

Mr Chair,

I have the honour of addressing, on behalf of the European Union, this Commission on the Status of Women, as we celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the tenth anniversary of the outcome document of the 23rd Special Session of the 2000 General Assembly.

The following countries align themselves with this statement: the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

I would like to thank the CSW for supporting these important events. By sharing our experiences and good practices, we hope to overcome the remaining obstacles in our struggle to attain real and effective equality between women and men.

We the Member States and the institutions of the European Union reassert our commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action as well as to the outcome document of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly as indispensable tools for achieving gender equality as well as for reaching the Millennium Development Goals.

The Platform for Action identified twelve critical areas of concern where specific measures are needed to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women: measures which should aim to guarantee women's full enjoyment of human rights.

The identification of the critical areas of concern was very important, and we are convinced that the commitment made by Governments to effectively incorporate a gender equality perspective in all their institutions, in all policies, at all levels and at all stages of policy and decision-making, was a mile stone and a valuable strategy for achieving gender equality. To carry out this process of gender mainstreaming, an analysis must be made of the effects that different policies have on men and women.

Mr. Chair,

The European Union, which I have the honour of representing at this Session, recently entered a new phase, with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. Even though the European Union had, since 1997, included among its goals the elimination of inequalities between men and women, the new Treaty boosts this aim by finally making the European Charter of Fundamental Rights legally binding. The Charter reiterates the European Union's long-standing guarantee of equality between women and men in all domains.

This is a time for review and assessment. It is 15 years since the adoption of the Platform for Action, 10 years since the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly, 10 years since the Millennium Summit and 10 years since the adoption of UNSCR 1325.

In the European Union, the 2006-2010 strategy of the European Commission for equality between women and men – the so-called Roadmap – will lapse this year, as

When talking about violence, we cannot but mention the exploitation suffered by thousands of women and girls who are the victims of human trafficking. The EU Member States are joining forces to fight against the factors that perpetuate this terrible phenomenon, which still afflicts our countries.

We also must not forget the key role women should be able to play as active agents in conflict prevention and resolution, peace negotiations, peace building, humanitarian responses, and post-conflict reconstruction. Further efforts are urgently needed to make this happen. Women's and girls' needs also continue to be neglected during post-conflict reconstruction. The EU is firmly committed to the implementation of Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889 of the United Nations Security Council, as manifested in the 2008 'Comprehensive approach to the EU implementation of Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on women, peace, and security'. To date, 9 of the 27 EU Member States have adopted National Action Plans for implementing Resolution 1325. We would like to congratulate Margot Wallström for her appointment as Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and express our support.

Every year, the European Commission carries out an analysis of equality between women and men in the world of work, for it

aim is to assist the Commission and Member States in the promotion of gender equality, including gender mainstreaming in all Community policies and the resulting national policies, and the fight against discrimination based on sex.

A few months ago, we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, a key document that is no less than a Bill of Rights of Women, and which is currently binding for 186 States. This anniversary has given us the chance to reassert our commitment to the full, effective implementation of the CEDAW Convention, as well as its Optional Protocol.

However, serious violations of human rights still persist which constitute an obstacle to their full enjoyment by women and girls, such as female genital mutilation and other harmful traditional practices such as early and/or forced marriage, and so-called 'honour crimes'.

The media and the private sector advertising can play a crucial role by refraining from spreading stereotyped images of women and men and by taking a critical view of outdated power structures and gender roles.

Making the media and the advertising industry fully committed to the achievement of gender equality is another challenge we face.

Likewise, women and men must take part on an equal footing in the management and preservation of the environment, in the use of natural resources and in climate and sustainable development policies. Decisions in this field must include women and be made in the light of a rigorous analysis of the different effects which they will have on women and men.

In May 2008, the Council of the European Union urged all the Member States and the European Commission to integrate the gender perspective into e6d-1.15 T0arriage,e gendkrnd be

much look forward to working together with the other UN Members, with a view to achieving this goal.

I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to present the commitment of the EU on Gender Equality. The EU remains dedicated to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and acknowledges that it is as relevant today as it was 15 years ago.

Thank you.