



Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Permanent Mission to the United Nations  
New York



Ministry for Foreign  
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Permanent Mission  
of the Federal Republic of Germany  
to the United Nations  
New York



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Side event to the 69th Commission on the Status of Women

## **Men Politicians as Transformative Actors for Gender Equality in Politics**

Thursday, 13 March 2025, 3.00-4.30 pm

Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, 666 Third Avenue, 31<sup>st</sup> Floor

*Organised by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR),  
in co-operation with the European Union, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Finland, Germany & Lithuania*

In 2025, OSCE participating States, together with the rest of the globe, are marking the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, a central set of international norms on women's rights and gender equality. Reflecting on the last 30 years, the OSCE space has seen far-reaching developments in women's full and equal participation in politics and decision-making. To name a few of the major achievements: states have adopted ground-breaking gender equality laws; set up stronger government ministries, agencies and councils that lead on gender equality policy; and 26 OSCE participating States also introduced legislative gender quotas, aiming at decreasing male over-representation and targeting gender-balanced politics in the long run.

Women's presence in national parliaments in the OSCE space – North America, Europe and Central Asia – has reached a record high with 31.6% at the end of 2024. The picture gets more complex, when looking into the women's representation in governments, local governance councils or at the level of municipal and city mayors, as there are no trends that can be generalised for the entire OSCE space. For example, while in some countries, the share of women ministers or local level councillors can be higher than in parliament, in others there is an opposing development. Overall, even though we have witnessed progress, the OSCE space is far away from reaching gender parity – our shared goals as also defined by the CEDAW Committee.

Men are significantly over-represented in all major legislative and executive bodies, and especially in the positions of party leaders, parliamentary speakers, heads of governments, heads of state and as mayors. Political and elected offices are still too often seen as a 'men's issue', while advancing gender equality policy and in politics remains predominantly a 'women's issue', left to women politicians, and often without meaningful engagement of male politicians.

In the last decade, the OSCE region, along with stagnation in further progress, has also faced gender equality backsliding and unprecedented mobilisation against gender equality. As we mark the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, there is a new sense of real urgency, a recognition that we are at a turning point for women's rights, a recognition that realizing gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights of women and girls must be a pressing and central task – not only for women leaders but also for male politicians who occupy the majority of decision making and leadership posts.

While there is a strong and relevant track-record on engaging men on gender equality in diverse areas of social life, including on preventing and addressing violence against women, there have been limited targeted programmes and policies, which aim at working with male politicians on countering the gender equality backsliding, advancing gender equality within politics, political parties and elected office overall. Furthermore, there is a strong need for gender-responsive approaches to governance and decision making, where engaging male politicians doesn't only mean engaging them on diverse gender equality policy issues, but also about the transformation of male power and privileges that come with political office.

This side event will provide a unique contribution to the 69th Commission on the Status of Women, by

- Facilitating exchange among male and female politicians, and representatives of women's movements, civil society organisations, governmental gender equality bodies and international organizations, and raising awareness among existing practices, initiatives and programmes on engaging men politicians for gender equality in politics;
- Advocating for a stronger focus on engaging men politicians for gender equality in politics in future policy and programme developments, as a precondition for a full transformation of politics and towards the achievement of gender equality overall, as well as countering to the gender equality backsliding;
- Presenting action-oriented guidance as part of ODIHR's *Sarajevo Tool for Engaging Male Politicians in Achieving Gender Equality in Politics*

#### **International and OSCE commitments**

Gender equality is a fundamental value of the international human rights framework. With the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), State parties committed to eradicating discrimination in order to remove a primary obstacle to the participation of women on equal terms with men in political, social, economic and cultural life. Specifically, the Convention notes that "a change in the traditional role of men as well as the role of women in society and in the family is needed to achieve full equality between men and women", paving the way for later articulations of the role of men in gender equality work and calling not only for a gender-sensitive but also gender-transformative approach to gender equality advancement.

The role of men in advancing gender equality was recognised also at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. As per the unanimously agreed Beijing Platform for Action, the UN member states expressed a determination to "encourage men to participate fully in all actions towards equality" and recognized that "women share common concerns that can be addressed only by working together and in partnership with men towards the common goal of gender equality around the world."

The OSCE views gender equality as integral to peace, security and sustainable democracy, recognizing the benefits to both men and women and endorsing a gender mainstreaming approach. The OSCE Ministerial Council Decisions 7/14 and 4/18, acknowledge the role of men in addressing violence against women and girls and encourage participating States to "take appropriate measures to increase the engagement and participation of men and boys in the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against women, including sexual and domestic violence" (7/14). The MC decision 4/18 specifically recognizes the importance of actively engaging men and boys in efforts towards elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and girls, including by addressing the root causes of gender inequality and violence and by raising awareness about the impact of negative attitudes, behaviours, and gender stereotypes that can underlie and perpetuate discrimination and violence.

**Interested in participating? The number of seats is limited. Please register at the following [LINK](#).**

#### **Contact**

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## Working AGENDA

### Side event to the 69<sup>th</sup> Commission on the Status of Women **Men Politicians as Transformative Actors for Gender Equality in Politics**

Thursday, 13 March 2025, 3.00-4.30 pm

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#### Moderator

Yulia Netesova, Chief of Democratic Governance and Gender Unit, OSCE/ODIHR

#### Opening remarks (3.00-3.10)

- Ambassador Stavros Lambrinidis, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations in New York (*tbc*)
- Tea Jaliashvili, ODIHR First Deputy Director

#### Panel (3.10-3.50)

- Saara-Sofia Sirén, Chairperson, Employment and Equality Committee, Eduskunta (Parliament) of Finland & 2025 OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Special Representative on Gender
- Laurynas Šedvydis, Chairperson, Human Rights Committee, Seimas (Parliament) of Lithuania
- Dag Schölper, Executive Director, Bundesforum Männer (Federal Forum for Men), Berlin, Germany

Presentation:

*Sarajevo Tool for Engaging Male Politicians in Achieving Gender Equality in Politics*

Saša Gavrić, Adviser of Gender Issues, OSCE/ODIHR

#### Commentary (3.50-3.55)

#### Q&A (3.55-4.20)

#### Closing remarks (4.20-4.30)

Samra Filipović-Hadžiabdić, Director, Agency for Gender Equality,  
Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, Bosnia and Herzegovina (*tbc*)

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