

State of affairs in the implementation of 1325 in EU security and peace policy

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Thank you very much and also thank you for the invitation from the Heinrich Böll Foundation to speak to you today and take part in this very important event. As mentioned, I have been asked to speak in general on the status of implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 at the European Union level. Thanks to our very rich discussions yesterday, a part of my work has already been done for me. From yesterday's discussion, I think it is quite clear that the European Union is not reaching its full potential or fulfilling all of the commitments that it has to implement 1325 and the EP resolution. Operationally we saw that very little is being done, although there have been some exceptions, and at the policy level changes have been quite spotty and they have been ad hoc. Furthermore, changes have not really been fully institutionalised. So, six and a half years later, after 1325 and after the EP resolution, it is a good time to discuss what has been done, and more importantly, what has not been done. And because I don't want to be too pessimistic on a Saturday morning, I am going to quite quickly go through the first part of my presentation and focus more on entry points and ways forward for the future.

Up here I have the first slide which may seem somewhat redundant, because the speeches yesterday all demonstrated how important the role of women is and why we need to look at gender issues in the context of peacebuilding. But the reality is that gender issues are still seen as optional. Decision-makers and policy-makers see gender as too much of a luxury and something that can be postponed. Gender equality comes after the hard security issues have been addressed. You don't need gender equality for peace - this is the attitude of too many people. But the reality is that a gender unequal peace is no peace at all. For women who experience increased levels of domestic violence in post conflict situations - there is no peace for them. For women who don't have access to property rights or to economic independence - how can we say that they are truly at peace? We need to consider these issues and make gender has to be central to peace and security policy.

The EU has committed itself repeatedly to this, as recently as in the 2006 open debate on 1325 at the UN Security Council. Elisabeth Rehn, speaking on behalf of EU member states,

said that the EU strongly believes in gender equality as a prerequisite for peace and security, that the EU is committed to women's representation at all levels, to increased dialogue with local and international women's groups, to protect women and girls affected by conflict, and to incorporate gender perspectives into all ESDP operations. So, the mandate is there and the commitment on paper is there. But it is still not really happening.

Here I have listed some of the key mile stones in terms of pushing forward 1325 and gender and peacebuilding issues at the EU. These were all mentioned yesterday, so I won't go over them, but just to say that there are several important and useful policies, recommendations and documents, especially when you also take into account commitments at the UN level that also apply to the EU member states. And although these are limited in certain ways – that I'll come back to – the fact is that there are policies, there are words. This is not the problem at the EU level. The problem is in fact actually action. And that's what we need to work towards.

Again, all of these issues were mentioned yesterday, as well as examples of what has actually been done: things like we have had a gender advisor at the EU mission in Congo, we've got the adoption of the checklist of mainstreaming gender in ESDP, and several other factors. However, it is notable that all of these changes took place relatively recently, and they are not really institutionalized actions or progress, they are more driven by individuals or may be certain isolated things that although very important progress, we need to see that they become more mainstream, more institutionalised.

The EU is an important actor on the ground in conflict-affected contexts through its development and of humanitarian assistance programmes, through the role of EU member states in peacekeeping-missions or its own EU-led missions, and through its role in influencing international regional security policies. So for all these reasons, the EU must be doing more and it has the potential to do more in terms of implementing 1325, which brings us to the obstacles of why things are not moving faster than they are.

The problem is changing rhetoric into action; implementation, not just coming up with more policies. Making it accountable, increasing the political will and the constituency of people who support the resolution, bringing gender to the heart of peace and security policy.

1325 is for example still seen as a women's issue. You know, one of the common questions that women and peacebuilding activists always used to ask: Where are the women? Where are the women at the peace table? Look around this room - where are the men? There are hardly any men here today, although there were some yesterday. But we need to look at why we are not engaging these people who play key leadership roles. We need to get them on board; we need to bring them in. In the UK, we recently held an event through GAPS [Gender Action for Peace and Security], the national level working group on women peace and security, on involving men in the implementation of 1325. I think this really showed the multiplier effect that it has. If you've got a man in a leadership position within a government or within an organisation, their ability to bring more people on board is very powerful, and we need to actually reach out and do this more at the EU level. There are also other obstacles up here that I don't have the time to go into.

What I want to do is look beyond these obstacles and see what some of the entry points are that already exist, that we can capitalise on, and we can use today and tomorrow to talk about how to move forwards. First of all, the development of an EU-wide action plan and the development of national action plans by EU member states is something that was raised yesterday and is going to be discussed in more detail today. This is a way of overcoming obstacles and enhancing coordination and really pushing agendas forwards.

Make life easy and exploit what's already out there. There are active networks at the EU level, such is the EPLO gender, peace and security group, and at the national level in countless member states. What we need to do is to tap into this expertise that exists. We need to strengthen the links between these groups themselves and between these groups and policy-makers within the EU level.

We also need to take practical steps and advocate practical steps at the EU level. Training has to be institutionalised. Monitoring has to be mandatory. Without these kinds of actions it is very difficult to monitor progress and to assess where we have come from and where we are going to. Gender expertise is a speciality. We can't assume that some day people will wake up one day and have their gender glasses on. We have to teach it, we have to show people why it is important. We have to give them the tools and the resources so that they can then implement it in their work.

And again, using what's out there, link 1325 to policies that exist like CEDAW. But also, more importantly, link it into other peace and security policies. In the UK, the Department for International Development recently released a new conflict policy, and to our alarm, gender issues in the initial draft were hardly mentioned at all. And in a final version, in fact, the UK National Action Plan on 1325 is not mentioned. The fact that the UK's conflict policy is not reinforcing and incorporating the UK's 1325 action plan is a huge problem.

The Secretary General in 2004 called for the development of a system-wide action plan at the UN level, and now several member states are following suit. But why should the EU develop a regional action plan or a system-wide action plan? Some of the reasons for developing such a plan are that it is a comprehensive strategy. It is a way of tying together the different policy and operational areas within the EU's diverse institutions and programs. And it also provides a focus to disparate efforts. We have these piecemeal activities, some progress in the Council, some progress in the Parliament and in the Commission, and a 1325 action plan would be a way of bringing it all together and putting it into one coherent document. It can also provide objectives, benchmarks, and monitoring opportunities. And again, these are all very critical to the implementation of 1325 and for fostering accountability. Indeed, one of the key problems with 1325 is that we don't have enough mechanisms for accountability. Finally it assigns responsibility and ownership. The process of developing an action plan means that people take the issues on board and it becomes part of their job.

Action plans can be developed in a number of different ways. I have listed here three of the main activities that are part of the process.

- The first is to develop or establish a working group of some kind to get people to come together, get ownership, get people who are working at different levels, in different areas to share information, generate shared goals, and share perspectives on what implementation of 1325 would mean at the European level. So this would be members of the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission, and relevant civil society groups, who can also bring a different expertise to bear.
- Secondly, there is a need to conduct mappings and assessments. We need to look at what has been done. Where are the big gaps? Where are the areas of strategic priority that 1325 is most important for in terms of the EU? For example, there are a lot of EU police missions; therefore the aspect of gender training and security forces, and increasing a number of women in police forces could be an area of particular

importance to the EU. This has partly already begun. As we heard yesterday, I think it was ten member states who replied to the call for the sharing of best practises in relation to 1325. So we need to extend this. We need to get the EU institutions to also respond and also talk about what they have been doing.

- And finally, broad consultation to get as many people on board as possible, bringing in diverse perspectives is key. This conference is a great start to that. It is a way of bringing people together who can share their work on peace and security issues - in particular people who are working on the ground and have insight into what is really happening.

But some might say and a lot of people do say as we heard: Why would you bother? I mean why would you have an action plan? Does it achieve anything? It's a bit of paper; it's another policy that just won't result in any kind of implementation.

The next session will be exploring the experiences of the individual countries in a bit more detail. But a few lessons can be learned from the general process of the five countries at the European level that have got an action plan that I think are important. National action plans have to be context specific and the process of developing a national action plan can be very different for different countries. And in fact: all five countries have taken different approaches. It can be either a long consultative process or it can be a shorter, more targeted approach of developing a plan. It depends on the needs of the country. If you have a lot of resources available, it can be put into this process but if you don't have a lot of resources available, there are still ways of developing an action plan in a short period of time.

Action plans can also be integrated into existing policies. Countries such as Fiji have gone down this line where they have decided to incorporate and build on what already exists, whereas the five European countries have developed more stand-alone action plans.

Overall the goal is in fact in gendering peace and security policy, but the way of getting there can be a different.

Again, some of the good things about the process is that they generate this process of consultation among different actors at different levels. They're a useful tool. They are a way of governments being able to link 1325 to their national priorities. Sometimes it is not entirely clear how 1325 maybe relates to domestic policy-making processes or structures or to foreign policy making. NAPs can be a way of pulling out the relevant parts of 1325 and bringing them into the national processes.

It is important to note that having an action plan doesn't necessarily result in action; it doesn't mean that implementation necessarily happens. You need accountability, you need responsibility, you need leadership, and you need resources. Just one example of a process that was undertaken by the UK government was to issue an E-gram (an electronic telegram) to all FCO staff around the world that a 1325 National Action Plan has been adopted and that they must take note. This is one way of making sure that it doesn't sit only in the capital city, but it is actually disseminated to all government staff throughout the world.

Transparency, coordination, consultation with a wide range of actors is also needed. One other thing I wanted to highlight in my presentation is the role of civil society, in particular women's organisations. The implementation of 1325 has been historically, and continues to be, led by women's organisations: through their advocacy, through their field level programs, and also through their monitoring of UN, regional and government activities. Their efforts and their contribution cannot be underestimated. 1325 was the first time that a Security Council resolution had such a backing and such a constituency among civil society representatives, and the power of this constituency is still being seen today.

So, women's organisations play a huge role. They are an expert resource. They have knowledge and access to different kinds of information. Yesterday's afternoon session, where we had women from different country contexts speaking to us, just shows how much knowledge and how much capacity is out there. And just think how much is being overlooked. If we don't involve these organisations, we don't tap their expertise, we're missing out, we're losing capacity. We are not seeing the full picture. This know-how has to be somehow brought in. It must be remembered that women were doing 1325 before it was even an idea in the heads of the Security Council members. It is not a new thing. It gives a name to something that already existed, and to activities they were already happening. But the problem is that what women are doing is so often in the informal sphere. They exist outside of the formal peacebuilding processes that donors and governments tend to focus on, so they don't have access to decision-makers or policy channels. At the same time, the donors and governments then also don't see what is being done. Women's organisations can play a huge role in bridging that gap. We need to bring what is happening on the ground to the attention of policy makers. The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security in New York, for example, has for several years been bringing women from conflict-affected regions to speak to the Security Council and share their experiences. And the responses from Security Council

members and other government officials are always, "Wow, we had no idea this was going on." We can play a role in linking these people up, so that when we the Security Council members go on missions, they know who to speak to. They can go to a country and they can demand, as Ambassador Chowdhury did in Kosovo, to speak to women's groups. We can facilitate that process.

Women's groups need support to increase their impact, particularly in conflict-affected countries, and so we really need to try to draw more resources towards them. Although implementation in Western countries is important, what is more important is that 1325 is being implemented in the countries where the conflicts are happening. For example, I recently returned from Liberia, and when I was in Monrovia, the capital, lots of women's organisations were familiar with 1325. They all said, "Yes, you know, this is so important to me." Often I hear people say, "1325 - it's not really that relevant, it's a piece of paper." However, the Liberian women said. "This 1325 is the most powerful thing that we have. We can use it, we can make our government listen." Admittedly, once you go outside the capital and the capacity of these organisations decreases, you have huge rates of illiteracy, poverty and women don't know about 1325. But they are still doing 1325, they just don't know it. Their work could have so much more impact if we found some way of empowering them with 1325, with the tools, with the knowledge and the capacity to actually take their work to the next level.

Finally, just to end with some recommendations and some steps forward for us to think about: I can't emphasize enough the need for gender to be seen as critical to security. This requires a change in mindset, which is not an easy thing to bring about. We need to raise awareness. We need to convince men that it helps them. One of the comments that was made in our event on involving men in London was that for men, 1325 should not be a matter of altruism. It is a matter of self-interest. And this is true. 1325 helps men, it helps communities. It is called the resolution on women, peace and security, but it doesn't end there. It is about societal change and that is what we need to focus on, and that includes men too.

1325 is a political issue, it is not just a technical issue. It is not going to be implemented solely through checklists and guidelines. It requires changing attitudes and making people really understand the cost to sustainable peace and development if gender is left out.

We need to build on what is already out there. There is so much momentum among NGOs at all levels, and we need to begin working more collectively. We need to work together. We need to speak with one voice at the EU level, and I think this conference is a very good start. We need to try and link EU policymakers with women on the ground. We need to give other people the benefit of the progress that has been made. We need to share our experiences at the level of our member states with other EU member states and with other countries.

We don't want to create new structures. We don't want to reinvent the wheel. Let's just try and take advantage of the mistakes of others. Let's learn. The EU should look at the UN and the progress as well as all the mistakes the it has made in terms of bringing gender into peacekeeping missions. Let's not make the same mistakes again. Let's try and look and see what has worked and what hasn't worked, and then try and replicate that at the EU level.

And we also need to start this action plan process. Maybe we could try and create a working group at the European Union. Maybe start some assessments. These are the kinds of things we could and should be advocating for and getting people in the EU institutions to actually do.

Finally, just to end with a challenge, a challenge for I think ourselves as civil society.

Women's organisations and gender, peace and security activists, we can't be complacent. It's got to the point where it's going to be seven years since 1325 was passed, and there is a feeling, especially in New York, that nothing much has changed. Things aren't really moving, and progress on the implementation of 1325 has stagnated. So we really need to think outside of the box. We need to try and get 1325 and gender issues to the ears of the people and to the forums where it is not normally heard. We need to break down the barriers that I think sometimes box in 1325 and risk isolating it from the heart of peace, security and development. So we need to engage men. We need to engage the sceptics. And we really need to find ways of sharing the experiences of women and men on the ground, making them meaningful to policymakers. We need to demonstrate the reality that peace without gender equality can not be sustainable in the long run. Thank you.