Draft speaking points Gender Equality Commission 2016 Conference
Tallinn, 30 May
Maaike van Adrichem, OSCE Gender Section
Panel 3 – Gender matters: gender mainstreaming in international organizations – best practices and impact on national policies and strategies

- Relations between the Council of Europe and the OSCE are among the most formalized and institutionalized. The co-operation between the two organizations is grounded in their shared values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It is also based on formal agreements taken by their respective participating or member States. As a result, the two Organizations have developed very close co-operation, in particular in the fight against terrorism; combating trafficking in human beings; the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities; and the promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination. The recent presentation of the Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Permanent Council H.E. Mrs. Marina Kaljurand on 26th May, where it was encouraging to hear that Gender Equality is highlighted as one of the three priorities for the Estonian Chair of the Committee of Ministers to the CoE.

- Within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, **gender mainstreaming is formalized and institutionalized to a large extent**. The 57 participating States adopted an **OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality in 2004**. Very much like the Council of Europe Strategy, the Action Plan targets OSCE as an organization responsible for mainstreaming gender in its work, and the participating States to take all necessary measures to promote gender equality and gender-mainstreaming in the OSCE area as an essential component of comprehensive security. The **link to comprehensive security**, which for the OSCE means that security is not only related to the politico-military area but also to environmental and economical area and the area of human rights is key here.

- The Action Plan sets **clear goals internally** within the OSCE secretariat and other institutions, and tasks the OSCE to mainstream a gender perspective into all OSCE activities, policies, programmes and projects. The final part of the Gender Action Plan highlights that states bear the primary responsibility and are accountable to their citizens for the **implementation of the States' commitments on gender**. It specifies areas of special interest to all OSCE participating states, including legal and policy frameworks, preventing violence against women, participation in political and public life, women's participation in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict reconstruction, equal economic opportunities and strengthening national mechanisms for the advancement of women.

- On a yearly basis, the Secretary General of OSCE reports to the participating States on the progress on the GAP implementation in the Permanent Council. While it is relatively easy to report on internal progress made in OSCE structures and mainstreaming all programmes and activities, the progress of participating States is more **difficult to report on and measure**, since the action plan does not contain a monitoring and reporting framework.

- Of course this is where the **challenge** starts. Being a political organization that works on consensus basis, it can be very challenging to agree among all participating States on new commitments around gender issues. Still, since the adoption of the Gender Action Plan, several ministerial council decisions have been taken on gender issues, including on violence against women, women's economic participation and women, peace and security. One of the main added values of the OSCE as the largest regional security **organization is that it serves as a platform** where experiences from the 57 participating States can be shared and

an exchange can take place between a region ranging from Vancouver to Vladivostok. In addition, OSCE has **13 field operations** which closely work on gender issues with the national governments.

- The challenges therefore are great to **bridge the gap between commitments and actual implementation at the national level**, trickling down to the sub-national, local level. In order to achieve this, **a systematic approach** to gender mainstreaming within the organizations is essential as this is the only way to provide states as well as other organizations with the technical support, awareness raising, tools and resources required to make progress on gender equality. This way, discussions around the development of national gender action plans and especially on developing and implementing UNSCR 1325 become an integral part of all national policies rather than something in addition. This is where we see a very concrete impact on national policies and strategies, especially in the **combination of sharing best practices across OSCE region (for example: NAP 1325 study, VAW study), paired with the development of tools and the field presence and project experience to provide direct support for implementation**.

- Recent examples: the work on **including a gender perspective in the response to refugees and migrants** – an area of work which dates back to 2009 in the OSCE, involves several departments and missions and is aimed to provide policy guidance for participating States in different areas of mainstreaming gender in refugee and migrant flows, including as practical as border management, reception facilities, training of border guards and police forces, etc. Another example is the area of **Countering Violent Extremism** and Radicalization that lead to Terrorism, where a gender perspective is being included more and more.

- To conclude, of course this process does not take place in isolation, and we are strongest if we benefit from the tools and experiences of other regional and international organizations, including council of Europe, and **work together** where we can. I am very happy with this opportunity to learn more about successful initiatives in other organizations and discuss how we can work together to strengthen our joint efforts.

Thank you