



**EU and Member States` Statement on the
Full, Equal and Meaningful Participation of Women in Peacebuilding**

(Electronic Consultation on the 2020 Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture)

1. The **UN Peacebuilding Commission`s Gender Strategy** reaffirms the “important role of women in peacebuilding, noting the substantial link between women’s full and meaningful involvement in efforts to prevent, resolve and rebuild from conflict and those efforts’ effectiveness and long term sustainability”. The EU as promoter of effective multilateralism, places gender equality, women's empowerment and the implementation of the WPS agenda at the centre of our partnerships with multilateral and regional partners. Our commitment to **promote regional and global leadership** in the implementation of the WPS Agenda cannot be achieved without close cooperation with multilateral and regional organisations, civil society, academia, the IFIs and the private sector.
2. Since the Secretary-General's last report on WPS, the European Union adopted a new **Strategic Approach**, as well as an **Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security** reaffirming our determination to pursue the implementation of the WPS agenda in a **holistic fashion**. The **EU Strategic Approach to Women Peace and Security** considers the WPS Agenda an essential tool in ensuring that the rights, agency and protection of women and girls are observed and upheld at all times, confirming that a meaningful and equitable role in decision-making is secured for women of all ages during all stages of conflict prevention, peace-making, peacebuilding and post-conflict rehabilitation.
3. Our Strategic Approach supports **actions by Governments and civil society alike** to engage, empower, protect and support women and girls through concrete commitments, with particular emphasis on our aim to achieve sustainable and lasting peace and security through the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. In the European Union, we endeavour to lead by example and our Action Plan on WPS has as its key objectives to **increase women's leadership and full, equal and meaningful participation** and to firmly emphasize the centrality of gender analysis and the mainstreaming of gender perspective.
4. The EU supports **women’s leadership and participation in all stages of peace processes**. Recognising that women’s peacebuilding efforts at the local and national levels are critical for conflict resolution, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction, the EU supports these initiatives, including financially and at the grassroots level. While we are all focused on tackling the COVID-19 crisis, we need to ensure that these important local peacebuilders continue to receive the necessary financial and political support to play a constructive role during the crisis and to ensure they will survive its current constraints. The EU strives to enable the participation of more women mediators, chief negotiators and political representatives in such processes including within its own structures.
5. We continue to **engage actively with women’s organisations and women human rights defenders** working in conflict-related settings, as well as in conflict prevention, preventing violent extremism and radicalisation, peace negotiations and peacebuilding, humanitarian action and development programmes, through bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, as well as regular consultations with in EU-led and EU-supported processes.

6. Women's organisations, peacebuilders and women human rights defenders are **key political constituents** who play pivotal roles in conflict prevention, resolution and sustaining peace. **Conflict prevention**, conflict-related human rights violations and the promotion of full accountability policies and institutional reforms, the **protection of women's and girls' rights**, access to justice as well as the promotion of institutional mechanisms to help prevent all forms of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and to support effective relief and recovery remain the very core of EU priorities.
7. **The joint EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls** represents an innovative project at the forefront of ending violence against women and girls. Spotlight is unprecedented in the level of ambition of its goals; the number of women and girls worldwide benefitting from our intervention; and the inclusive engagement of civil society organizations at all levels throughout the process. We equally strongly support the appeal by UNSG António Guterres on Gender-Based Violence and COVID-19.
8. Women **affected by violent conflict** are to be seen as experts of their own experiences and need to be part of the consultation process including peace processes, peacebuilding and reconstruction. Endangered activists need to be protected locally and possibly supported to leave the conflict area, thus the EU will continue to ensure to **build relations with local women's organisations**, as is an action and indicator in the EU Action Plan (AP) on WPS from July 2019.
9. The **relief and recovery pillar of the WPS Agenda** focuses on ensuring that relief, recovery and reconstruction are inclusive and takes into account the **specific needs of women and girls**. Special attention is paid to the most vulnerable groups taking part in processes linked to peacebuilding, such as repatriation, resettlement, rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction. This includes displaced women and girls, survivors of gender-based violence, older persons, persons with disabilities, minorities and indigenous peoples.
10. In the EU we have adopted a **holistic approach** for the **prevention of violence against women** and girls, and we have identified actions under the key areas of prevention, protection, relief and recovery under the two overarching and cross-cutting aspects of **gender mainstreaming and participation**. Acknowledging the critical role women are playing in the COVID-19 response efforts and the importance of inclusive decision-making to sustainable and effective responses, **as well as the differentiated social and economic impact** of the pandemic on women, we encourage efforts to enable women's full, equal and meaningful participation in all aspects of peace processes and their implementation.
11. The instruments, strategies and political commitments are already there. Our focus should now turn to the **implementation of the PBC's Gender Strategy, more and better targeted peacebuilding action** in order for us all to demonstrate significant progress. We must step up our game collectively and inclusively. This is no mission for women and girls alone, but **men and boys** also need to be fully engaged as positive agents for change.
12. In view of the upcoming 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 in 2020 the EU reiterates its commitment to help UN efforts for **faster and more ambitious implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda**, including in the framework of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture Review. In this regard, we look forward to tighten EU-UN peacebuilding and sustaining peace cooperation in a gender responsive manner. Together we must work on better gender analysis, more sex-disaggregated data, gender expertise, leadership accountability and resources. The United Nations can always rely on our unwavering support to this endeavour not only in New York, but across the globe.