

Ministers' Deputies

CM Documents

[CM\(2003\)58](#) (restricted) 30 April 2003

840 Meeting, 28 May 2003

4 Human Rights

4.3 5th European Ministerial Conference on Equality between Women and Men (Skopje, 22-23 January 2003)

Report by the Secretary General

Introduction

1. The 5th European Ministerial Conference on Equality between Women and Men was held in Skopje on 22 and 23 January 2003, at the invitation of the Government of the “former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”. All the Council of Europe’s member States, except Armenia, Georgia, Iceland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Malta and San Marino, were represented. The following States attended as observers: Canada, Japan, the Holy See, and Serbia and Montenegro^[1].

2. Representatives of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH) and the Steering Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR) also attended. The following sent observers: the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Gender Task Force of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe (SP-GTF).

3. The list of Heads of Delegation is contained in Appendix I.

4. The Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men (CDEG) held a preparatory meeting on the eve of the Conference.

5. The general theme and the sub-themes of the Conference were as follows:

General Theme: Democratisation, conflict prevention and peacebuilding: the perspectives and the roles of women

Sub-theme 1: The roles of women in democratisation and peacebuilding

Sub-theme 2: The roles of women in the prevention of conflicts

6. The agenda is contained in Appendix II.

7. The Conference was opened by the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Ms Maud de Boer-Buquicchio and by the Prime Minister of the “former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, Mr Branko Crvenkovski, who welcomed the participants. In his opening address, Mr Crvenkovski noted the minimal participation of women in political and public life. He said that gender equality was recognised in law, but was not being fully implemented, and still did not apply to decision-making. It was therefore necessary to marshal all the vital forces of society in order to implement this principle which was a *sine qua non* of democracy and an imperative of social justice and human rights protection. The Deputy Secretary General emphasised, in her opening address, that men’s contribution to promoting equality was vital. She also said that it would be a serious mistake not to give women a place at the negotiating table when decisions were being taken on reconstructing communities in the wake of conflicts. She said that trafficking in human beings, and particularly women, was a new form of slavery and that the Council of Europe should consider drawing up a new European convention on action to prevent it.

8. The conference then elected its Chair and two Vice-Chairs. On the proposal of Norway, Mr Jovan Manasijevski, Minister for Labour and Social Policy of “the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” was elected Chair, and Ms Margareta Winberg, Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden and Ms Silvia Ciornei, Romanian Minister for Small and Medium Sized Companies and Co-operatives, were elected Vice Chairs, on the proposal of Denmark and Portugal respectively.

9. The participants then heard statements by Ms Anna Lamperova, representing the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, Ms Minidora Cliveti, member of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and Ms Diane Bunyan, member of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe. They gave presentations of the work carried out by the three statutory organs of the Organisation in the area of gender equality and in particular the recent recommendations adopted by the Committee of Ministers, the work of the Parliamentary Assembly in combating trafficking in human beings and the work of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe on the family vote.

10. Sub-theme I was introduced by Ms Elisabeth Rehn, UNIFEM Independent Expert. Sub-theme II was preceded by the showing of a short film, commissioned by the CDEG, of interviews with women members of NGOs who had lived through situations of war and conflict in Europe and who talked about their actions and efforts to enable the voice of women to be heard in the prevention of conflict. The film was introduced by Ms Flora Van Houwelingen, Chair of the CDEG.

11. Several delegates had submitted written contributions on the themes of the Conference. Conference documents can be obtained from the Secretariat.

12. Following discussions in which most of the delegates took part, the Conference adopted the following texts (see Appendix III):

- Declaration: “Gender equality: a core issue in changing societies” and a Programme of Action;
- Resolution on the roles of women and men in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict democratic processes: a gender perspective;
- Resolution expressing appreciation to the host authority.

13. Mr Jovan Manasijevski, Ms Margareta Winberg and Ms Silvia Ciornei took it in turns to chair the conference. During the closing session, chaired by the Minister of “the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe expressed the hope that it would in future be impossible to conceive of the resolution of conflicts and the reconstruction of just and democratic societies without the participation of women. She also expressed her full confidence that member States would support a European Convention on action against trafficking in human beings. She referred in this context to the commitment of the CDEG to this issue and hoped that the Committee would receive the necessary support in its efforts to combat this modern form of slavery. Mr Jovan Manasijevski spoke in support of this view.

14. The Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe also expressed appreciation to the hosts of the Conference, thanking them for their excellent organisation and for the warm welcome given to participants. Her statements may be found in Appendices IV and V.

SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSIONS

Sub-theme 1: “The roles of women in democratisation and peacebuilding”

15. The inequality in the balance of power between women and men in times of peace tends to be exacerbated in times of armed conflict. According to the delegates who spoke, although women and children account for 80% of losses of human life and 80% of refugees and displaced persons, they are given less international protection and support than men. At present about 32 million women and children in the world are refugees or displaced persons within their own countries.

16. Delegates stressed the fact that conflicts have continued, and indeed increased in number, since the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, and that this has been matched by an increase in the abuse of the human rights of women and girls by both governments and non-governmental bodies. Recent conflicts in Europe highlight the need to devise and promote new institutional and legal initiatives for the protection of women against violence in times of war, and in particular against the use of sexual violence as a war strategy.

17. The finding of lasting solutions in order to guarantee peace requires that the parties to the conflict undertake to uphold human rights and to bring those responsible for violating such rights, who are guilty of crimes against humanity and of war crimes, to justice. In this connection the delegates welcomed the adoption of the Statute of the International Criminal Court and its entry into force. The statute provides that "rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity" are crimes against humanity "when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack". They held, in this regard, that the holding of the Conference was a clear indication of the attention paid to the issue by the Council of Europe and its commitment to devising strategies to eradicate the causes of conflict in general and ensuring their effective implementation in regard to women.

The role of women and men in peacebuilding and the democratisation of society after conflicts

18. "Women are victims of war and they should not become victims of peace." The statement to this effect by Ms Rehn in her opening address is an indication of the tone of the remarks of the various delegates. Women, who are the principal victims of conflicts, are under-represented and indeed discriminated against in post-war situations. The skills, experience and knowledge which they gained during the conflicts are completely ignored, despite the fact that their presence during peace negotiations might well make it possible to achieve peace more swiftly, while respecting equality.

19. Women should be encouraged to participate in decision-making processes at international, national and, above all, local level, where their involvement, both in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in post-war reconstruction, is paramount. However, as several delegates observed, it is difficult to achieve results, particularly in view of financial constraints, and the lack of concerted action and of time to make efforts in the field of gender awareness and the prevention of stereotyping. Women do not always have access to sufficient information on their political and legal rights and they seldom have the opportunity to participate in decision-making when it comes to the distribution of economic and other resources. Sometimes they do not even have the right to participate in elections either as voters or as candidates. A post-war period provides an exceptional opportunity to introduce institutional and legislative changes in order to guarantee equality between women and men in all aspects of life. In countries where women's rights have been seriously flouted, such changes must be introduced as soon as peace negotiations begin.

20. Delegates thus proposed various measures to maintain and encourage the participation of women in post-war peacebuilding. Some delegates proposed a 30% minimum quota of women in peace negotiation processes and in interim government bodies. To this end, they called for the electoral assistance of international and regional organisations in establishing quotas (with a minimum of 30%) in order to achieve

equality in decision-making. For example, the quotas maintained in the countries and territories in which the OCSE and the Council of Europe have co-operated closely are proof of the effectiveness of this approach.

21. Other measures suggested by various delegates to improve and promote the participation of women included: ensuring that voters were on the electoral rolls, decreasing the incidence of the family vote, increasing the number of women on electoral committees and observation panels and giving specialist training to women candidates. Women's rights should be guaranteed in relation to access to health services, including reproductive and sexual health services, and they should have the right to a life free of violence, including sexual slavery and enforced prostitution, and rights to land and international aid as war widows.

22. Participants fully agreed that provision must be made for adequate financing and that in the post-conflict reconstruction of society contributors should be asked to support equality between women and men in constitutional, legislative and political reforms, as well as all forms of assistance and democratisation programmes.

Intercultural and inter-religious dialogue

23. Delegates affirmed the need to eliminate conditions which give rise to irreconcilable differences and which often lead to conflicts, and the need to find peaceful solutions to differences. Participatory governance rallying the nation and the protection of human rights are the main challenges on the democratisation and peacebuilding agenda.

24. Delegates pointed out that even if their countries were not involved in conflict, their societies were now facing ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, and contradictions between globalisation and local societies, often presenting a threat to the progress achieved so far. The sharp increase in migration might in fact give rise to internal tensions. Macro-economic policies can undermine such national reforms as affirmative action, reproductive health services and child care. Partisan identity policies can undermine women's civil rights, in particular those of women belonging to minorities, who must then endure discrimination on more grounds than one.

25. It was also emphasised that the fight against terrorism constituted another form of conflict. Many women's associations participate in that fight by actively helping to encourage and develop initiatives to promote peace and peaceful coexistence.

26. Several delegates observed that efforts should be made at the national level to amend laws and policies and to change people's attitudes so that immigrants themselves adopt a positive attitude to coping with this phenomenon. It is therefore important to establish networks enabling women to be actively involved, particularly at local level, in the drawing up and implementation of policies and programmes benefiting immigrant or minority communities. As an example of this, reference was made to the Council of Europe's project "Roma women and access to public health care"^[2].

27. Participants also emphasised that co-operation between international, national and local non-governmental organisations was of the utmost importance in this regard. Many positive examples of such co-operation, particularly in the Balkan, were given: for example, assistance to women traumatised by war, the setting up of information centres for refugees, and the development of handicraft workshops for women which also provide training in respect for human rights and peacekeeping.

Preventing and combating violence against women and trafficking in human beings

28. Women are more exposed to violence and to sexual exploitation. Various delegates sometimes expressed their concern, despite all the efforts that had been made, about very strong social prejudice, stereotyping and a certain degree of tolerance towards violence against women and trafficking. It was observed that the general problem of violence towards women, particularly that of domestic violence, calls for a joint effort by the government and NGOs to develop national strategies to fight it. Delegates welcomed the work of the Council of Europe in this area, and in particular that of the CDEG. Some of them described the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the protection of women against

violence^[3] as a source of inspiration for their polices for combating violence, which had enabled them to achieve a better understanding of the situation and thus deal more effectively with this phenomenon.

29. The Chair of the Conference observed that the violence of the battlefield was very often transferred to the sphere of private life once the war was over and that violence towards women, and trafficking in particular, was one of the consequences. It was noted that the number of women victims of trafficking was increasing dramatically and that this was a serious violation of human rights. For many delegations, combating violence against women and trafficking in human beings was a priority: national legislation and action plans had been adopted and close attention was being paid to victims with the support of NGOs. But the precise volume of this trafficking remains an unknown factor and quantitative and qualitative indicators should be established so that data are collected constantly and systematically. It is vital too to attack the root causes of trafficking and to combat traffickers and organised crime networks effectively. Other more stringent measures should also be taken to protect victims, harmonise legal systems and increase co-operation between member States, international organisations and NGOs.

30. Delegates stressed the need for international co-operation in this field. They welcomed the co-operation between the Council of Europe, the UNHCR, the IOM and the OSCE in devising and implementing a regional plan of action against trafficking through the Stability Pact Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings.

31. The work of the CDEG for developing other instruments was encouraged. Several delegations gave their support to the drafting of a European Convention on action against trafficking in human beings. They underlined that such a European Convention would pursue in a European framework the achievements of the United Nations in this field. It should be based on the definition existing in the *Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against transnational organised crime* (Palermo Protocol). As a complement to and development of the United Nations Protocol which emphasises the crime prevention aspect of trafficking, a European Convention would clearly define trafficking as being first and foremost an issue of violation of human rights. Some delegates considered that the priority was first to sign and ratify the Palermo Protocol.

32. Many delegates observed that the victims of trafficking were all too often based in conflict zones, where their clients were representatives of peacekeeping forces. They said that the involvement of international staff in the sexual exploitation of women and children was wholly unacceptable and they expressed their support for the drawing up of codes of conduct for persons participating in peacekeeping and conflict resolution operations in order to prevent all forms of violence against women, as provided for in the Conference Resolution on “the roles of women and men in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict democratic processes – a gender perspective”.

33. Some delegates announced that they had taken measures in this regard, ranging from the introduction of codes of conduct for armed forces in charge of peacekeeping to specific training in respect for the fundamental rights of women and humanitarian law. Some have decided to increase the numbers of women participating in international peacekeeping operations. They emphasised that the presence of women in international peacekeeping missions facilitated contact with refugees and people with different cultures and beliefs and made it possible to solve communication problems with women from countries in a state of conflict.

The participation of women at the international level

34. The minimal participation of women in decision-making bodies is all the more blatant in international negotiations, particularly peace negotiations. Few women are to be seen in the higher ranks of international organisations. The international community has a duty to set an example in adopting a standard of conduct based on gender mainstreaming. This strategy if used consistently, would promote increased participation by women at all levels and in all delegations involved in international negotiations, and the inclusion of this perspective in the reports, decisions and programmes adopted.

Sub-theme 2: “The roles of women in the prevention of conflicts”

35. Delegates noted in this connection the importance of Resolution 1325, adopted by the United Nations Security Council on 31 October 2000, regarding the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding. The Resolution states that the reinforcement of the rule of law should include the protection of the human rights of women, particularly as they relate to the Constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary. It calls upon all states and/or international organisations to undertake such democratic reforms. This resolution, supplemented by the implementation report drawn up by the Secretary General of the United Nations, provides delegates with a solid legal basis on which to achieve some progress on these issues. The delegates agreed that regional documents such as the Final Declaration of the Conference: "Gender Equality: a core issue in changing societies" supplemented the United Nations resolution very effectively.

36. The delegates also welcomed the work of the Council of Europe on the protection of human rights and of equality. They observed that most of the achievements in this field were largely attributable to the ongoing work carried out within the Council of Europe, which had helped to put these issues at the top of the international political agenda. They expressed their satisfaction with the Declaration and with the Programme of Action, which would serve as a framework for the promotion of equality as a fundamental criterion of democracy.

Promotion of equal opportunities, rights, freedoms and responsibilities for women and men

37. Equal rights do not always imply equal opportunities. Women are more often unemployed, they are often alone in bringing up children and caring for elderly persons and other dependants. Generally their earnings are lower and they have fewer financial and other assets. Moreover, they bear a double burden and a double responsibility as a result of their occupational activity and hours of housework, a major obstacle to their participation in public and political life. Equality between women and men should be upheld and encouraged so that each may benefit from its advantages within the family, in the workplace and in political and economic life, in all sectors and at all levels. The delegates welcomed the vital destined role to be played in this regard by Protocol No. 12 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which prohibits any form of sex discrimination on the part of any public authority.

Balanced participation of women and men in public and political decision-making

38. Participants emphasised that balanced representation of women and men is part and parcel of good governance. According to the data compiled by the CDEG in its report "Women in politics in the Council of Europe member States"^[4], at present there are no woman ministers in the governments of 7 member States, while in 10 others women account for fewer than 10% of ministers. In 11 member States men represent over 90% of MPs and there are only 7 member States in which women represent over 30% (the minimum percentage at which women are considered to make a difference). The average percentage of women MPs in the Parliaments of the member States of the Council of Europe is 17.5%.

39. The introduction of true equality in the organs of power can be achieved not only by coercive measures, such as the introduction of legislation on quotas, but also by measures designed to change the political climate and to combat the stereotyping of women as being insufficiently qualified to participate in decision-making processes. Some delegates, for example, favoured co-operation with NGOs to develop programmes to increase political parties' awareness of the importance of gender mainstreaming in all policies. Others stated that they had great expectations in this area of the adoption and implementation of the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making^[5].

Gender mainstreaming

40. It has been observed that a policy of equality, if it is to be carried out fully, must be supported by gender mainstreaming strategies. The promotion of this concept implies transforming government and State institutions and paying attention to links between national equality mechanisms and other public sectors and NGOs. Expertise in gender mainstreaming must be taken into account along with all other expertise, for example in peace negotiations.

41. A number of delegations noted that the Council of Europe was the first Organisation to have provided a specific definition and a process analysis of gender mainstreaming, which had enabled them to develop their own strategies.

42. They welcomed the work of the Council of Europe in this field as being of major importance in developing gender mainstreaming within the Organisation and the member States. Delegates expressed satisfaction that the Conference Resolution on “The roles of women and men in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict democratic processes - a gender perspective” contained proposals for gender mainstreaming in this field, thus reinforcing the measures taken by the United Nations, and in particular Resolution 1325 regarding the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding.

Good practices in the prevention of conflicts

43. As far as the prevention of conflicts is concerned, respect for the human rights and better socio-economic and development conditions, together with good governance, were considered to be the leading factors in the prevention of conflicts. Delegates emphasised that the prevention of conflicts called for the study, the analysis and the implementation of the good practices referred to during the conference. To extend the role of women in the prevention of conflicts within the geographic area of the Council of Europe, close co-operation and an exchange of good practices between international organisations and national authorities was seen as indispensable.

44. The existence of social movements and NGOs promoting and upholding the rights of women, including women from minority groups, constitutes a powerful instrument of social and political cohesion. Governments have been called upon to support NGOs in their efforts to achieve lasting peace and to invest in women’s NGOs as a strategy for the prevention and resolution of conflicts and for peacebuilding, in particular at the local level, where women’s groups have played an important and recognised role.

45. Education that includes respect for human rights, human dignity and tolerance should be encouraged and dispensed both to future generations and to bodies such as public authorities, institutions and NGOs, which should be encouraged to work together. It has also been suggested that language be reviewed – the language of battle and confrontation, the patriarchal language, often crammed with military expressions, used by journalists and politicians. It is not a question of legislating on the matter, language being a living and evolving thing, but of introducing notions of positive relations.

46. Delegates also emphasised the role that the media can play in exacerbating or in helping to resolve conflicts, because of their ability to stir up hostile opinions and to rally the public. It is therefore necessary to include gender mainstreaming in the information strategies of newspapers, radio and television, particularly in situations of economic, political and social crisis preceding or following armed conflicts.

47. The importance of international co-operation was also emphasised. It was suggested that the UN agencies and the Council of Europe hold regular high-level meetings and meetings of experts in order to improve co-operation, share information and develop expertise. The idea of Council of Europe participation in developing gender-based early warning devices was given warm support: a central data base set up and managed by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) would regularly disseminate information on women and armed conflicts to the Secretariat, to member States, to intergovernmental organisations, to regional organisations, to NGOs and to other relevant bodies.

48. Finally, it was emphasised that the Council of Europe should contribute to peace by defending the fundamental rights of women and by encouraging their decisive contribution to preventing, managing and resolving conflicts. Member States should join forces within the Council of Europe so that international initiatives can be improved and reinforced by the development of national strategies, laws and policies.

49. The European Ministers whose task it is to bring about equality between men and women called for a new approach to policies for the prevention of conflicts and peacebuilding which takes account of the needs and talents of women. The Ministries unanimously declared that if women are not fully involved in the reconstruction of democracy, all efforts to establish a stable society will be doomed to failure.

Appendix I**LIST OF HEADS OF DELEGATION****LISTE DES CHEFS DE DELEGATION****MEMBER STATES/ETATS MEMBRES****ALBANIA/ALBANIE**

Mrs Merita NDREKO-HAXHI, Adviser on Policy Affairs to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania

ANDORRA/ANDORRE

Mme Mertixell FONT VILAGINES, Division des Affaires multilatérales, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères

ARMENIA/ARMENIE**AUSTRIA/AUTRICHE**

Ms Bernadette GISINGER-SCHINDLER, Bundesministerium für soziale Sicherheit und Generationen

AZERBAIDJAN/ AZERBAIJAN

Ms Zahra GULIYEVA, Chairperson, State Committee for Women's Issues

BELGIUM/BELGIQUE

Mme Carine JOLY, Conseillère Adjointe, Direction de l'égalité des chances, Ministère fédéral de l'Emploi et du Travail

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA/BOSNIE ET HERZEGOVINE

Mr Fahrudin KULENOVIC, Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina, SKOPJE

BULGARIA/BULGARIE

Mr Radoslav BOZADZHIEV, Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs

CROATIA/CROATIE

Mrs Zeljka ANTUNOVIC, Deputy Prime Minister, Defence Minister, Government of the Republic of Croatia

CYPRUS/CHYPRE

Mr Alecos SHAMBOS, Minister of Justice and Public Order, Ministry of Justice and Public Order

CZECH REPUBLIC/REPUBLIQUE TCHEQUE

Ms Jaroslava PRIBYLOVA, Ministry of Defence

DENMARK/DANEMARK

Ms Vibeke ABEL, Deputy General Secretary, Head of Department, Ministry for Gender Equality

ESTONIA/ESTONIE

Ms Kätlin SANDER, Lawyer of the Equality Bureau, Ministry of Social Affairs

FINLAND/FINLANDE

Ms Birgitta STENIUS-MLADENOV, Ambassador, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

FRANCE

Mme Brigitte GRESY, Chef du service des Droits des femmes et de l'égalité, Ministère délégué à la parité et à l'égalité professionnelle

GEORGIA/GEORGIEGERMANY/ALLEMAGNE

Ms Christel RIEMANN-HANEWINCKEL, Parliamentary State Secretary, Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

GREECE/GRECE

Ms Heleni VAKALI, Embassy of Greece, SKOPJE

HUNGARY/HONGRIE

Dr Katalin LEVAI, Director General, Ministerial Commissioner, Ministry of Employment and Labour

ICELAND/ISLANDEIRELAND/IRLANDE

Mr John KENNY, Principal, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform

ITALY/ITALIE

Dr Clara COLLARILE, Head of International Affairs, Department for Equal Opportunities, Presidency of the Council of Ministers

LATVIA/LETTONIELIECHTENSTEINLITHUANIA/LITUANIE

Mr Rimantas KAIRELIS, State Secretary, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour

LUXEMBOURG

Mme Anne KAYSER, Adjointe au Représentant permanent du Luxembourg auprès du Conseil de l'Europe, Ministère des Affaires étrangères du Grand Duché du Luxembourg

MALTA/MALTEMOLDOVA

Mme Anghelina APOSTOL, Vice Ministre, Ministère du Travail et de la Protection Sociale

NETHERLANDS/PAYS-BAS

Ms Flora VAN HOUWELINGEN, Chair of the CDEG, Deputy Director, Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, Department for the Co-ordination of Emancipation Policy (DCE)

NORWAY/NORVEGE

Ms Laila DAVØY, Minister, Ministry for Children and Family Affairs

POLAND/POLOGNE

Ms Izabela JARUGA-NOWACKA, State Secretary, Government Plenipotentiary for the Equal Status of Women and Men, Chancellery of the Prime Minister

PORTUGAL

Ms Amelia PAIVA, President of the Commission for Equal Opportunities and Women's Rights, Ministry of the Presidency

ROMANIA/ROUMANIE

Ms Silvia CIORNEI, Minister for Small and Medium Sized Companies and Cooperatives

RUSSIAN FEDERATION/FEDERATION DE RUSSIE

Ms Marina GORDEEVA, Director, Family, Women and Children Department, Ministry of Labour and Social Development

SAN MARINO/SAINT MARINSLOVAKIA/SLOVAQUIE

Mr Peter GURÁN, Director General of the Family Policy Section, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic

SLOVENIA/SLOVENIE

Ms Mira OLUP UMEK, Director, Equal Opportunities Office of the Slovene Government

SPAIN/ESPAGNE

Ms Carmen de MIGUEL GARCIA, General Director, Women's Institute, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

SWEDEN/SUEDE

Ms Margareta WINBERG, Deputy Prime Minister, Prime Minister's Office, Swedish Government

SWITZERLAND/SUISSE

Mme Patricia SCHULZ, Directrice du Bureau fédéral de l'égalité entre femmes et hommes, Département fédéral de l'intérieur

"THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA" / "L'EX-REPUBLIQUE YOUGOSLAVE DE MACEDOINE"

Mr Branko CRVENKOVSKI, President of the Government

Ms Radmila SEKERINSKA, Vice Prime Minister

Mr Jovan MANASIJEVSKI, Minister, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

TURKEY/TURQUIE

Mr Mehmet TASER, Ambassador, Embassy of the Republic of Turkey, SKOPJE

UKRAINE

Ms Valentyna DOVZHENKO, Head of State Committee of Ukraine for Family and Youth

UNITED KINGDOM/ROYAUME-UNI

Ms Liz CHENNELLS, Director, Gender Equality, Department of Trade and Industry, Women and Equality Unit

* * *

COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS/COMITE DES MINISTRES

Mme Anna LAMPEROVA, Ambassadeur Extraordinaire et Plénipotentiaire, Représentation permanente de la Slovaquie auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE/ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Mme Minodora CLIVETI, MP, Chambre des Députés, BUCAREST

CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES OF EUROPE/CONGRES DES POUVOIRS LOCAUX ET REGIONAUX DE L'EUROPE - CLRAE/CPLRE

Ms Diane BUNYAN, Councillor, Bristol City Council, BRISTOL

* * *

OBSERVER STATES/ETATS OBSERVATEURSHOLY SEE/SAINT-SIEGE

Mr Edmond FARHAT, Apostolic Nuncio in Turkey, ANKARA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA/ETATS UNIS D'AMERIQUECANADA

M Habib MASSOUD, Chef de Bureau, Bureau de l'Ambassade du Canada, SKOPJE

JAPAN/JAPON

Mr Naoki ONISHI, Consul (attorney), Consulate General of Japan, STRASBOURG

MEXICO/MEXIQUE

* * *

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA/REPUBLIQUE FÉDÉRALE DE YOUGOSLAVIE

Ms Dragana PETROVIC, Coordinator, Yugoslav Commission for Cooperation with UNICEF and the Advancement of Women

* * *

STEERING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS (CDDH)/COMITE DIRECTEUR SUR LES DROITS DE L'HOMME (CDDH)

Mr Krzysztof DRZEWICKI, Minister Counsellor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Permanent Representative of Poland to the Council of Europe, STRASBOURG

EUROPEAN COMMISSION AGAINST RACISM AND INTOLERANCE (ECRI)/ COMMISSION EUROPEENNE CONTRE LE RACISME ET L'INTOLERANCE (ECRI).

Excusée/apologised

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL COHESION (CDCS)/COMITE EUROPEEN POUR LA COHESION SOCIALE (CDCS).

STEERING COMMITTEE FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEMOCRACY (CDLR)/ COMITE DIRECTEUR POUR LA DEMOCRATIE LOCALE ET REGIONALE (CDLR).

Ms Maja ORTAKOVA, State Counsellor, Ministry of Local Self-Government, SKOPJE

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION/COMMISSION EUROPEENNE

SECRETARIAT GENERAL OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT/PARLEMENT EUROPEEN

* * *

ORGANISATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE)/ORGANISATION POUR LA SECURITE ET LA COOPERATION EN EUROPE (OSCE).

Ms Beatrix ATTINGER COLIJN, Senior Advisor on Gender Issues, OSCE, VIENNA

ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD)/ORGANISATION DE COOPÉRATION ET DE DÉVELOPPEMENT ECONOMIQUES (OCDE).

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (UNHCHR)/ HAUT COMMISSAIRE DES NATIONS UNIES AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME

Excusée/apologised for absence

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)/HAUT COMMISSARIAT DES NATIONS UNIES POUR LES RÉFUGIÉS

Mr Christos THEODOROPOULOS, Deputy Representative (Protection) UNHCR, SKOPJE

UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW)/COMMISSION SUR LA CONDITION DE LA FEMME DES NATIONS UNIES (CCF).

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)/ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'EDUCATION, LA SCIENCE ET LA CULTURE (UNESCO).

Ms Annali KRISTIANSEN, Assistant Programme Specialist, UNESCO, PARIS

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN (UNIFEM)/FONDS DES NATIONS UNIES POUR LA FEMME (UNIFEM).

Ms Osnat LUBRANI, Regional Programme Director, UNIFEM Regional Office, BRATISLAVA

UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (INSTRAW)/INSTITUT INTERNATIONAL DE RECHERCHE ET DE FORMATION POUR LA PROMOTION DE LA FEMME (INSTRAW)

WORLD BANK/BANQUE MONDIALE

[Excusée/apologised for absence]

WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION (WHO)/ORGANISATION MONDIALE DE LA SANTE (OMS)INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION (ILO)/BUREAU INTERNATIONAL DU TRAVAIL (BIT)

[Excusée/apologised for absence]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY UNION/L'UNION INTERPARLEMENTAIRE

[Excusée/apologised for absence]

GENDER TASK FORCE OF THE STABILITY PACT FOR SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE (SP-GTF)/GENDER TASK FORCE DU PACTE DE STABILITE POUR L'EUROPE DU SUD-EST (SP-GTF)

Ms Sonja LOKAR, Stability Pact Gender Task Force, LJUBLJANA

EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ETUC)/CONFEDERATION EUROPEENNE DES SYNDICATS (CES)UNION OF INDUSTRIAL AND EMPLOYERS' CONFEDERATIONS OF EUROPE (UNICE)/UNION DES CONFEDERATIONS DE L'INDUSTRIE ET DES EMPLOYEURS D'EUROPE (UNICE)REGROUPING "EQUALITY-PARITY-WOMEN-MEN"/REGROUPEMENT "EGALITÉ-PARITÉ-FEMMES-HOMMES"COUNCIL OF WOMEN WORLD LEADERS

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KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Ms Elisabeth REHN, UNIFEM Independent Expert, FINLAND

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DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE/SECRETAIRE GENERALE ADJOINTE DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Ms Maud DE BOER-BUQUICCHIO

Appendix II

AGENDA

1. Opening of the Conference by Ms Maud DE BOER-BUQUICCHIO
Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe
2. Address by the Prime Minister, Mr Branko CRVENKOVSKI
3. Address by Ms Maud DE BOER-BUQUICCHIO
Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe
4. Election of the Chair and two Vice-Chairs of the Conference

5. Statements by representatives of the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe of the Council of Europe
6. Adoption of the Agenda
7. Presentation and discussion of the theme and sub-themes of the Conference

Theme: “Democratisation, conflict prevention and peacebuilding: the perspectives and the roles of women”

Sub-theme 1: The roles of women in democratisation and peacebuilding

Keynote speech by Ms Elisabeth REHN, UNIFEM Independent Expert

Sub-theme 2: The roles of women in the prevention of conflicts

Projection of a documentary about the role of women in the prevention of conflicts introduced by the Chair of the Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men (CDEG), Ms Flora VAN HOUWELINGEN

8. Other business
9. Adoption of the draft Declaration and Programme of Action and of the draft Resolutions
10. Close of the Conference

Documents of the Conference

Working documents

General theme: Democratisation, conflict prevention and peace building: the perspectives and the roles of women

Draft agenda	MEG-5(2003)1
Practical arrangements for the Conference and guidelines for the Ministers' Discussions	MEG-5(2003)2
Programme	MEG-5(2003)2 Addendum

Sub-theme 1: The roles of women in democratisation and peace building

Sub-theme 2: The roles of women in the prevention of conflicts

Reports and memoranda from the member States, in the order received by the Secretariat:

Report from the Spanish delegation	MEG-5(2002)5
Report from the Turkish delegation	MEG-5(2002)6
Report from the Greek delegation	MEG-5(2002)7
Report from the Luxembourg delegation	MEG-5(2002)8
Report from the Ukrainian delegation	MEG-5(2002)9
Report from the Azerbaijan delegation	MEG-5(2002)10

Report from the Irish delegation	MEG-5(2002)11 rev
Report from the Croatian delegation	MEG-5(2002)12
Report from the Norwegian delegation	MEG-5(2002)13 rev
Report from “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” delegation	MEG-5(2002)14
Report from the Portuguese delegation	MEG-5(2002)16
Report from the Swiss delegation	MEG-5(2002)17 rev
Report from the Belgian delegation	MEG-5(2002)18
Report from the Slovak delegation	MEG-5(2002)20
Report from the German delegation	MEG-5(2002)21
Report from the Armenian delegation	MEG-5(2002)22
Draft political texts	
Draft Declaration and Programme of Action: “Gender equality: a core issue in changing societies”	MEG-5(2003)3
Draft Resolution on the Roles of women and men in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict democratic processes: a gender perspective	MEG-5(2003)4
Background documents	
National machinery, action plans and gender mainstreaming in the Council of Europe member States since the United Nations 4th World Conference on Women	EG(2002)3
Compilation of internationally agreed texts on the general theme of the Conference since the United Nations 4 th World Conference on Women	EG(2002)4
Twenty-five years of Council of Europe action in the field of equality between women and men	EG(2002)5
Women in Politics in the member States of the Council of Europe	EG(2002)6 rev
Compilation of Council of Europe texts dealing with the question of men and gender equality	EG(2002)7
Inventory of initiatives and actions regarding women and peace in Europe	EG/Sem/Peace(2001)2 rev
Proceedings of the Seminar on the participation of women in	

the prevention and resolution of conflicts

(Strasbourg, 20-21 September 2001)

EG/Sem/Peace(2001)9

Text of the video "Voices from the grassroots"

MEG-5(2002)19

Appendix III

Declaration and Programme of Action

Gender Equality: a core issue in changing societies

The Ministers of the States participating in the 5th European Ministerial Conference on Equality between Women and Men, held in Skopje on 22-23 January 2003;

Reaffirming the commitment of the member States of the Council of Europe to the fundamental principles of pluralist democracy, which are the rule of law and respect for human rights, and of which gender equality is a full part;

Stressing the importance of Council of Europe activities during the last 25 years to promote women's human rights and gender equality, especially after the democratic changes in Central and Eastern Europe, and inviting member States to reinforce their co-operation in this field;

Recalling the Declaration adopted at the 4th European Ministerial Conference on Equality between Women and Men (Istanbul, 13-14 November 1997), emphasising that equality between women and men is a fundamental criterion of democracy, which should be enriched through gender-balanced representation in political, public and professional life and through greater participation of men in the sphere of private life and caring responsibilities, especially in the everyday care of children, family and home;

Affirming that the Council of Europe has a crucial role to play in promoting gender equality in its member States through, for example, defining common principles and standards for a policy framework for the realisation of equality of women and men in a changing society and combating violence against women and trafficking in human beings;

Agree to enhance the impact of the Council of Europe programme of activities in the field of gender equality at the pan-European level, by focusing them around some fundamental issues related to democratic stability, social cohesion and human rights, in line with the texts adopted at the 2nd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (1997), as well as at the Rome Conference on Human Rights (2000);

Agree that equality between women and men can only be reached by using the dual and complementary strategies of specific gender equality policies and gender mainstreaming;

Welcome the activities undertaken by the Council of Europe to protect and promote the human rights of women and agree that these activities should be focused on the following main objectives:

- promotion of equal opportunities, rights, freedoms and responsibilities of women and men;
- preventing and combating violence against women and trafficking in human beings;
- development of gender mainstreaming, within the Council of Europe and at the national level.

Agree on the following programme of action and ask the Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men (CDEG) of the Council of Europe to implement it, in co-operation and/or close consultation with other bodies of the Organisation. In particular, the Committee should work closely with other Steering Committees concerned;

Request the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to make all appropriate arrangements for the implementation by the CDEG of this programme by allocating it adequate resources.

Programme of action

Objective I: Promotion of equal opportunities, rights, freedoms and responsibilities of women and men

Bearing in mind this objective, the CDEG should carry out the following activities:

- continue its standard-setting work on the balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making and undertake follow-up activities with a view to promoting the implementation of common standards throughout Europe;
- collect and disseminate good practices on gender-balanced reconciliation of professional and private life; develop new activities in this field focusing on men;
- undertake work on women's contributions to conflict prevention, peace and security issues, including intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, and in particular examine the possibility of defining common policies with a view to ensuring balanced participation of women and men in decision-making regarding peace negotiations, conflict prevention and resolution and the rebuilding of post-conflict societies;
- develop policies and measures which could be of assistance to member States in the adoption and/or review of equal opportunities legislation and national gender equality plans – including for the equal participation of women and men in the economic life of a country - and the strengthening of national equality machinery;
- analyse and monitor the development of equal opportunities legislation, national gender equality plans and national equality machinery in member States with a view, as appropriate, to implementing common pan-European objectives in this field; promote an active exchange of information and experience on these issues;

Objective II: Preventing and combating violence against women and trafficking in human beings

Bearing in mind this objective, the CDEG should carry out the following activities:

- develop Council of Europe norms and standards to prevent and combat violence against women and trafficking in human beings and monitor their implementation;
- develop its work on specific aspects of gender-based violence, proposing norms and/or strategies to combat this type of violence;
- develop its work on men and violence against women through new activities to be defined by the Committee.
- continue and review its work on common objectives and strategies to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings and undertake any initiatives which might prove necessary to that effect;
- step up its assistance activities in the field of combating trafficking in human beings, in association with the relevant international organisations.

Objective III: Development of gender mainstreaming, within the Council of Europe and at the national level

Bearing in mind this objective, the CDEG should carry out the following activities:

- step up its work to promote the strategy of gender mainstreaming and, in this context, promote an exchange of information and experience between its member States regarding development of gender disaggregated

statistics, indicators, gender budgeting, awareness-raising, education and training, methods and instruments to favour the use of gender mainstreaming in practice;

- develop, in this context, specific expertise to be put at the disposal of those working with the gender mainstreaming strategy in the member States of the Council of Europe;

- develop, and/or undertake, as appropriate, in co-operation with other steering committees of the Council of Europe, activities aimed at promoting the use of the strategy of gender mainstreaming within the Council of Europe in the various policy fields, such as: education policies, social policies, health policies, refugee and IDP policies, new information policies, youth policies, policies regarding demography and sustainable development, peace and security policies and policies at the local level;

- examine, and assess as a regular procedure, all legal and political instruments to be adopted by the Committee of Ministers with a view to preventing any gender bias in these instruments.

Resolution

The roles of women and men in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict democratic processes – a gender perspective

1. The Ministers of the States participating in the 5th European Ministerial Conference on Equality between Women and Men (Skopje, 22-23 January 2003);
2. Recalling that the principles of pluralist democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights – which are the guiding principles of the Council of Europe – constitute the basis for their co-operation;
3. Recalling the commitments entered into by the member States of the Council of Europe under the European Convention on Human Rights (1950) and highlighting the crucial role to be played by its Protocol No. 12 which prohibits discrimination;
4. Recalling the Declaration on equality of women and men of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe of 16 November 1988, which establishes equality between women and men as a principle of human rights, a *sine qua non* of democracy and an imperative of social justice;
5. Also recalling the Final Declaration of the Second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 10-11 October 1997) as well as Resolution II of the European Ministerial Conference on Human Rights (Rome, November 2000) both of which express the conviction that the promotion of human rights and the strengthening of pluralist democracy contribute to stability in Europe and call for the balanced representation of women and men in all fields of society;
6. Reaffirming their commitments to the goals set out in the Declaration on equality between women and men as a fundamental criterion of democracy, adopted at the 4th European Ministerial Conference on Equality between Women and Men (Istanbul, 13-14 November 1997);
7. Reaffirming their commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and highlighting the crucial role played by its Optional Protocol of 10 December 1999, as well as reaffirming their commitments expressed in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the UN 4th World Conference on Women (September 1995) and in the Beijing +5 Political Declaration and Outcome Document adopted at the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly (June 2000);
8. Welcoming the adoption, by the United Nations Security Council, on 31 October 2000, of Resolution 1325 regarding the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding;

9. Welcoming the adoption of the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Treaty (Ottawa Treaty, December 1997) and its entry into force on 1 March 1999, and recognising that women and children are particularly affected by the indiscriminate use of antipersonnel land mines;
 10. Welcoming the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and highlighting the crucial role played by its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children;
 11. Welcoming the adoption of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (17 July 1998) and its entry into force on 1 July 2002, which provides that rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilisation or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity are crimes against humanity when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack;
 12. Concerned by persisting situations of conflict or crisis in Europe, the increase of various forms of terrorism and other threats to democratic security which pose a serious threat for human rights, democracy and the rule of law;
 13. Affirming that armed conflict has a different impact on women and on men and that a gender-sensitive approach to the application of international human rights law and international humanitarian law is necessary before, during and after conflicts;
 14. Bearing in mind that the majority of the victims of conflicts, including refugees and internally displaced persons, are women and children;
 15. Reaffirming the crucial role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, in peacebuilding and in post-conflict democratic processes, as well as in intercultural and inter-religious dialogue;
 16. Noting, with grave concern, that in spite of the role and the recognised contribution of women to the promotion of peace and democratic security, women are still marginalised or excluded from the peacebuilding processes during conflict as well as the democratisation processes in societies in transition from conflict, thereby hindering the development of peaceful societies;
 17. Considering that continuing to marginalise women in these areas is a waste of resources, skills and competence and minimizes the chances for successful conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict democratic processes;
- * * *
18. Agree that the goal must be to build democratic societies where conflicts are resolved in a non-violent manner, *inter alia* through political dialogue and in accordance with international law and the relevant human rights instruments;
 19. Emphasise that, to reach this end, any policy regarding peace and security must consist of a twofold approach:
 - a. the full participation of women at all levels of decision-making in local, national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, resolution of conflict, including peace negotiations, and democratisation of societies after conflict;
 - b. the integration of a gender perspective in all activities aimed at conflict prevention and resolution, including peace agreements, the promotion of peace and construction of a democratic society;
 20. Encourage governments and all institutions and groups concerned to implement, strengthen and support initiatives based on the strategies set out in the appendix to this Resolution;

21. Encourage the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to take all necessary measures for the achievement of the objectives set out in this Resolution, and in particular:

- organise meetings of European ministers and/or politicians on themes related to conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict democratic processes from a gender perspective;
- invite the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) to set up a network to enable women politicians to come together regularly to discuss conflict prevention and peacebuilding with women's NGOs involved in such activities;
- invite the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe to support local organisations and grassroots groups working at the local level on issues of peace and security and assist them with networking;
- promote the implementation of Recommendation No. (2000) 11 on action against trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation and Recommendation Rec (2002) 5 on the protection of women against violence;
- adopt the draft Recommendation on the balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making and take the necessary measures for its implementation;
- invite the Steering Committee for equality between women and men (CDEG) to develop its activities regarding the roles of women and men in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict democratic processes, including activities related to women's contributions to intercultural and inter-religious dialogue;
- invite its Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on Legal Aspects of Territorial Asylum, Refugees and Stateless Persons (CAHAR) to consider the feasibility of accepting gender-based persecution as a basis for refugee status;

22. Agree on the strategies set out in the appendix to this Resolution.

Appendix to the Resolution

Peacebuilding strategies for changing societies

Human rights of women and the non-violent resolution of conflicts

Governments are invited to:

- a. organise meetings between ministers, decision-makers and NGOs involved in conflict prevention and resolution and peacebuilding;
- b. encourage the inclusion of human rights, conflict prevention and resolution, mutual understanding, a culture of peace and gender equality in formal and non-formal education at all levels;
- c. provide training in human rights and gender equality, as appropriate, for those involved in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict democratic processes;
- d. take measures aiming at encouraging young people, and particularly young women, to participate in conflict prevention and resolution and in the peacebuilding process;
- e. raise public awareness on the violation of the human rights of women during and after conflicts, and on the increase of domestic violence, gender-based violence, sexual violence and trafficking for the purpose of sexual and economic exploitation;

- f. provide information on international law and human rights instruments, including those concerning women's human rights, especially through new information technologies;
- g. encourage and support networking among non-governmental organisations, in particular women's organisations, involved in conflict prevention and resolution and peacebuilding;

Governments and international organisations are invited to:

- a. encourage and support women's regional projects on conflict prevention and resolution and peacebuilding, both within and across borders;
- b. encourage the work of NGOs dealing with peace issues, in particular women's and youth organisations, especially by providing appropriate technical, logistic and financial support;

NGOs are invited to:

- a. develop more cross-border activities and projects involving partners from neighbouring countries;
- b. seek ways to link up with well-established human rights organisations and networks in order to make their work better known;
- c. make efforts to intensify their co-operation with decision-makers in order for their interests, experiences, initiatives and solutions to be taken on board as a substantial contribution to their work;

The media are invited to:

- a. refrain from portraying stereotypes based on gender, ethnicity and religion;
- b. promote peace by producing programmes which foster gender equality and non-discrimination, stimulate mutual understanding and oppose intolerance and racism.

2. Balanced participation of women and men in decision-making

Governments are invited to:

- a. take the necessary measures to recognise and promote the equal and individual rights of women and men to participate in political life, in particular by combating the practice of family voting;
- b. take measures aiming at increasing the number of women in decision-making bodies in political and public life at all levels, *inter alia* by enacting legislation and taking special measures for political parties, social partners, other professional organisations, public institutions, etc.;
- c. take measures to achieve a gender balance in public appointments to committees or missions;
- d. take the necessary measures to ensure that women have an equal opportunity to reach all levels in the diplomatic services;
- e. increase the number of women candidates to high-level decision-making posts in international organisations;
- f. ensure that women are involved in all stages of conflict prevention, resolution and reconstruction, including peace mediation and negotiations;
- g. take the necessary measures to train mediators involved in conflict resolution, peace missions and peace support operations to apply a gender perspective;
- h. encourage parliaments and local and regional authorities to examine their time tables and working methods in order to enable women and men legislators to reconcile their work and family life;

- i. encourage the work of NGOs dealing with the empowerment of women for active citizenship, especially by providing appropriate logistic and financial support;

International organisations are invited to:

- a. support training for women who wish to become actively involved in the field of conflict prevention and resolution;
- b. ensure a balanced participation of women and men in their staff and in their field missions;

NGOs and political parties are invited to:

- a. organise training for women in active citizenship and involvement in political and public decision-making;
- b. organise broadly, at local, national, regional and international level, support for women already engaged in political or public life at all levels of society to ensure their continuing involvement in post-conflict reconstruction;

3. Gender equality and gender mainstreaming

Governments are invited to:

- a. fully implement international instruments and programmes designed to advance and empower women, and take the necessary measures to translate them into national languages and to make them available and known to the general public;
- b. adopt and implement procedures to promote gender equality and integrate a gender perspective in the framework of their international co-operation policy;
- c. consider a gender screening of their legislation relevant to conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict democratic processes and introduce a systematic gender impact assessment into legislative processes, policies, programmes and budgeting;

Governments and international organisations are invited to:

- a. encourage and support national and transnational research in women's and gender equality issues relating to conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict democratic processes;
- b. integrate a gender equality perspective in the planning, design and implementation of peace-keeping operations and humanitarian aid;
- c. introduce gender-sensitive training for participants of international peace-keeping and conflict resolution operations;
- d. set up, improve and implement codes of conduct for participants in peace-keeping and conflict resolution operations to prevent all forms of violence against women;
- e. provide assistance to victims of conflicts, including refugees and internally displaced persons, giving special attention to the needs of women and girls, particularly war widows, female-headed households and orphans;
- f. set up special gender-based programmes to heal women and men from trauma and give them the necessary training and skills to survive after conflict.

Resolution expressing appreciation to the host authorities

The Ministers participating in the 5th European Ministerial Conference on equality between women and men, held in Skopje on 22-23 January 2003;

Aware of the progress that equality between women and men will constitute for democracy and the development of peaceful societies and of the contribution that the Skopje Conference has also made to such progress;

Express their warmest thanks to the Government of “the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” for the excellent organisation of this Conference in Skopje and for its kind hospitality;

Take note of the invitation by the Government of Sweden to hold the 6th European Ministerial Conference on equality between women and men.

Appendix IV

Opening address by Ms Maud de Boer-Buquicchio

Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Prime Minister,

Ministers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Two years ago, on 22 February 2001, Trial Chamber II of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia delivered its ruling on the first trial ever focusing exclusively on systematic sexual violence perpetrated against women in an armed conflict. In this special case, the Tribunal held that rape had been used as an instrument of terror by the armed forces and found the three defendants guilty of rape and torture as war crimes and crimes against humanity.

This was an historic moment. The ruling set an example regarding respect for women’s human rights during wartime.

In the past, such crimes were considered as a “normal” corollary of war. Women were subjected to the most odious forms of violence, including sexual violence and exploitation. Fortunately, the international community now outlaws such violence. The Statute of the International Criminal Court, which came into force on 1 July 2002, is explicit in this respect.

In recalling this, I wish not only to emphasise the progress that has been made, but also to emphasise that I consider the theme of this Conference, “Democratisation, conflict prevention and peacebuilding: the perspectives and roles of women”, as most important. Women are not spared by wars. Civilians constitute the majority of victims in modern wars. Women and children make up the majority of refugees. It would therefore be a great mistake if women were to be kept silent on issues of peace and security.

Women must take part in conflict prevention, peace building and democratisation of society after conflict.

There is another reason why women must take part in conflict prevention and rebuilding of societies after conflict. Women are not only victims of wars; on the contrary, they are very active during wartime. They are often the sole breadwinners and keep families and communities together, in very difficult circumstances. It would be a great mistake not to give women their place at the negotiation table, when conflicts are resolved, and when decisions are taken regarding the rebuilding of society after conflict. Otherwise, we run the risk that no perfect and lasting solutions will be found.

I am pleased that the draft resolution to be submitted to the Ministers at this conference insists on the importance of using the strategy of gender mainstreaming in all matters regarding conflict. The prerequisite for such policy would mean that more women should find their way into the diplomatic services, peace keeping forces and humanitarian aid programmes.

I also hope that this Conference will make women's efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts better known. Their actions have often been exemplary. Among the many examples, I should like to mention the action of the Women's Coalition in Northern Ireland who claimed their place in the Good Friday Peace negotiations, the women who created the Gender Task Force of the Stability Pact for South East Europe, the Soldier's Mothers in Russia, the Women in Black in Belgrade and many other cities. I wish to pay tribute to the courage and strength of all these women, and hope that their actions will serve as an example to others. For my part, as the Council of Europe is increasingly involved in conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation activities, I will pass on the message that our Organisation needs to take more account of women's actions and contributions when preparing and implementing such activities.

In fact, this question is intimately linked to the lack of women in political decision-making. This is an issue, which the Council of Europe has worked on untiringly for the last 15 years. Has this work borne any fruit? Before I came here, I had a look at the progress made since the 4th European Ministerial Conference, held in Istanbul, five years ago. The figures are as follows: In 1997, in the then 40 member States, women made up 15.2 % of MPs. The figures collected in November 2002 show that in the 44 member States they now represent 17.5%. At this rate, we will still need almost 100 years to reach balanced representation of women and men in national parliaments. In 11 member States men still represent over 90% of MPs, and there are still 7 governments without any women ministers.

Are we going to wait for 100 years or do we really wish to do something about this? A strong political will, at the European and national levels appears to be needed to introduce measures to increase women's participation in decision-making. Such measures may vary from country to country, from context to context. They may take the form of a law, or simply be organised within the political parties themselves.

The Council of Europe has already taken measures to address this aim, the latest being the preparation of a Recommendation on the balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making which will probably be adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in March this year.

I am pleased to see that some of the new member States have already understood the necessity of such measures, and that our host country has already introduced a quota of 30% of women on candidate lists during the recent elections. As a result, more women were appointed members of the Government and the Parliament.

Greater participation of women in political life should start at an early age. The Equality and the Youth sectors of the Council of Europe will join efforts later this year to organise a policy oriented seminar aimed at promoting participation of young women in political life. The Council of Europe Prize "Young Active Citizens" in 2003 will be devoted to this issue as well. Participation is not only a matter of legislation and policy measures but also of awareness raising and education for democratic citizenship.

Strong action must be taken to combat trafficking in human beings

One of the biggest problems we have to face in Europe today, and one of those which concerns women to a much greater extent than men, is that of trafficking in human beings. Some months ago, I read an interview with Helga Konrad, who, as many of you know, heads the Stability Pact's Task Force on Trafficking. She said the following: "Between 120,000 and 170,000 people are being trafficked a year in the Balkans and elsewhere in South East Europe. Many of them are women working in the sex trade". And she went on: "Traffickers operate with impunity, generating billions of dollars, while victims of trafficking are most often treated as criminal and illegal migrants... Ninety percent of the sex trade in the region involves women who have been trafficked. Men are mainly forced into bondage labour, in small factories or sweat shops. Children are used for begging".

It is probably no coincidence that the Equality Committee, composed in its majority of women, was the only Steering Committee of the Council of Europe to take up the issue of trafficking more than ten years ago. At that time, few people could foresee that this odious phenomenon would reach such dramatic intensity. After having drafted Recommendation (2000) 11 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on action against trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation, and organising many follow-up activities, the Committee

has prepared a feasibility study regarding the possibility of preparing a draft European Convention on action against trafficking in human beings which is currently being discussed by the Committee of Ministers.

In my view, it is timely for the Council of Europe to consider drafting an instrument to fight against this shameful new form of slavery on our continent. The evolution of international law proves that regional instruments are very often necessary to complement global efforts. European instruments in the fields of the protection of children's rights, money laundering or trafficking in drugs have proved to have a very positive impact on the implementation of global initiatives.

A European convention against the trafficking of human beings would pursue the United Nations achievements in this field in a European context and be based on the definition agreed upon in the "Palermo Protocol" (*Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against transnational organised crime*). The legal instrument that Europe needs should necessarily focus on the protection and the human rights of the victims and should provide for an adequate monitoring mechanism.

I hope that this Conference will support this idea and send a clear message to the Committee of Ministers to this end. I will personally follow this matter very closely, as I consider it as a high priority for our Organisation, whose major role is to protect and promote human rights and human dignity.

Building an effective framework for the implementation of gender equality

Women are to a greater extent than men victims of trafficking in human beings. When societies are in crisis, when there are economic difficulties, women are likely to be more often victims of unemployment and poverty than men. They will be more vulnerable to abuse such as trafficking. There is a long tradition of inequality in our societies, a tradition which must be combated, because it is contrary to democratic progress. Countries will not develop in a democratic way when women are less well treated than the male half of society.

Therefore, however important it may be, it is not sufficient to have formal equality recognised in constitutions. All democratic countries must ensure that they provide equal opportunities for their members, be they women or men. This is why they need equal opportunities legislation, accompanied by the establishment of national equality machinery to ensure the protection of the rights of women and to foster their full and equal participation in society.

I hope that co-operation between the old and the new member States of the Council of Europe will help create such institutions in all countries, which do not yet have them. This is crucial.

At the same time, I should like to point out that the European Convention on Human Rights has now an important instrument for building equality between women and men in this new century. This is Protocol number 12, which, once in force, will provide that no one can be discriminated against by any public authority on any ground. Today, 27 member States have signed this instrument, but only two have ratified it. The ratification process seems very slow. Do we wish this Protocol to be a dead instrument? Should we not rather use it for the protection and promotion of human rights as soon as possible?

I hope that those who fight for equality, development and peace will campaign for the ratification of this Protocol and that this Conference will take up this message.

Prime Minister,

It is a real pleasure for me to have the opportunity to welcome you to this 5th European Conference on Equality between women and men. I should like to thank you personally and your authorities for hosting this important event. This is the first Ministerial Conference of the Council of Europe to be organised in your country and surely not the last.

Prime Minister,

Ministers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to see in this audience a significant number of men. Even if I have spoken mostly about women I should like to emphasise that equality goes both ways. It will be difficult to achieve unless women and men work together. I have the good feeling that this is beginning to be understood, that both women and men realise that equality is not a question for women only, but that both sexes are concerned. In particular, if women claim to participate in the traditionally “male” sphere of society, men have to take on work in the opposite direction.

As the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Congress on Women, in Beijing in 1995, said “the advancement of women and the achievement of equality between women and men are a matter of Human Rights and a condition for social justice and should not be seen in isolation as a women’s issue”.

During a Conference held at the Council of Europe on the occasion of the International Women’s Day in March 2001, Professor Michael Kimmel summarised this idea as follows (I quote): “I believe that changes among men represent the next phase of the movement for women’s equality – that changes among men are vital if women are to achieve full equality. Men must come to see that gender equality is in their interests as men”. This is the message we must get through all over Europe. Then, perhaps, it will be easier to avoid conflicts and live in a world of peace.

I wish you a very successful Conference and thank you for your attention.

Appendix V

Closing address by Ms Maud de Boer-Buquicchio

Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Chair,

Ministers,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our meeting is now coming to an end and it is with some emotion that I close this 5th Ministerial Conference on equality.

After more than 30 years working in the Council of Europe, I have to confess that I still see it as a wonder that people from so many different countries, cultures and religions come and sit together with the ambition of building a fair, peaceful and democratic society. I firmly believe that the Council of Europe stands for the policy of life to which Ms JARUGA-NOWACKA, Secretary of State of Poland referred in her address.

I would therefore like to express my thanks to the Ministers, the Heads of Delegation and to all those who have spoken and who –I am convinced- will act. I thank you for the quality of your contributions and for your commitment, as well as for your concrete and practical proposals.

Your proposals will guide the future work of the Council of Europe. The Programme of Action that you have adopted will be implemented thanks to the commitment of the Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men. This Committee has put a great deal of effort into the preparation of this Conference and I should like to thank its members for their remarkable work.

At the opening of this conference, I asked for your support for a European convention on action against trafficking in human beings. I am leaving Skopje full of hope in this regard. The Steering Committee for

Equality has been working for a long time on the issue of trafficking and needs support for its action against this modern form of slavery which is now rampant on our continent.

Before we part, I should like to share with you a few thoughts that have come out of our debates.

This is, I believe, the first time that there has been discussion at ministerial level of this highly political subject: the role of women in the resolution of conflict and peace building. In choosing this subject for the Ministerial Conference, the Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men has challenged a truly masculine domain. But war is not, and never has been, simply men's business. Not only have women always had to suffer the effects of war, but they have also had to replace men in time of war, to find ways to survive and to feed their children and families during the troubles.

Women do not want to have conflict and war imposed upon them. As many of you have said, women want to work for prevention, for the resolution or management of conflicts, for the eradication of violence, whether it is conflict within the family, the community or between states. We must be given the opportunity to express and explain our initiatives and ideas, whether in civil society or at the level of peace negotiations when conflict has broken out between states. We need women's wisdom and experience. After war, instead of returning home and accepting men's decisions, women must be part of the reconstruction of a just and democratic society.

Let us hope that this conference will have enabled us to advance a few steps in this direction. It is clear that the Resolution that you have adopted expresses perfectly the need to associate women fully with these issues. We are becoming more and more aware of the fact that women are indispensable in the peace process, in the construction of peace. Without our participation, peace can be neither fair nor lasting. It is inconceivable to imagine the reconstruction of a country after conflict without the participation of women.

Yesterday, the women we heard interviewed said as much: the post-war period is the most difficult. How can we deal with the anger, the suspicion, the damage done by years of conflict? How is it possible to justify the violence and the deaths, and how can trust be built up again?

A participant in the preparatory Council of Europe seminar held on this subject in September 2001 said: "Any government, forum, agreement or decision which excludes the contribution of women must be considered illegal". I tend to agree, for how is it possible for men to express women's views and ideas?

A great deal remains to be done in certain countries in order for the participation of women to become a reality and, in this respect, a number of the reports submitted to the conference are very clear.

We can still see that, in certain member States of the Council of Europe, customs and traditions still exist which relegate women to the rank of second class citizens, as though they were inferior beings. Women in these countries are virtually absent from decision-making posts.

There are still countries in Europe where there is no woman minister in the government and there are national parliaments which consist of 95% men. It seems to me that this is no longer acceptable.

This is the 21st century. It is time to take stock of what has been achieved, and what remains to be done. Having seen you all here, and heard what you have to say, I feel certain that, slowly and surely, we have no choice but to move towards equality between women and men. The experiences brought here (among others) by Portugal, Ireland, Norway and indeed by our hosts are very illustrative and confirm that changes are possible. We are more than ever aware that this is a question of justice, of civilisation and of the development of human rights.

Taking into account the women's perspective and using gender mainstreaming may lead us to a greater understanding of what will certainly be one of the main concerns of this century: how to live in harmony with "the other", how to respect the differences of "the other".

We live already in open, multicultural societies where different religions exist alongside each other and where ethnic minorities live alongside majorities.

I am pleased to see that the Resolution adopted here includes a request to undertake work in the field of women's contribution to intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

Chair, Ministers, Ladies and gentlemen,

I should like to thank all those who have contributed to the success of this Conference: firstly you, Mr Manisajevski, who have worked to make this conference become a reality, and who have chaired the Conference so competently and tactfully. You and your team have prepared and organised this event - the first Council of Europe Ministerial Conference to take place in your country - with great efficiency and excellent hospitality.

As Ms Bronagh Hinds of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition said in the interview we saw yesterday, we must hold on to the notion that women, as a majority community in most societies, carry the banner of understanding invisibility and exclusion and, therefore, carry the banner for more visibility for those people who have been voiceless and a more inclusive society in all ways.

It has been a pleasure to open and close my first ministerial conference with a majority of women as heads of delegation. I hope to see the same in one of our future conferences of ministers of justice, for instance. I really hope to enjoy that wonder too.

I thank you for your attention and hope to see you again in Sweden.

[1] The State Union of Serbia and Montenegro became a member of the Council of Europe on 3 April 2003.

[2] This was a joint project carried out by the Migration and Roma/Gypsies Department of the Council of Europe, the European Union (European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Office of the High Commissioner for National Minorities (HCNM) and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

[3] Recommendation [Rec\(2002\)](#) 5 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the protection of women against violence, adopted on 30 April 2002.

[4] Document EG (2002) 6 rev, « Women in politics in the Council of Europe member States », updated in November 2002

[5] Recommendation Rec (2003) 3 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making