



Participants at the opening of the 2021 OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum in Prague, 9 September 2021. (Lubomir Kotek)

PRESS RELEASE

Economic empowerment of women is vital for sustainable and democratic societies, say participants at 2021 OSCE Forum in Prague

PRAGUE, 9 September 2021 - Promoting women's economic empowerment and their access to education, social protection and the labour market, particularly in the post pandemic period, is critical to achieving stability and sustainable development across the OSCE area, said participants today at the opening of the 2021 OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum in Prague.

"By acting now and working together towards a more sustainable, inclusive and gender-equal development, we have a chance to curb economic and environmental security risks and build more sustainable, peaceful, and democratic societies in the OSCE region," said OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde.

The Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs Jakub Kulhánek assured that "promoting women's economic empowerment is one of the priorities of the Czech Republic." "We constantly strive to increase women's participation in public life," he said stressing that any decision-making process "must involve meaningful participation of women at all levels."

Participants agreed that now is the time to regroup and re-energize to create a more equal, just and sustainable OSCE region, where women and men can equally contribute to the common good and security.

OSCE Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid said that gender inequality is persistent in all of our societies. "Women and girls have unrecognized potential because the gender pay gap, career opportunities gap and digital divide still exist."

She referred to the forthcoming Stockholm Ministerial Council as an opportunity for OSCE participating States to lead by example. "With our post-pandemic recovery plans, governments adopting substantial commitments on women's economic empowerment would signal our determination to leave no one behind," said Schmid.

Strengthening gender equality is one of Sweden's 2021 OSCE Chairpersonship key priorities.

For PDF attachments or links to sources of further information, please visit: <https://www.osce.org/chairmanship/497629>

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