

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN MAINTAINING PEACE AND SECURITY

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security, adopted in 2000, for the first time acknowledges the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women and girls, pointing to the under-appreciated role that women play in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peace-building, as well as the need for equal and full participation of women as advocates of peace and security.

Resolution 1325 sets two main components: 1) equal participation of women at all levels of decision-making in national, regional and international bodies and mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution, as well as in peace processes, and 2) prevention of violence against women and girls during and after the conflict, and their comprehensive protection not only from violence but also in terms of the exercise of their human rights within the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary. In the operational part, Resolution 1325 calls on States, regional organizations and UN bodies to implement concrete measures and activities to achieve the objectives set.

Gender equality is one of the common and fundamental principles of Article 2 and Article 3 (paragraph 3) of the Treaty on European Union, Article 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Gender equality is also one of the priorities of the EU's external action in the field of human rights. Guidance notes for the engagement of EU delegations in conflicting countries and post-conflict and fragile countries are also contained in the Gender Action Plan for the period 2016-2020. The EU's financial contribution to women, peace and security averages € 200 million a year, covering more than 70 countries worldwide. Support includes assistance in developing and implementing national action plans, training for government agencies, funding for NGOs, funding for projects against gender-based violence, including sexual violence, etc.

It is geographically focused mainly on Africa, Central Asia and the Middle East. New European Consensus on Development - 'Our world, our dignity, our future', which was adopted in June 2017, further to the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, gender equality and women's empowerment have been identified as a priority and central point of EU development cooperation.

Since 2005, the EU has adopted operational documents on the implementation of UNSCR 1325. The comprehensive approach to the EU implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on women, peace, and security was revised in 2018 and replaced by the EU Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security welcomed by the EU Council in its Conclusions of 10 December 2018.

The EU's new strategic approach to the issue of women, peace and security emphasizes the need to systematically integrate a gender perspective into all areas and activities in the field of peace and security, and in the Union's external actions in general. It also stresses the need for the EU to involve, empower, protect and support women and girls to help all countries achieve sustainable and lasting peace and security as intrinsic components of human rights and sustainable development. The EU's strategic approach is implemented through political and diplomatic engagement of its leadership, enabling women to participate fairly and

meaningfully in all EU external actions, not only on the topic of women's rights, but in all other activities including peace and security.

Equal participation of women at all levels of decision-making in order to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts as well as their participation in peace processes was set as one of the main goals, together with the prevention of violence against women and girls during and after the conflict as well as their comprehensive protection not only from violence but also in terms of the realization of their rights. Namely, it is necessary to ensure that women in conflict, post-conflict and unstable situations can participate equally in all political, economic, security and social aspects of their societies, as a precondition for the creation of inclusive and peaceful societies, that is, sustainable development and peace.

Violence against women is present as a social problem in all countries and is considered one of the main obstacles to gender equality and of particular concern is its widespread presence during conflicts and crises when women and girls are exposed to systematic rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence which is used as a tactic of warfare.

The strategic approach of the EU to the issue of women, peace and security also emphasizes the importance of women's leadership and action in all policy areas and the development of programs related to peace and security. This guarantees women and girls of different backgrounds the right to participate equally and meaningfully in the prevention and resolution of conflict and in the prevention of conflict-related violence, including all forms of sexual and gender-based violence. Furthermore, the role of men and boys as positive actors for change is set in order to transform gender stereotypes and mechanisms of social exclusion.

(Possible) Points of Discussion:

- How can National Parliaments contribute to strengthening the role of women and girls in maintaining peace and stability?
- How can the European Union position itself as a global leader in gender equality in areas such as security and defence?

