



## **EUROPEAN UNION**

# **Second Preparatory meeting of the 29<sup>th</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum Vienna, 10 – 11 June 2021**

## **EU Closing Statement**

The European Union and its Member States would like to thank the Swedish Chairpersonship and the OSCE Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities and his team for organising this meeting. We would also like to thank all speakers for their interesting presentations and the moderators for stimulating our debates.

This meeting has provided a valuable opportunity to learn about the importance and the benefits of women's economic empowerment for society as a whole. We discussed the barriers women are facing in the job market, but also in fields of trade, transportation and as women entrepreneurs. We have listened with interest to the panel discussions highlighting a number of successful initiatives, often led by civil society. We have heard how environment and climate change still an area influenced by a set of gender inequalities, where despite disproportionate effects of climate change on women, they are underrepresented in environmental decision-making institutions and green businesses.

The dialogue in the past two days once again stressed the need to increase women's representation in leadership positions and decision-making. As stressed during one of the sessions, we should not aim for women to adjust to the traditional systems, but rather create a system that allows for and embraces diversity.

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During the meeting, we have heard many voices calling for increased collection of and work with gender-disaggregated data and enhanced research to move us forward towards targeted actions which empower women and remove barriers to women's economic participation. Statistics and data with an intersectional approach are key to analysing the gender impact of policies, and subsequently to strengthening policies so that they advance equal economic empowerment.

The EU is committed to gender equality and is working to integrate gender perspective in all of its policies, including on entrepreneurship, trade and environmental protection. Women have an essential role to play in the development of sustainable and ecologically sound consumption and production patterns, and approaches to natural resource management. The gender perspective is relevant in all areas of environmental policy and in particular in strategies on adaptation and mitigation of the impacts of climate change.

Underlining the negative impact the Covid-19 Pandemic has on economy, undermining the participation and opportunities for women and girls, we need to work hard to turn this unprecedented global health and socio-economic crisis into an opportunity to review and accelerate our work to achieve gender equality. We need to work on strengthening and forging partnerships, including within the OSCE, and renew and advance our existing international commitments on gender equality, women's rights and empowerment. We hope that the discussions during the past two days will serve as a basis for a common approach and we are looking forward that in Prague we will identify how we can move forward together and support women's economic empowerment and equality through targeted actions.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, SERBIA\* and ALBANIA\*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA, MONACO and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

\* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.