

How to Boost Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in the OSCE Region

Dr. Ewa Sapiezynska served as Human Rights Officer at the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). She worked for ODIHR's "Human Rights, Gender and Security" Program that has a special focus on the UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Sapiezynska was seconded to the OSCE by NORDEM. She holds a PhD in social science and has previously worked with gender issues in conflict and post-conflict settings in Mexico, Guatemala and Colombia.

Disclaimer: All views, opinions and conclusions included or referred to in this paper are those of the author, and do not necessarily imply an official endorsement or acceptance by the OSCE.

Executive summary

The main challenges to the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325) in the 57 participating States of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) are, on the one hand, lack of knowledge in some participating States on how to realize it in practice, and, on the other hand, skepticism towards the implementation of the resolution or simply under-prioritizing it. These, in turn, result in still-low participation of women in the maintenance and promotion of peace; insufficient program funding; and the continued lack of UNSCR 1325 National Action Plans (NAPs).

To overcome these challenges the paper recommends more awareness raising firstly on the importance and benefits of the inclusion of women in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace building; and secondly on the relevance of gender analysis in conflict and post-conflict settings. This should include strengthening the UNSCR 1325 reporting through the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC) annual information exchange on the Code of Conduct and delivery of tailored workshops to the FSC military advisers by ODIHR and the Gender Section of the OSCE Secretariat. The coordination of efforts of these two bodies should be further strengthened. Furthermore, earmarking a certain percentage of development aid to UNSCR 1325-related programs and projects is recommended as a way to effectively alleviate the lack of funding. The donors among OSCE

participating States should prioritize projects aiming at the development and implementation of NAPs.

Context and importance of the problem

The UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security is a landmark document both reaffirming the importance of women's participation and full involvement in maintaining and promoting peace and security, and noting women's and girls' particular vulnerability in conflict and post-conflict situations, as well as the relevance of their needs and perspectives in such settings. The resolution will celebrate its 20th anniversary already in 2020, States have nonetheless been very slow to implement UNSCR 1325, as documented by a number of studies.¹

OSCE – as the world's largest regional security organization spanning from Vancouver to Vladivostok– has a vital role in the implementation of the resolution. There are several OSCE Ministerial Council decisions that embrace and “indigenize” the UN instrument, including: the OSCE Action Plan on the Promotion of Gender Equality (2004); MC.DEC.14/05 Women in Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation and MC.DEC.03/11 Elements of the Conflict Cycle, related to Enhancing the OSCE's Capabilities in Early Warning, Early Action, Dialogue Facilitation and Mediation Support, and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation. Some analysts classify the OSCE Action Plan on the Promotion of Gender Equality from 2004 as a regional action plan for the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 even though the plan's focus is much broader.²

Shortcomings of the UNSCR 1325 implementation in the OSCE region

Despite an adequate framework to facilitate the implementation of UNSCR 1325, its implementation by OSCE participating States has been fraught with gaps and challenges identified on the global level namely: inadequate

¹ See for example Kirby, P. & Shepherd, L. J. (2016), The futures past of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, *International Affairs* 92: 2, p. 373–392, UN Global Study “Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace. A Global on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325” (2015), <http://wps.unwomen.org/~media/files/un%20women/wps/highlights/unw-global-study-1325-2015.pdf> and the “OSCE Study on National Action Plans on the Implementation of the UNSCR 1325” (2014), www.osce.org/secretariat/125727?download=true

² Kirby, P. & Shepherd, L. J. (2016), op. cit.

representation of women; insufficient program funding; and lack of NAPs for implementation of UNSCR 1325.

The participation of women in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace building remains very low. This concerns not only the OSCE region – where women continue to be severely under-represented in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict reconstruction processes – but also the organization itself. Since the establishment of the OSCE institutions, only twelve women have been Heads of Field Operations alongside 141 men.¹ The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine has not been led by a woman yet since its establishment in 2014, while among this mission's deputy heads there have been two men and one woman.² Moreover, no Special Representative for the protracted conflicts has so far been a woman.³

Insufficient program funding continues to be a major challenge despite significant rhetorical support for the UNSCR 1325 agenda, and despite the notable momentum the UNSCR 1325 achieved during the 15th anniversary of its passage in 2015. Globally, while the bilateral aid to fragile States directed to gender issues has increased, it still constitutes no more than 6 percent of the aid total, and a mere 2 percent of aid earmarked for peace and security.⁴ Support for UNSCR 1325 activities that the Gender Section of the OSCE Secretariat and ODIHR's "Human Rights, Gender and Security" Program receive from the ministries of foreign affairs and development agencies of OSCE participating States is scarce and often has to be spent during just a few months, making comprehensive interventions and long-term program planning extremely difficult.

¹ Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the OSCE 2004 Action Plan on the Promotion of Gender Equality – 2017 (published in July 2018)

<https://www.osce.org/secretariat/387014>

² Op. cit.

³ I refer here to OSCE's mediation efforts in the 5+2 talks on a Transnistrian settlement, the Minsk Group on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and the Geneva International Discussions on the 2008 conflict in Georgia. The number is quoted after the last Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the OSCE 2004 Action Plan on the Promotion of Gender Equality published in July 2018, op. cit.

⁴ See the UN Global Study (2015), op. cit.

Finally, many OSCE participating States lack National Action Plans to implement UNSCR 1325. Only 76 countries worldwide have formulated such plans so far, 39% of all UN Member States.⁵

There was a significant increase in NAP development around 2010 – the 10th anniversary of the UNSCR 1325 and then again around 2015 due to the 15th anniversary of the resolution– but this trend stagnated shortly thereafter. On a positive note, in the OSCE region 32 countries, so more than 55% of all the participating states, have designed and are implementing a NAP. Nonetheless, many of these action plans were created without a real inclusion of civil society. Another frequent weakness is lack of monitoring mechanisms and budgets for the implementation of the NAPs.

On a more general level, all these challenges might be attributed to the lack of know-how in some participating States on how to implement UNSCR 1325 in practice, as well as to resistance towards the implementation – typical for both the political decision makers and the security sector in some States. To a lesser extent, this might also mean under-prioritizing implementation of UNSCR 1325 and its funding. Building both the capacity and commitment of key stakeholders is essential for the Women, Peace and Security agenda to succeed.

The reporting mechanism called the annual information exchange on the national implementation of the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security (CoC) at the Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC) has not reached its full potential as far as these objectives are concerned. Since 2009 this mechanism includes voluntary reporting on the implementation of UNSCR 1325. There were first 17 participating States reporting voluntarily, this number rose to about 30 relatively quickly but shows a slight tendency to fall in the last four years, after the peak of 34 reporting states in 2014.

Since 2011 there is also an indicative list of questions on Women, Peace and Security for the information exchange but about half of the reporting countries do not follow this list -which makes the analysis of answers very demanding- and none of the participating States that actually use the indicative list, answers to all of the suggested questions.

⁵ See WILPF, <https://www.peacewomen.org/member-states>

Recommendations

To address the challenges described above and to boost the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 in the OSCE region, the following recommendations should be adopted:

1. There is a clear need of more awareness raising on the importance and benefits of the inclusion of women in peace processes and the relevance of gender mainstreaming to security. This should include promotion of the OSCE Ministerial Council Decisions that embrace the resolution and task the OSCE structures to assist the OSCE participating States in the UNSCR 1325 implementation process.
2. The reporting on UNSCR 1325 through the annual information exchange on the national implementation of the CoC at the FSC should be strengthened and streamlined as it is a tool to promote the UNSCR 1325 in the OSCE and – at the same time – a great opportunity to share experiences and good practices of the implementation.
3. ODIHR and the Gender Section of the OSCE Secretariat should contribute to the awareness raising and capacity building at the FSC as well as expert advice to key stakeholders at the ministries of defense and ministries of foreign affairs of these OSCE participating states which still lack a 1325 NAP or are developing their first plan.
4. The Gender Section of the OSCE Secretariat and ODIHR should further strengthen the coordination of their efforts on UNSCR 1325, in order to avoid duplication and to maximize synergies. These OSCE structures should also further engage in their strategic co-operation with the UNSCR 1325 researchers and experts at PRIO in Norway and Folke Bernadotte Academy in Sweden.
5. Furthermore, earmarking a certain percentage of development aid to UNSCR 1325-related programs and projects is recommended as a way to effectively alleviate the lack of funding. The support OSCE structures receive to work with this issue should be long-term, secured for example under multiyear frame agreements with the donors.
6. The donors among OSCE participating States should prioritize projects aiming at the development and implementation of 1325 NAPs.

Following the recommendations is vital at this particular moment as we are

approaching the 20th anniversary of the adoption of UNSCR 1325 in 2020. The international community should grip the chance of building a momentum.