



International Women's Day 2025. #IWD2025 #AccelerateAction (OSCE)

PRESS RELEASE

OSCE leaders mark International Women's Day, call for action to turn equality and empowerment for all women and girls from ideals to realities

HELSINKI/VIENNA/WARSAW, 8 March 2025 – Increased efforts and resources to ensure gender equality and equal opportunities for women and girls everywhere regardless of their background or circumstances are needed, say OSCE leaders on the occasion of International Women's Day.

Under the 2025 theme “For ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment,” OSCE leaders from the Chairpersonship, the Secretariat and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) joined the global community in calling for equal access to fundamental rights, education and healthcare, economic opportunities and the ability to live free from violence and discrimination for all women and girls, regardless of their background, location, or status.

“Every girl should grow up thinking she can achieve anything and that nothing, especially not her gender, can hold her back. Equal rights and opportunities are the prerequisites for true freedom. This is at the very core of gender equality, which I fight for today and every day,” said OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Finnish Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen.

Every day, women continue to face significant barriers, discrimination and violence. This is particularly evident in conflict situations, where women often bear the heaviest burdens.

“Throughout conflicts all over the world, women are disproportionately affected by violence, displacement, and instability, and yet, their voices remain marginalized in the very processes aimed at resolving crises. Even in the face of immense challenges, women continue to contribute to building peace and security. I would like to take this opportunity and applaud the brave women peacebuilders and humanitarian workers, around the world. They press forth in the face of danger in the hope of creating a more peaceful society for all,” said Secretary General Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu in his address to the OSCE Permanent Council session on 6 March, which was dedicated by the Chairpersonship to mark International Women’s Day.

The OSCE has long been at the forefront of promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, with an emphasis on preventing violence against women, enhancing women’s participation in decision-making, and access to justice and economic opportunities. Through the OSCE’s comprehensive approach to security, including its work in conflict-affected areas, the Organization strives to ensure that women have equal influence in peacebuilding processes, policymaking, and society at large.

“The inclusion of women in the decision-making process is crucial for genuine debate and policies that work for us all,” said ODIHR Director Maria Telalian. “But we will only increase the participation of women in public life if we ensure they are safe – and they feel safe – to do so. That is and will remain our goal.”

ODIHR works to increase gender equality across the OSCE region, for example by promoting women’s [participation and leadership](#) in the democratic process. At the same time, with increasing levels of violence against women in politics discouraging both active and aspiring women politicians from engaging in politics altogether, and the overall stagnation in the growth of women’s representation in politics, ODIHR works directly with states and with civil society to find [sustainable solutions](#), strengthening democratic governance and political pluralism across the region.

The OSCE calls on all stakeholders to strengthen their efforts to eliminate the barriers preventing women and girls from fully realizing their human rights. Together, we must work towards a future where rights, equality, and empowerment are a reality for all women and girls.

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