

## **EU joint reply to the UNODA request related to UNGA resolution 71/56, entitled "Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control"**

### **Executive Summary**

The promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women are important priorities for the European Union. The EU is fully committed to mainstreaming gender into all disarmament work, including in regard to nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. This is reflected in the fact that Gender and Disarmament is one of the 11 high level priorities for the EU's three Disarmament and Non-Proliferation working groups.

The EU believes that the active participation and leadership of women in peace and security decision making and action is crucial in achieving peace, security and sustainable development. The role of women in these areas, including disarmament and non-proliferation should be enhanced by ensuring systematic gender analysis and integration of gender perspective.

The EU and its Member States have a long-standing commitment to the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325, and its subsequent resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) in its internal and external action. In 2016 unanimous adoption of Resolution 2242 sent a strong message of continuous engagement of the international community on advancing the WPS agenda in an effort to address the emerging global challenges. The EU actively promotes the strengthened and effective implementation of the WPS agenda and expansion of its scope.

The EU continues on its efforts to integrate gender and UNSCR 1325 on WPS into its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). All planning documents for CSDP missions and operations make reference to the requirements to integrate gender perspective and to include specific activities focused on gender equality, women's empowerment and women, peace and security.

### **Detailed response**

#### **Gender perspective in the EU policies**

Promoting the Women, Peace and Security agenda is essential to realising our shared global ambitions of security, conflict prevention, sustaining peace and sustainable development.

The full and effective implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda remains a priority for the EU, and it runs across all our EU external action. Eighteen EU Member States have already adopted a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, further complemented by an implementation framework at EU-level. The EU implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda is reinforced by a substantial financial investment into

gender equality and women's empowerment. In line with the EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020, we are devoting 6.5 billion Euros each year to external projects which address gender equality as either a significant or a principal objective.

The EU remains committed to substantially increase women's participation in all aspects of peace and security, including women's political participation and leadership. The meaningful inclusion of women in their societies, both horizontally and vertically, is of key importance.

The EU and its Member States are steadily increasing the number of women and the number of women leaders in the peace and security domains. Some of the EU Member States have enhanced balance in their diplomatic services, and come very close to reaching parity among their diplomatic Heads of Mission. At the EU level, three of our ten civilian missions are led by a female Head of Mission. We will remain steadfast in our commitment to achieve sustainable gender balance in our own institutions and engagements in peace and security. We note that research has shown that women's participation in disarmament fora is lower than in other areas of government and diplomacy and will continue to strive for equal participation in discussions and decisions that have a profound impact on women's lives.

In our external action, we have continued to work for women's full and active participation in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding.

The EU is continuously working to improve its procedures and practices in CSDP missions and operations. All strategic planning documents of missions and operations include a commitment to integrating human rights and gender perspective. All current CSDP missions and operations, as well as CSDP Headquarters, have human rights and/or gender advisers and/or focal points. Moreover, a Gender Focal Point System is being adopted in the majority of civilian CSDP missions, which has been shown being an enabling factor for gender mainstreaming in all mission activities. Emphasising the EU's commitment to a 'zero tolerance policy' regarding misconduct and abuse, the upgraded Generic Standards of Behaviour, applicable to both civilian military missions and operations, were adopted in January 2018.

### **Gender and nuclear weapons**

Gender equality and the empowerment of women is an important horizontal priority for the EU, and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda continues to feature prominently in EU external action. Women must be fully involved, through active and equal participation, including in leadership in non-proliferation and disarmament efforts.

Women continue to be strongly under-represented in multilateral for a concerned with nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The EU is committed to mainstreaming the issue of gender in discussions around nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

### **Gender and mine action**

Women, girls, boys and men may be affected in both similar and different ways by mines and other explosive remnants of war. On the basis of their different roles and responsibilities, it is important to take into consideration their different needs and priorities and ensure that the similarities and differences are analysed and assessed in order to influence planning and activities. The aim is that all, independent of their sex, should equally benefit from mine action activities.

The EU funds projects on humanitarian demining activities and SALW in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe. Between 2012 and 2016, the EU contributed more than EUR 298 million to mine action.

### **Gender and SALW/ATT**

For the EU it remains essential to fully integrate the gender perspective into all efforts of preventing and combating the risk of the misuse, diversion and illicit circulation of SALW so that the gendered aspects of armed violence are adequately addressed. They also require the full and active participation of all, men as well as women.

The EU also welcomes the inclusion in the Arms Trade Treaty of the concept of serious acts of Gender Based Violence as a factor to take into account when making export assessments.

Within the EU Security Sector Reform framework the Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council, (JOIN(2016) 31 final), provides elements for an EU-wide comprehensive strategic framework to support security sector reform (SSR) that applies to all EU actors and instruments. The document also links Small arms and lights weapons (SALW) control intrinsically to SSR efforts.

### **EU-UN cooperation on gender issues**

The EU's approach is built upon the foundations of peace and security, sustainable development, human rights, justice and gender equality, which are also the interrelated cornerstones of the whole United Nations edifice.

The joint EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls, launched in September 2017 with an initial investment of 500 million euros by the EU, recognizes that women and girls are disproportionately subjected to violence, including femicide, sexual violence, intimate partner violence, trafficking, and harmful practices. It is one of the largest-scale demonstrations of the political will by the EU and the UN to say enough is enough – we must act now to address gender-based violence in all its forms.

The EU will continue to support the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and all work aimed at an integrated approach to prevent and punish acts of sexual violence, as well as to bring justice, services and reparation to its victims. We recognise that the UN peacekeeping operations play a vital role in the protection of women, girls, men and boys as part of their mandated task of protecting

civilians. We also stress the importance of training peacekeeping personnel on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse.

In addition, we stress the importance of actions designed and implemented in partnership with civil society. We are troubled about the continuously shrinking space for civil society in many parts of the world, including activists being raped for denouncing sexual violence.

A key area of UN reform will be the restructuring of the Peace and Security pillar. Echoing the words of the UN Secretary-General, the full participation of women and the full implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda should be a guiding principle for how the UN carries out its peace and security mandates. Achieving gender equality and ensuring the recruitment and retention of women in the UN, in particular at senior levels and in UN operations, will be critical in the same ways it is critical to the EU. This requires progressing sustainable budgetary and human resources dedicated to Women, Peace and Security.

The UN-EU Steering Committee on Crisis Management has agreed that WPS should be a priority, following-up on the 2015-2018 priorities to strengthen the UN-EU strategic partnership on peacekeeping and crisis management, and the EU and the UN are currently working together to break that down into more concrete priorities. Moreover, regarding the EU-NATO partnership the new set of proposals (FAC and NAC) from December 2017 includes strong references to WPS considerations in the areas of situational awareness, early warning and capacity-building. Point of Contact/POCs in EEAS were appointed and the implementation is ongoing. Furthermore, ongoing work with the establishment of the Regional Acceleration on Resolution 1325/RAR 1325 (where EU, UN, NATO, OSCE and AU at both technical/experts levels exchange best practices and high level engagement) a two day meeting took place in Brussels in October 2017 and draft terms of references are currently being established and the next meeting in this format is currently being discussed to take place in May. One aim for RAR 1325 as well as for the EU is to establish a situation where the recruitment and appointment of Gender Advisors is the normal practice both at Headquarters and in operations, their work is sufficiently resourced and they are properly situated in the organizations.