.

The gender balance within the three Heads of executive Institutions has remained equal, with Astrid Thors continuing to serve as the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and Dunja Mijatović holding the post of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

In the professional category within the Secretariat and Institutions, women accounted for 42% of staff in 2015, which is an increase from the reported 41% in 2012 and 2013 but a decrease from 43% in 2014. The Secretariat and Institutions have experienced an increase in the number and proportion of women holding senior management positions, with 16 out of a total of 34 positions now held by women (55%).⁸⁸ Female representation in the Secretariat and Institutions continues to be the strongest among the general service staff (66%).

Since the establishment of OSCE Field Operations in 1992, only eight women have served as Heads of Field Operations in sharp contrast to the 122 men who have held that position. Only one woman currently heads a Field Operation: Ambassador Janina Hrebickova, Head of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro (since December 2013). The number of female Deputy Heads of Mission has dropped from five in December 2013 to the current three out of ten. Only the Deputy Heads of Mission at the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the OSCE Mission in Kosovo and the OSCE Mission to Skopje are female.

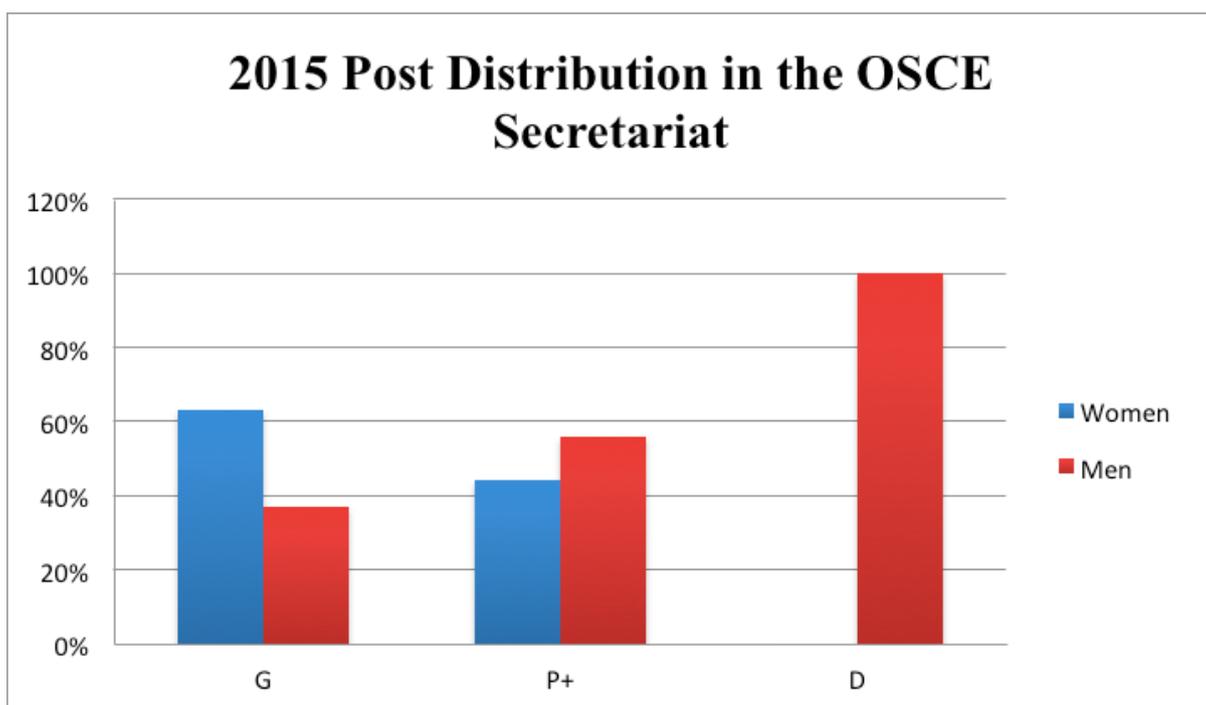
The overall percentage of women in senior management positions in Field Operation has also dropped – from 34% in December 2013 to 31% in December 2014 and 2015. However, female representation within the ranks of professional staff has increased to 52% from 51% in the last reporting period.

a. OSCE Secretariat⁸⁹

In total, women represent 55% of the OSCE Secretariat workforce, which is a two percent increase compared to last year. In G-level (locally recruited) positions, the percentage of women increased from the past two years, from 64% to 66%. In S-level (seconded) positions, it has increased over 31% to 36%. As for the P-level (internationally recruited) positions, men still hold a majority of posts with 58%. There are no women holding D-level (director) positions, which represents a deterioration compared to 2013, when one D2 position was occupied by a woman. The post of the Secretary General is currently held by a man. Overall, the proportion of women in the P category has stayed consistent at 42%.

⁸⁸ See Table 2 in Annexes.

⁸⁹ See Table 3 in Annexes.



b. Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)⁹⁰

In the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) women represent 56% of the total workforce. Compared to the previous year, this marks an increase of one percentage point. Female representation in G-level positions remained stable at 67%. It went up, however, in S-level positions, marking 56% as opposed to 40% the year before. The only employee of the D category has been a woman over the past three years, while the Head of the Institution remained male. The percentage of female employees in P+ positions has decreased from 51% to 44%.

c. Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM)⁹¹

In the Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), women represent 65% of the workforce. They hold 100% of G-level positions and 50% of S-level positions. The latter marks a decrease by 10% compared to 2013. Forty-six per cent of employees in P-level positions are female – an increase from 36% the year before. The Head of Institution is a woman. The percentage of female employees in the P+ category increased by 10% to 46%.

d. Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media⁹²

In the Office of the Representative on Freedom of Media, the General Staff of the Office consists entirely of women, while the total number of S-level positions remains divided equally, with

⁹⁰ See Table 4 in Annexes.

⁹¹ See Table 5 in Annexes.

⁹² See Table 6 in Annexes.

women and men each occupying 50% of the jobs. In P-level positions, female employees occupy 50%, an increase of 10% compared to the previous year. D-level positions remain without female representatives, as the only position is held by a man. However, the Head of Institution remains a woman. The percentage of female employees in the P+ category has returned to the 2013 level of 50%, after declining to 43% in the previous year.

e. Seconded Posts in the Secretariat, Institutions and Field Operations⁹³

On the 29 December 2015, the OSCE had 338 seconded staff from 37 OSCE participating States, of whom 43% were women – this is a seven percentage point increase from 36% as of 29 December 2014.

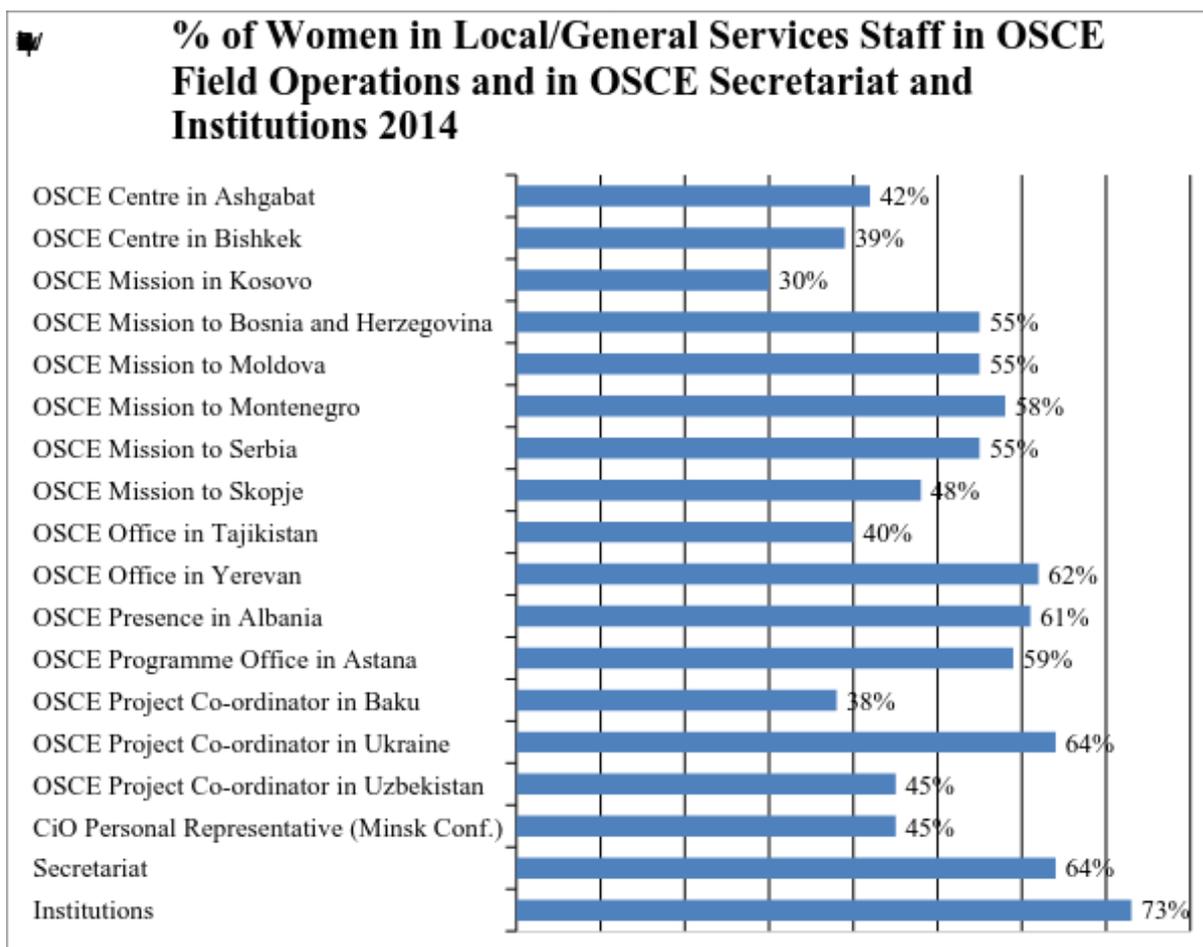
The seconding States with the highest number of female secondees were Italy (22), Germany (16) and the United Kingdom (11). Among the countries that seconded at least ten people, Italy has the highest female representation (52%), with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Canada having 40% each). A vast gender gap in favour of men can be observed in the staff seconded by the Russian Federation (no women among 12 secondees), Turkey (14% women) and Switzerland (0% women).

f. Field Operations: Gender Balance of Local Staff

Depending on the field operation and its mandate, the OSCE employs a certain number of local staff. The largest staffed OSCE field operation is in Kosovo, employing 404 local staff. Of these, only 122 are women, amounting to 30% of the workforce. With that, the OSCE Mission to Kosovo is the field operation employing the lowest proportion of women. The OSCE Field Operations with the highest proportion of women are the OSCE Programme Office in Astana (64%), the OSCE Office in Yerevan (61%), OSCE Presence in Albania (61%), and the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine (60%). Other Field Operations where women represent the majority of the workforce include the OSCE Missions to Montenegro (58%), Moldova (53%), Serbia (56%), and Bosnia and Herzegovina (54%).

With a few exceptions, such as the OSCE Mission to Kosovo, and the OSCE Centre in Bishkek, the OSCE Field Operations appear close to finding an equal gender balance, as most staff categories proportions are within 40% and 60%.

⁹³ See Table 7 in Annexes.



IV. Gender in the OSCE PA

During the Vilnius Annual Session in 2009, the Standing Committee amended the OSCE PA’s Rules of Procedure, agreeing to introduce a new sub-clause to Rule 1 stating that “each national Delegation should have both genders represented”.

In 2011, the OSCE PA adopted a resolution on “Women’s representation at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly” calling on national parliaments to improve the representation of women in the national delegations to the Assembly. The Resolution noted with concern that, as of February 2011, 17 national delegations to the OSCE PA were comprised of men only, that only ten women were Heads of delegation and that out of the 307 MPs only 73 (23.7%) were women.

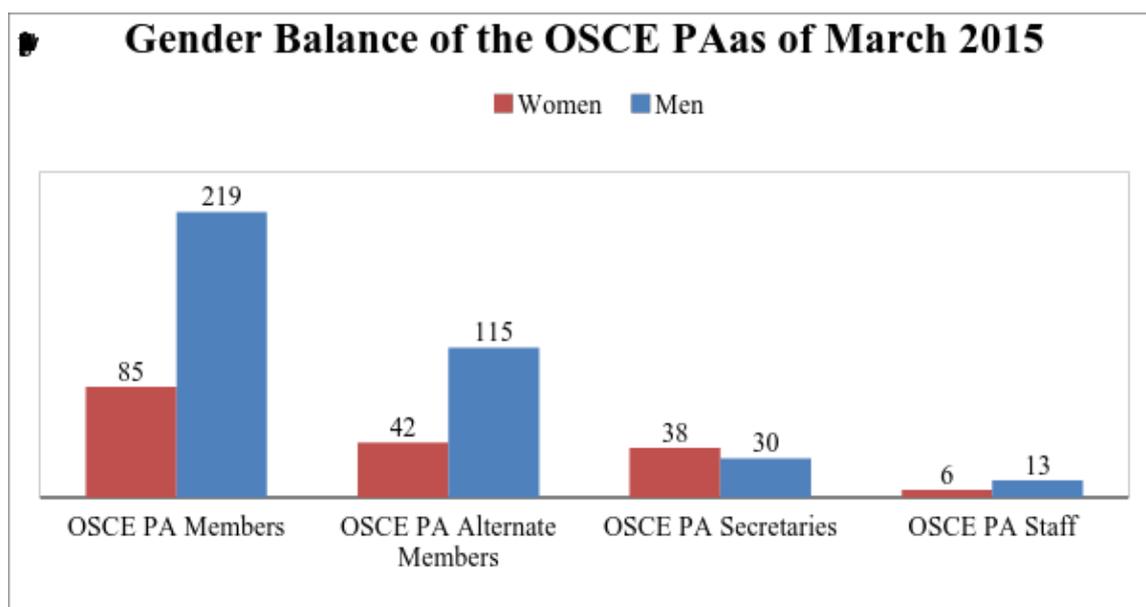
Since then, positive efforts have been made by the national delegations to improve gender balance within the Parliamentary Assembly, though not all countries are in compliance yet.

The OSCE participating States regularly consider ways to advance gender equality, and OSCE PA members stand ready to engage in the debates on this topic. One of the most recent initiatives

was the Conference on "The Role of the Parliament in Achieving Gender Equality in the Context of the Beijing +20 Process", which was hosted by the Jogorku Kenesh, Kyrgyzstan's Parliament, on 15–16 May 2015 and supported, among other international organizations, by the OSCE PA.

a. Member Directory Statistics⁹⁴

As of March 2016, there is an overall male majority within the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, with 386 men and 161 women (29%).⁹⁵



The vast majority of both regular OSCE PA Members (75%), including Heads of delegation, and OSCE PA Alternate Members (75%) are men, holding a combined number of 346 out of 460 positions. Compared to the statistics provided in last year's report, no major changes in female representation within the Assembly can be recorded. Compared to the data provided in the 2011 Resolution, female representation in the OSCE PA Member category has grown from 23.7 to 25% over the last five years.

Women outnumber men as Secretaries of national delegations to the OSCE PA. Among the OSCE PA Secretaries of Delegations, 42 out of 70 are women, representing a 60% to 40% gender distribution.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ The OSCE PA Member Directory is available on request from the International Secretariat.

⁹⁵ See Table 9 in Annexes. Provided numbers include OSCE PA Members, Alternate Members, Secretaries and Staff.

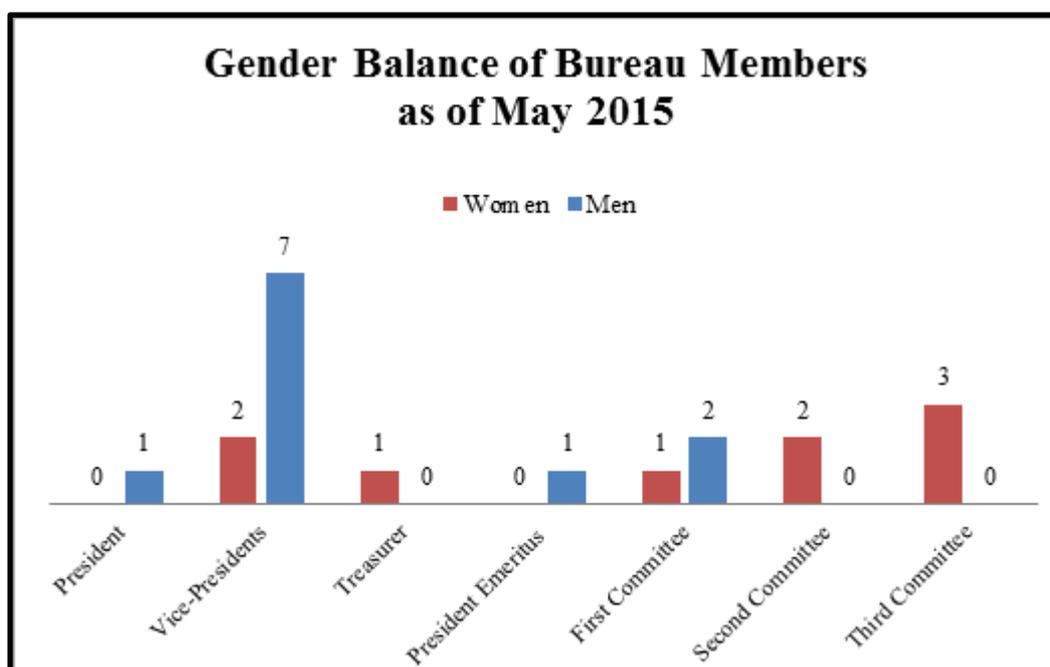
⁹⁶ See Table 9 in Annexes.

b. Initiative to Boost Women’s Participation

Efforts undertaken by the national delegations to comply with Article 1.4 of the OSCE PA Rules of Procedure have led to a significant decrease in the number of delegations with no female representation. The number dropped from 17 in 2011 to 10 in 2012 and 2013, and further to 9 in 2014, but again increased to 10 in 2015.⁹⁷ Seventeen women are currently heading national delegations, which represents a moderate improvement compared to 2014.⁹⁸

c. Gender in the Assembly Bureau

The Bureau is composed of the President, nine Vice-Presidents, the Treasurer and the President Emeritus, as well as the three Officers of each of the General Committees. As of May 2016, the Bureau comprised 20 (1 Vacant) members – 9 of whom are female – providing for a 55% to 45% ratio of men to women. These numbers exceed the goal of 30% suggested in 2011.⁹⁹



d. Female Presidents and Vice-Presidents in the OSCE PA

In May 2016 there were two female Vice-Presidents, Vilija Aleknaite Abramikiene (Lithuania), and Christine Muttonen (Austria) as compares to four female Vice-Presidents in 2015.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ No data available for Uzbekistan.

⁹⁸ No data available for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Uzbekistan.

⁹⁹ See Address by Dr. Hedy Fry, Special Representative on Gender Issues to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, 10th Winter Meeting, 24–25 February 2011, Vienna, Austria.

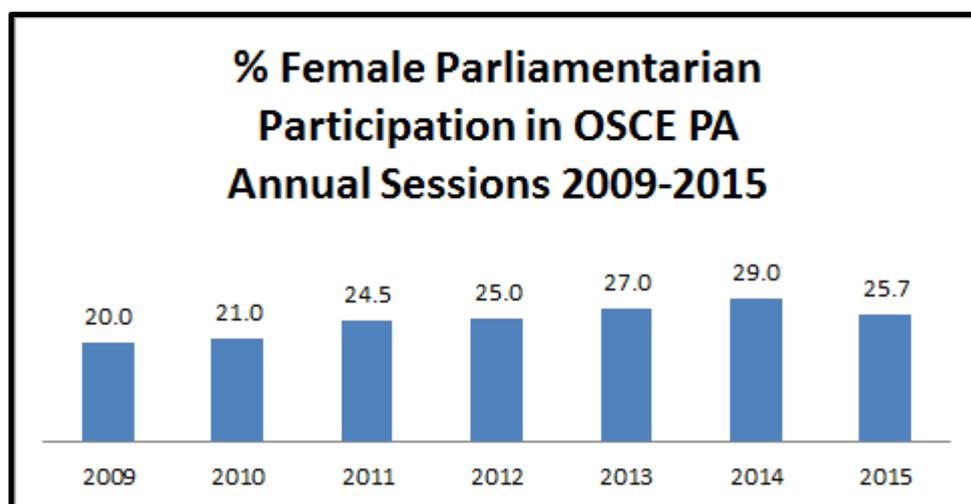
¹⁰⁰ See Table 10 in Annexes.

e. Officers of the OSCE PA General Committees

Prevalence of women in the General Committees has remained unchanged since the last reporting period. Out of 9 committee officer posts, 6 are currently held by women.

f. Participation in OSCE PA Meetings

The charts below show the percentage of female Members of Parliament who participated in the OSCE PA's Meetings from 2009 to 2015. The 2015 Annual Session observed a decrease in female participation compared to the previous reporting period (from 29 to 25.7%). Over the last six years, the numbers steadily increased from 20.0% in 2009 to 29.0% in 2014, but then dropped to 25.7% in 2015.¹⁰¹

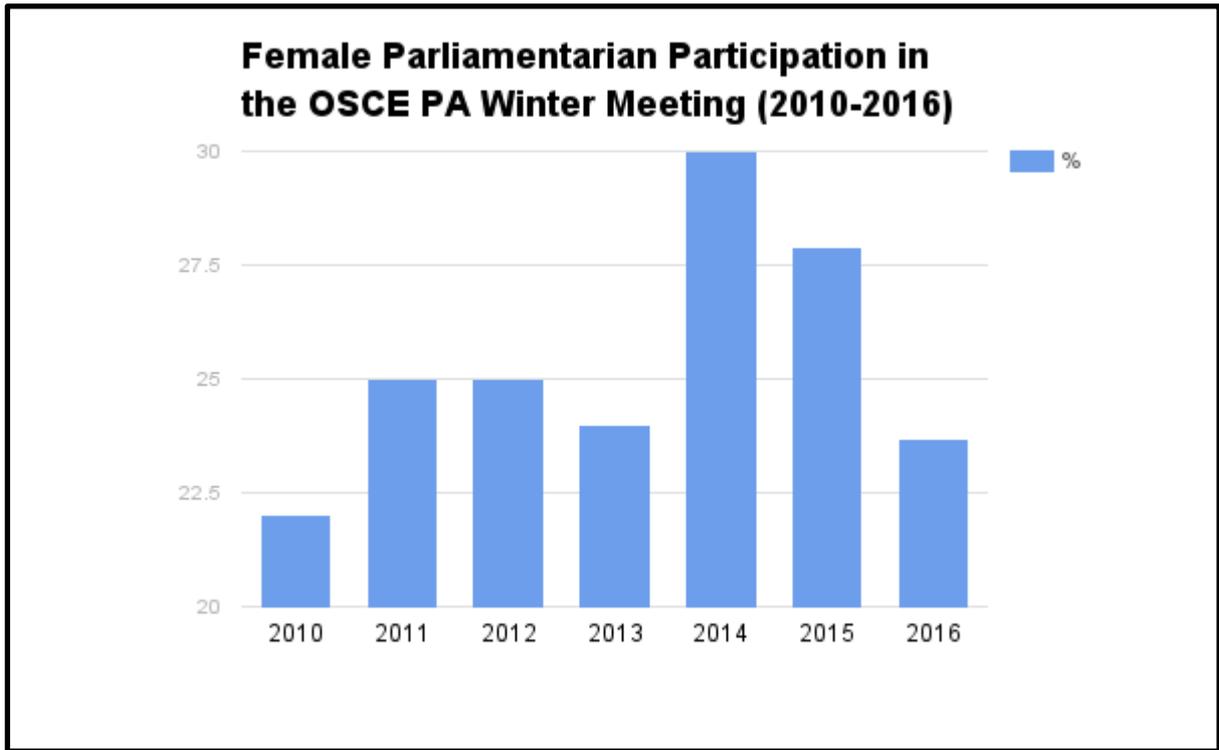


The overall percentage of female participation in the OSCE Winter Meetings has slightly decreased in the last two years,¹⁰² with the 2014 Winter Meeting seeing the highest percentage of female participants in the last ten years (30%).¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ See Table 11 in Annexes.

¹⁰² See Table 12 in Annexes.

¹⁰³ See OSCE PA Gender Balance Report; July 2013 and OSCE PA Gender Report, July 2013.



g. Participation in OSCE PA Election Monitoring 2014–2015¹⁰⁴

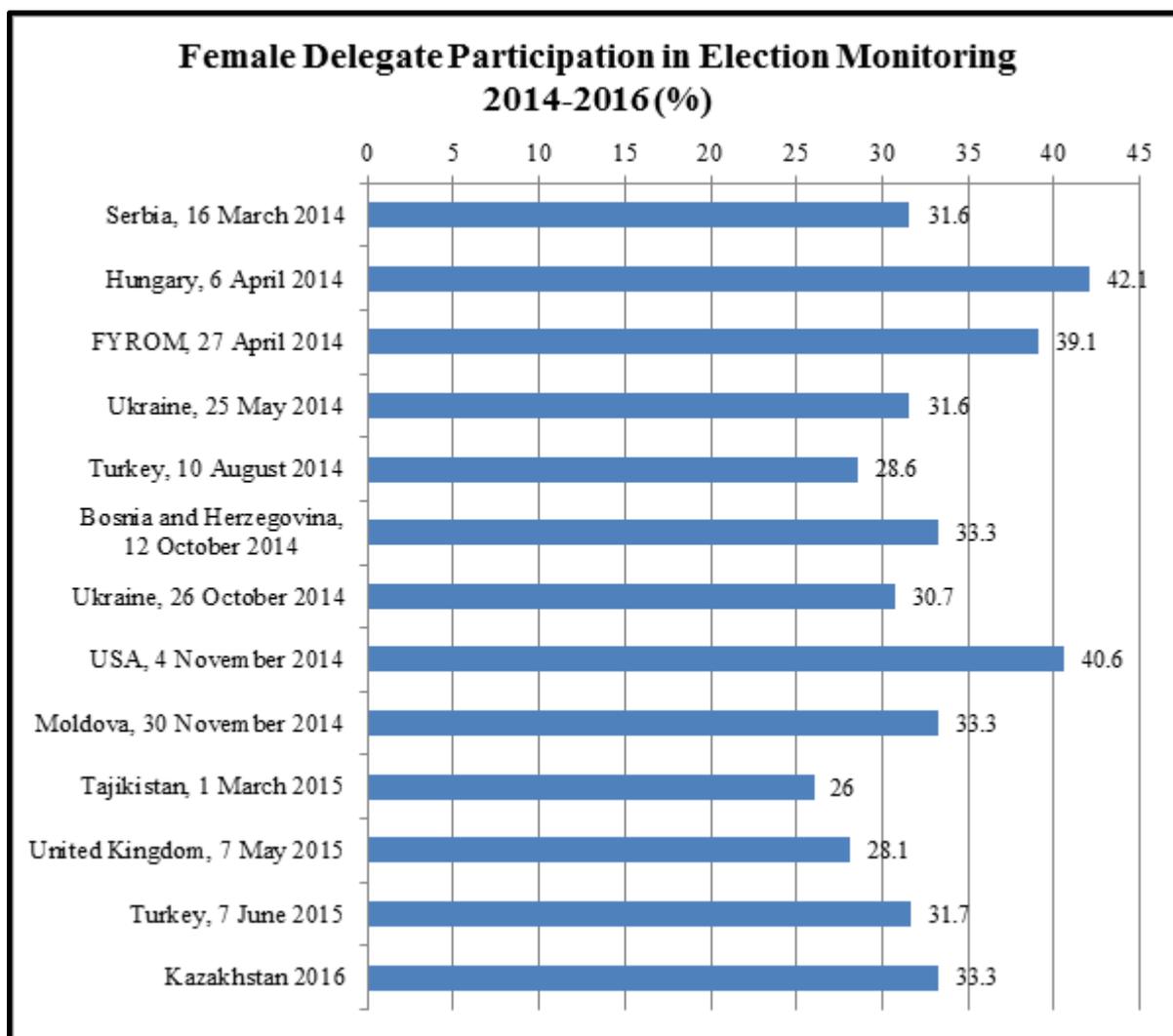
Women take active part in election observation conducted by the OSCE PA every year. The figures concerning female participation in OSCE PA election monitoring show that, over the 2014–2016 period, the highest percentage of women participated in election monitoring in Hungary (42.1%), the USA (40.6%) and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (39.1%).¹⁰⁵

The graph below shows the Assembly’s female Members’ participation in election observations missions over the 2014–2016 period.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ In the graph, “FYROM” refers to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

¹⁰⁵ The calculations exclude Staff of Delegation and Secretariat personnel.

¹⁰⁶ See Table 13 in Annexes. Calculations for female participation were done excluding Staff of delegations and the International Secretariat.



The average percentage of female participation in election observation for the 2014–2016 period is 31.83%, which represents a 0.77 percentage point decrease compared to the previous reporting period. At the same time, women hold almost parity with men in the election observation leadership category, which comprises Special Coordinators designated by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office to lead short-term observers and Heads of OSCE PA observation missions. Within the reporting period, 11 men and 10 women have held the lead positions in OSCE PA election observation missions.

h. Permanent Staff of the OSCE PA International Secretariat

Currently the permanent staff of the OSCE PA International Secretariat, including the Vienna Liaison Office, is comprised of 18 individuals, of whom six are women. The posts of the OSCE PA Secretary General and two Deputies are held by men.

i. The International Research Fellowship Programme

The International Secretariat of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly conducts a Research Fellowship Programme, in which it engages graduate students for a period of six months each to

give them an opportunity to gain practical experience in the field of international affairs. There are currently four research fellows working at the International Secretariat in Copenhagen, and three in the Vienna Liaison Office— two men and five women.

j. Female Representation in National Parliaments of OSCE Participating States

According to the data provided by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, overall female representation in national parliaments of OSCE countries has increased since the last reporting period.

Within the OSCE participating States, those with the least female representation within national parliaments are Hungary, with only 10.1% of parliamentarians within its unicameral parliament being women, as well as Armenia, Georgia, Ukraine and Cyprus, all of which have between 10.7 and 12.5% women in their parliaments.¹⁰⁷

Collectively, female representation among national Parliaments in European countries within the OSCE region is 25.5%, combining Upper House or Senate and Single or Lower House members of parliament. The number drops to 24.4% if the Nordic countries are excluded.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ See Table 14 in Annexes.

¹⁰⁸ See Table 15 in Annexes.

V. Annexes

Table 1

Post Distribution of Staff in the OSCE 2014				
Category	Men	Women	Total	% Women
General Service Staff	735	624	1,359	46%
Professional Staff	419	395	814	49%
Senior Management	91	44	135	33%
Total	1,245	1,063	2,308	46%
Post Distribution of Staff in the OSCE 2015				
Category	Men	Women	Total	% Women
General Service Staff	709	598	1307	46%
Professional Staff	402	385	787	49%
Senior Management	88	47	135	35%
Total	1199	1030	2229	46%

Note: Figures as of 29 December 2014 and 29 December 2015 respectively.

Table 2

Post Distribution of the OSCE Staff in OSCE Secretariat, Institutions and Field Operations 2015				
Secretariat and Institutions Staff				
Category	Men	Women	Total	% Women
General Service Staff	88	172	260	66%
Professional Staff	131	96	227	42%
Senior Management	18	16	34	55%
Total	237	284	521	55%
Field Operations Staff				
Category	Men	Women	Total	% Women
General Service Staff	621	426	1,047	41%
Professional Staff	271	289	560	52%
Senior Management	70	31	101	31%
Total	962	746	1,708	44%

Note: Figures as of 29 December 2015.

Table 3

Post Distribution in the OSCE Secretariat 2014											
Category	G1-G7	G in %	S	S in %	P1-P5	D1	D2	SG	P+ in%	Total	Total in %
Women	121	64%	15	36%	50	0	0	0	42%	186	53%
Men	69	36%	27	64%	61	2	5	1	58%	165	47%
Total	190	100%	42	100%	111	2	5	1	100%	351	100%
Post Distribution in the OSCE Secretariat 2015											
Category	G1-G7	G in %	S	S in %	P1-P5	D1	D2	SG	P+ in%	Total	Total in %
Women	118	63%	14	38%	52	0	0	0	43%	184	54%
Men	68	37%	23	62%	62	1	4	1	57%	159	46%
Total	186	100%	37	100%	114	0	4	1	100%	343	100%

Note: Figures as of 29 December 2014 and 29 December 2015 respectively.

Table 4

Post Distribution in the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights 2014											
Category	G1-G7	G in %	S	S in %	P1-P5	D1	D2	Head of Inst.	P+ in%	Total	Total in %
Women	41	67%	4	40%	29	1	0	0	51%	75	58%
Men	20	33%	6	60%	28	0	0	1	49%	55	42%
Total	61	100%	10	100%	57	1	0	1	100%	130	100%
Post Distribution on the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights 2015											
Category	G1-G7	G in %	S	S in %	P1-P5	D1	D2	Head of Inst.	P+ in%	Total	Total in %
Women	41	67%	5	56%	26	1	0	0	44%	73	56%
Men	20	33%	4	44%	33	0	0	1	56%	58	44%
Total	61	100%	9	100%	59	1	0	1	100%	131	100%

Note: Figures as of 29 December 2014 and 29 December 2015 respectively.

Table 5

Post Distribution in the Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities 2014											
Category	G1-G7	G in %	S	S in %	P1-P5	D1	D2	Head of Inst.	P+ in%	Total	Total in %
Women	10	100%	2	50%	4	0	0	1	36%	17	61%
Men	0	0%	2	50%	8	1	0	0	64%	11	39%
Total	10	100%	4	100%	12	1	0	1	100%	28	100%
Post Distribution in the Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities 2015											
Category	G1-G7	G in %	S	S in %	P1-P5	D1	D2	Head of Inst.	P+ in%	Total	Total in %
Women	9	100%	2	50%	5	0	0	1	46%	17	65%
Men	0	0%	2	50%	6	1	0	0	54%	9	35%
Total	9	100%	4	100%	11	1	0	1	100%	26	100%

Note: Figures as of 29 December 2014 and 29 December 2015 respectively.

Table 6

Post Distribution in the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media 2014											
Category	G1-G7	G in %	S	S in %	P1-P5	D1	D2	Head of Inst.	P+ in%	Total	Total in %
Women	3	100%	2	33%	2	0	0	1	43%	8	50%
Men	0	0%	4	67%	3	1	0	0	57%	8	50%
Total	3	100%	6	100%	5	1	0	1	100%	16	100%
Post Distribution in the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media 2015											
Category	G1-G7	G in %	S	S in %	P1-P5	D1	D2	Head of Inst.	P+ in%	Total	Total in %
Women	3	100%	3	50%	2	0	0	1	50%	9	50%
Men	0	0%	3	50%	2	1	0	0	50%	6	50%
Total	3	100%	6	100%	4	1	0	1	100%	15	100%

Note: Figures as of 29 December 2014 and 29 December 2015 respectively.

Table 7

Seconded Staff in the OSCE Secretariat, Institutions and Field Operations by Seconding Country and Gender 2015				
Seconding Authority	% Wome n	Men	Wome n	Total Seconded Staff
1. Croatia	100%	0	2	2
2. Latvia	100%	0	1	1
3. Slovenia	100%	0	1	1
4. Serbia	100%	0	1	1
5. Spain	75%	1	3	4
6. Finland	56%	4	5	9
7. Italy	52%	20	22	42
8. Greece	50%	3	3	6
9. Norway	50%	2	2	4
10. Romania	50%	1	1	2
11. Kyrgyzstan	50%	1	1	2
12. Slovakia	50%	2	2	4
13. Bulgaria	50%	2	2	4
14. Montenegro	50%	1	1	2
15. Kazakhstan	50%	1	1	2
16. Armenia	50%	1	1	2
17. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	45%	11	9	20
18. Bosnia and Herzegovina	45%	6	5	11
19. Austria	44%	5	4	9
20. Republic of Moldova	43%	4	3	7
21. Canada	40%	6	4	10
22. Germany	42%	22	16	38
23. Czech Republic	38%	5	3	8
24. United Kingdom	37%	19	11	30
25. Ukraine	33%	2	1	3
26. Georgia	33%	2	1	3
27. Poland	33%	6	3	9
28. Hungary	30%	7	3	10
29. France	29%	5	2	7
30. Sweden	27%	8	3	11
31. United States of America	26%	25	9	34
32. Ireland	18%	9	2	11
33. Turkey	14%	6	1	7
34. Portugal	0%	1	0	1
35. Switzerland	0%	8	0	8
36. Netherlands	0%	1	0	1
37. Russian Federation	0%	12	0	12
Grand Total	43%	209	129	338

Note: Figures as of 31 March 2015.

Table 8

Gender Balance of Local Staff in OSCE field operations and General Services Staff in the OSCE Secretariat and Institutions 2015					
Field Operation	Women	In %	Men	In %	Total
OSCE Centre in Ashgabat	8	42%	11	58%	19
OSCE Centre in Bishkek	38	41%	55	59%	93
OSCE Mission in Kosovo	122	30%	282	70%	404
OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina	147	54%	127	46%	274
OSCE Mission to Moldova	20	53%	18	47%	38
OSCE Mission to Montenegro	18	58%	13	42%	31
OSCE Mission to Serbia	59	56%	47	44%	106
OSCE Mission to Skopje	50	49%	52	51%	102
OSCE Office in Tajikistan	50	39%	77	61%	127
OSCE Office in Yerevan	25	61%	16	39%	41
OSCE Presence in Albania	36	61%	23	39%	59
OSCE Programme Office in Astana	14	64%	8	36%	22
OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Baku	Closed				
OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine	26	60%	17	40%	43
OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan	8	38%	13	62%	21
Personal Representative of the CiO on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference	5	45%	6	55%	11
Secretariat	119	64%	68	36%	187
Institutions	53	73%	20	27%	73
Grand Total	798	48%	853	52%	1, 651

Note: Figures as of 29 December 2015.

Table 9

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly as of February 2015					
Category	Women	In %	Men	In %	Total
OSCE PA Members	75	25%	229	75%	304
OSCE PA Alternate Members	39	25%	117	75%	156
OSCE PA Secretaries	42	60%	28	40%	70
OSCE PA Staff	5	29%	12	71%	17
Grand Total	161	29%	386	71%	547

Note: Representatives of the Holy See not included in the figures. Data for Uzbekistan not available.

Table 10

Gender Balance of Bureau Members as of May 2015			
Category	Women	Men	Total
President	0	1	1
Vice-Presidents	2	7	9
Treasurer	1	0	1
First Committee	1	2	3
Second Committee	2	0	2
Third Committee	3	0	3
Grand Total	9	10	19

Table 11

Parliamentarian Participation in the OSCE PA Annual Sessions (2009-2015)							
Category	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Women	43	50	55	61	67	74	63
Men	170	186	169	185	178	180	182
% Women	20	21	24.5	25	27	29	25.7
Grand Total	213	236	224	246	245	254	245

Note: Calculations include Members and Alternate members of delegations and do not include Staff of Delegations, the OSCE PA and the OSCE Secretariats, Observers, Guests, International Parliamentary Organizations and Partners for Co-operation.

Table 12

Parliamentarian Participation in the OSCE PA Winter Meeting (2010-2016)							
Category	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Women	49	58	60	50	64	61	58
Men	174	172	180	159	151	157	186
% Women	22	25	25	24	30	27.9	23.7
Grand Total	223	230	240	209	215	218	244

Note: Calculations include Members and Alternate members of delegations and do not include Staff of Delegations, the OSCE PA and the OSCE Secretariats, Observers, Guests, International Parliamentary Organizations and Partners for Co-operation.

Table 13

OSCE PA Election Monitoring (2014-2016)			
<i>Elections observed</i>	<i>MPs</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>% of women</i>
<i>Serbia, 16 March 2014</i>	38	12	31.6%
<i>Hungary, 6 April 2014</i>	38	16	42.1%
<i>The FYR of Macedonia, 27 April 2014</i>	23	9	39.1%
<i>Ukraine, 25 May 2014</i>	98	31	31.6%
<i>Turkey, 10 August 2014</i>	21	6	28.6%
<i>Bosnia and Herzegovina, 12 October 2014</i>	27	9	33.3%
<i>Ukraine, 26 October 2014</i>	75	23	30.7%
<i>USA, 4 November 2014</i>	32	13	40.6%
<i>Moldova, 30 November 2014</i>	48	16	33.3%
<i>Tajikistan, 1 March 2015</i>	46	12	26%
<i>United Kingdom, 7 May 2015</i>	32	9	28.1%
<i>Turkey, 7 June 2015</i>	41	13	31.7%
<i>Kazakhstan, 2016</i>	46	14	30.4%

Note: Figures as of 03 June 2016

Table 14

Women in Parliament in OSCE countries										
Globa Rank	Country	Lower or single House			Upper House or Senate			Women OSCE PA Delegate Members		
		Seats	Women	%	Seats	Women	%	Members	Women	%
5	Sweden	349	152	43.6%	---	---	---	16	6	37.5%
10	Finland	200	83	41.5%	---	---	---	12	4	33.3%

11	Iceland	63	26	41.3%	---	---	---	6	3	50.0%
14	Spain	350	140	40.0%	265	104	39.2%	10	1	10.0%
"	Norway	169	67	39.6%	---	---	---	12	5	41.6%
17	Andorra	28	11	39.3%	---	---	---	4	1	25.0%
"	Belgium	150	59	39.3%	60	30	50.0%	13	5	38.4%
21	Denmark	179	67	37.4%	---	---	---	12	2	16.6%
22	Netherlands	150	56	37.3%	75	26	34.7%	8	1	12.5%
24	Slovenia	90	33	36.7%	40	3	7.5%	6	2	33.3%
26	Germany	631	230	36.5%	69	28	40.6%	26	9	34.6%
30	Portugal	230	80	34.8%	---	---	---	7	2	28.5%
31	Serbia	250	85	34.0%	---	---	---	7	4	57.1%
"	The F.Y.R. of Macedonia	123	41	33.3%	---	---	---	6	2	33.3%
36	Switzerland	200	64	32.0%	46	7	15.2%	8	1	12.5%
42	Italy	630	195	31.0%	321	91	28.3%	13	3	23.0%
44	Austria	183	56	30.6%	61	18	29.5%	5	3	60.0%
48	United Kingdom	650	191	29.4%	782	192	24.6%	23	4	17.3%
49	Luxembourg	60	17	28.3%	---	---	---	10	1	10.0%
52	Poland	460	126	27.4%	100	13	13.0%	16	5	31.2%
53	Belarus	110	30	27.3%	58	19	32.8%	12	6	50.0%
55	Kazakhstan	107	29	27.1%	47	3	6.4%	6	0	0%
60	France	577	151	26.2%	348	87	25.0%	13	1	7.6%
61	Canada	338	88	26.0%	82	30	36.6%	5	1	20.0%
"	Turkmenistan	124	32	25.8%	---	---	---	5	1	20.0%
70	Estonia	101	24	23.8%	---	---	---	6	1	16.6%
73	Lithuania	141	33	23.4%	---	---	---	5	1	20.0%

76	Ireland	158	35	22.2%	60	18	30.0%	8	2	25.0%
80	Republic of Moldova	101	22	21.8%	---	---	---	6	0	0%
81	Bosnia and Herzegovina	42	9	21.4%	15	2	13.3%	3	1	33.3%
"	Monaco	24	5	20.8%	---	---	---	4	2	50.0%
84	Albania	140	29	20.7%	---	---	---	2	1	50.0%
87	Bulgaria	240	49	20.4%	---	---	---	10	2	20.0%
"	Czech Republic	200	40	20.0%	81	15	18.5%	6	2	33.3%
"	Liechtenstein	25	5	20.0%	---	---	---	4	3	75.0%
"	Slovakia	150	30	20.0%	---	---	---	8	2	25.0%
95	Greece	300	59	19.7%	---	---	---	9	3	33.3%
97	United States of America	434	84	19.4%	100	20	20.0%	11	1	9.0%
98	Kyrgyzstan	120	23	19.2%	---	---	---	6	1	16.6%
99	Tajikistan	63	12	19.0%	32	2	6.3%	10	2	20.0%
102	Latvia	100	18	18.0%	---	---	---	3	0	0%
105	Montenegro	81	14	17.3%	---	---	---	5	0	0%
108	Azerbaijan	124	21	16.9%	---	---	---	6	2	33.3%
"	San Marino	60	10	16.7%	---	---	---	3	1	33.3%
"	Uzbekistan	150	24	16.0%	100	17	17.0%	3	N/A	N/A
120	Croatia	151	23	15.2%	---	---	---	6	1	16.6%
"	Turkey	550	82	14.9%	---	---	---	8	2	25.0%
126	Mongolia	76	11	14.5%	---	---	---	6	2	33.3%
"	Romania	401	55	13.7%	168	13	7.7%	12	2	16.6%
133	Russian Federation	450	61	13.6%	170	29	17.1%	15	2	13.3%
137	Malta	70	9	12.9%	---	---	---	6	0	0%

140	Cyprus	56	7	12.5%	---	---	---	3	0	0%
143	Ukraine	422	51	12.1%	---	---	---	16	6	37.5%
147	Georgia	150	17	11.3%	---	---	---	6	0	0%
151	Armenia	131	14	10.7%	---	---	---	5	0	0%
153	Hungary	198	20	10.1%	---	---	---	6	1	16.6%

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union, [Women in national parliaments](#) (situation as of 1 April 2016).

Table 15

Women in Parliament in OSCE Countries, Regional Average			
Category	Single House or Lower House	Upper House or Senate	Both Houses combined
Europe - OSCE member countries including Nordic countries	25.7%	24.7%	25.5%
Europe - OSCE member countries excluding Nordic countries	24.3%	24.7%	24.4%

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union, [Women in National Parliaments: Regional Averages](#) (situation as of 1 April 2016).