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The OSCE Copenhagen and Moscow Documents: A Short Commentary on the OSCE's Contributions to Gender Equality in Political and Public Life

Introduction

The Copenhagen and Moscow Documents¹ are key documents of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) that reflect developments in the area of human rights and human security, which includes gender equality. This paper discusses the contribution made by these two interlinked and mutually reinforcing documents to gender equality and women's rights. My working premise is that human-security standards have been developing in accordance with the main trends of international law as a whole in recent years, which has tended to encourage women's participation in political life and government. This is well documented.²

Since the 1990s, there has been a tendency to move towards the universalization and legal formalization of the principle that the effectiveness of government should be evaluated in terms of the importance granted to human needs and their representation in official policy. At the international level, this principle is integral to the concept of the security of individuals, which considers the process of satisfying human needs as a potential object of international influence, and not as an area of exclusive nation-state competence. At the same time, the value placed on representation has furthered the position that women should not be excluded from state building, political processes, and government institutions. Without the inclusion of women in decision making, "representative" democracy is compromised, and there can be no realization of the right to live in dignity.³

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- 1 Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE, Copenhagen, 29 June 1990, in: Arie Bloed (ed.), *The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, Analysis and Basic Documents, 1972-1993*, Dordrecht 1993, pp. 439-465; Document of the Moscow Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE, in: *ibid.*, pp. 605-629.
 - 2 Cf. Amitai Etzioni, *From Empire to Community*, New York, NY, 2004; Amitai Etzioni, *Security First: For a Muscular, Moral Foreign Policy*, New Haven, CT, 2007; Kseniya Khozinskaya, *Chelovecheskie potrebnosti kak faktor formirovaniya instituta mezhdunarodnoi bezopasnosti. Avtoreferat na soiskanie uchenoj stepeni kandidata politicheskikh nauk* [Human needs as a factor in the formation of international security. Thesis submitted for receiving the degree of candidate of political science], Moscow 2008.
 - 3 Cf. Nadezda Shvedova, Obstacles to Women's Participation in Parliament, in: *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers*, International IDEA, Stockholm 2005, at: http://www.idea.int/gender/wip_handbook.cfm.

This paper considers why new standards in international relations were needed to ensure equitable human development, and how the Copenhagen and Moscow Documents reflected the inherent challenges behind the building of accountable, multiparty democracy. It then turns to the commitments of the OSCE participating States to promote gender equality as contained in these documents. It emphasizes the main characteristics of the Copenhagen Document, including its *uniqueness* and *concreteness*. The paper reveals that a distinct approach to questions of gender originated in the Moscow Document, whose provisions regarding the status of women have not lost their relevance. On the contrary, they have become more significant in the 21st Century.

What Called the New Norms to Life?

In the new political situation that developed in Europe following the fall of the Berlin Wall, which symbolized the division of countries into two blocs with different forms of social and political organization, there was an objective need for innovative international agreements. The process of radical political change continued after the first meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE in Paris in 1989. Established and new democracies worked together with the purpose of creating clear standards and integrating the concepts of democratic elections, rule of law, and human rights. The new standards were enshrined for the first time in the Copenhagen Document. Significantly, these political norms did not require ratification by national parliaments, which enabled the OSCE to play the primary, “avant-garde role in setting standards after the Cold War”.⁴

The OSCE’s commitments are based on a comprehensive approach to security. The Concluding Document of the third follow-up meeting of the CSCE, signed in Vienna on 15 January 1989, is a fundamental OSCE document.⁵ It introduced the concept of the “human dimension” of the OSCE, covering not only respect for all human rights and freedoms, but also human contacts and other related issues. The “human dimension of security” refers to respect for and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, whilst strengthening democratic institutions and the rule of law.

The second meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE was held in Copenhagen from 5 to 29 June 1990, with 35 participating

4 Ambassador Audrey Glover, cited in: Curtis Budden, *Living up to the Legacy: Key OSCE Human Rights Document Turns 20*, 1 June 2010, at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/69578>.

5 Concluding Document of the Vienna Meeting 1986 of Representatives of the Participating States of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, Held on the Basis of the Provisions of the Final Act Relating to the Follow-up to the Conference, Vienna, 15 January 1989, in: Bloed (ed.), cited above (Note 1), pp. 327-411.

States and one observer state (Albania). The participants of the second meeting rightly noted three major circumstances:

- radical political change in Europe,
- the significant contribution of the CSCE to those changes, and
- the important influence of those changes on implementation of the Helsinki Final Act⁶ and other CSCE documents.⁷

The participating States proclaimed pluralistic democracy and the rule of law to be fundamental principles that are essential to ensure respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, the development of human contacts, and the resolution of other issues of a related humanitarian character. The Copenhagen Document validated and further codified a number of fundamental principles agreed upon by representatives of CSCE participating States in the Concluding Document of the Vienna Meeting, namely:

- respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion, and convictions, for all without any distinction on the grounds of race, sex, language, and religion;
- recognition of the global significance of human rights and fundamental freedoms as an essential factor of peace, justice, and security, necessary for the development of good-neighbourly relations and co-operation among all states;
- the determination to guarantee the effective exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms, all of which derive from the inherent dignity of the human person and are essential for his or her free and full development;
- recognition of the paramount importance of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights and freedoms, which must be fully realized by all appropriate means.

Main Characteristics

The uniqueness of the Copenhagen Document lies in its approach to the rule of law, which it understands to mean not only “formal legality” but also “justice”.⁸ The goal of development, according to the strategy of sustainable development, is not only to improve quality of life, but to also ensure justice, interpreted in its broadest form to include respect for the human rights of

6 Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, Helsinki, 1 August 1975, in: Bloed (ed.), cited above (Note 1), pp. 141-217.

7 Cf. Document of the Copenhagen Meeting, cited above (Note 1), pp. 439-440.

8 Cf. *ibid.*, section 2.

each individual. Gender equality (as a fundamental human right)⁹ and justice are thus overarching principles and necessary conditions for human development.¹⁰

The Copenhagen Document enumerates 21 concrete elements of justice that are essential to the full expression of the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all human beings, from free elections and representative government, to the right of any person prosecuted to defend him- or herself in person or through prompt legal assistance of his or her own choosing. It further underlines the principles of full equality before the law and non-discrimination.

It is vital to note the continuity between the various CSCE and OSCE documents adopted by the participating States. The Copenhagen Document refers to the “important contribution of international instruments in the field of human rights to the rule of law at a national level” and includes a commitment to the “purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations [and] other obligations under international law”.¹¹ The participating States also committed themselves to “consider acceding to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and other relevant international instruments [...] to a regional or global international convention concerning the protection of human rights, such as the European Convention on Human Rights or the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which provide for procedures of individual recourse to international bodies”.¹²

A further merit of the Copenhagen Document is that it links OSCE standards to concrete activities that OSCE institutions are mandated to undertake, including those relating to gender equality. For example, it was the first OSCE document to include provisions related to the methodology of conducting democratic elections, which later became the basis of the activities of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in the field of election monitoring, and which notably include the monitoring of

9 Cf. United Nations General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW), A/34/46; date of adoption: 18 December 1979, at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw.htm>. See also Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, *Increasing women's representation in politics through the electoral system*, Report of 22 December 2009, at: <http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/WorkingDocs/Doc09/EDOC12097.pdf>.

10 Cf. Nadezda Shvedova, Gender, Demokratiya i grazhdanskoe obshchestvo [Gender, Democracy, and Civil Society], in: *Predstavitel'naya Vlast'* [Representative Power] 6/2005, also available at: <http://www.owl.ru/content/openpages/p59416.shtml>. The term “sustainable development” was first coined by the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in its 1987 report, *Our Common Future, From One Earth to One World*, available at: <http://www.un-documents.net/ocf-ov.htm#1.2>. See also Duncan French (ed.), *Global Justice and Sustainable Development*, Legal Aspects of Sustainable Development, vol. 7, Leiden 2010.

11 Document of the Copenhagen Meeting, cited above (Note 1), section 37.

12 *Ibid.*, sections 5.20 and 5.21.

women's participation and representation in all electoral processes. The mechanism provided for in the Copenhagen Document includes the state obligation to invite foreign observers to monitor national elections. This requirement was innovative because it acknowledged that democracy and human rights concern not only the state in question but also the security of a whole region.

The vested interest that all OSCE participating States have in the democratic functioning of countries in their region also brings gender equality into sharp focus. The OSCE participating States recognize that "vigorous democracy depends on the existence as an integral part of national life of democratic values and practices as well as an extensive range of democratic institutions".¹³ This requires that women be granted the right to vote, to freely join and lead political associations, and to participate in national, regional, and local electoral processes on an equal basis with men.¹⁴ The importance of both international and national monitoring of women's participation in electoral processes has been further recognized in a variety of OSCE publications, including the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality¹⁵ and the ODIHR's Handbook on Monitoring Women's Participation in Elections.¹⁶ The 2004 OSCE Action Plan on the Promotion of Gender Equality specifically tasks ODIHR with continuing, "as a part of its Election Observation Mission, to monitor and report on women's participation in electoral processes" and further, when possible, to "commission and publish reports specifically analysing the situation of women in electoral processes".¹⁷

Gender Equality as a Core Principle for the Development of Human Potential

The OSCE participating States have committed themselves to promote gender equality as a core principle for the development of human capacities, and as a foundation for progress and development aiming at raising quality of life

13 Ibid., section 26.

14 The right of women to participate in political processes on an equal basis with men was further elaborated upon in OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 7/09, Women's Participation in Political and Public Life, MC.DEC/7/09 of 2 December 2009, in: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Seventeenth Meeting of the Ministerial Council, 1 and 2 December 2009*, Athens, 2 December 2009, pp. 30-31..

15 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, Annex to Decision No. 14/04, 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, MD.DEC/14/04 of 7 December 2004, in: *Twelfth Meeting of the Ministerial Council, 6 and 7 December 2004*, MC.DOC/1/04, Sofia, 7 December 2004, pp. 38-53, here: 39-53, also available at: <http://www.osce.org/mc/23295>.

16 OSCE/ODIHR, *Handbook for Monitoring Women's Participation in Elections*, Warsaw 2004, available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/13938>.

17 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, cited above (Note 15), section 44(d).

and enhancing justice.¹⁸ Inalienable human rights, including the rights of women and girls, are bestowed at birth and cannot be restricted unduly. Respect for human rights implies the eradication of attitudes that restrict women's access to politics and decision making. Furthermore, complete respect for human rights and freedoms is a component of representative and inclusive democracy, which includes:

- equal rights and opportunities for political participation for all citizens, without distinction on grounds of sex;
- acknowledgement that equal representation of women in elected and appointed positions in government is a matter of justice and equality;

as well as the recognition that:

- women introduce new elements into political culture in general, as they may be more likely to initiate issues and concerns that relate to gender and family;
- women bring with them new legislative initiatives corresponding to their position in society, thereby affecting parliamentary agendas;
- women in politics can create new role models for women, young people, and children, as their example of political participation can inspire others and foster the eradication of gender stereotypes and traditions in society;
- including women increases the pool and scope of talent, knowledge, and expertise available to governments and the political sphere; and
- an increased number of women parliamentarians may make it easier for other women to enter political life and parliaments across the board, reducing the obstacles that women face to entering the political sphere.¹⁹

Women's representation in government is not an end in itself, but a condition of development towards a more productive and socially equitable society and state. This fully corresponds to OSCE commitments to achieve justice and respect for human rights while also raising the quality of life of the citizens of OSCE participating States.²⁰ The goal of promoting representative multiparty democracy cannot be achieved without women.

The Copenhagen and Moscow Documents therefore reflect trends in the development of international security paradigms that increasingly focus on

18 Cf. 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, cited above (Note 15), sections 1 and 2.

19 Cf. Nadezda Shvedova, *Prosto o Slozhnom: Gendernoe prosveshchenie* [Simply about the Complex: Gender Education], Moscow 2002, at: <http://www.owl.ru/win/books/easygender>. See also Anne Phillips, *Engendering Democracy*, Cambridge 1991; and Pippa Norris/Mona Lena Krook, *Gender Equality in Elected Office: A Six-Step Action Plan*, a baseline study commissioned by ODIHR in 2010, available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/78432>.

20 Cf. Shvedova, *Gender, Demokratiya i grazhdanskoe obshchestvo*, cited above (Note 10).

the rights and security needs of individuals, both women and men. The Copenhagen Meeting and Document enabled all the states in the region, including established as well as “new” democracies, to work together on the basis of certain standards, all linked by the concepts of democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. The Copenhagen Document was the first international instrument to underline the interdependence between not only democracy and human rights, but also these and the rule of law. The document elaborates a concept of justice “based on the recognition and full acceptance of the supreme value of the human personality and guaranteed by institutions providing a framework for its fullest expression”.²¹ The OSCE participating States recognized democracy to be the only system of government able to ensure effective protection of human rights, and declared that pluralistic democracy must be based on the rule of law. From 10 September to 4 October 1991, the third (and last) meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE was held in Moscow. Both documents recognize the importance of pluralism in regard to political organizations. The Moscow Document states, among other things, that “the participating States recall their commitment to the rule of law in the Document of the Copenhagen Meeting and affirm their dedication to supporting and advancing those principles of justice which form the basis of the rule of law. In particular, they again reaffirm that democracy is an inherent element in the rule of law and that pluralism is important in regard to political organizations.”²²

The OSCE Approach to Gender

If the Copenhagen Document can be considered neutral from the gender perspective, as it does not include any provisions specifically addressing the issue of gender equality, the Moscow Document introduced gender issues into the CSCE framework, pointing out the most acute problems relating to the status of women. However, the Copenhagen Document had already prohibited any discrimination “solely on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, social origin or of belonging to a minority”.²³ The participating States committed themselves to considering “adhering, if they have not yet done so, to the international instruments which address the problem of discrimination” and ensuring “full compliance with the obligations therein, including those relating to the submission of periodic reports”.²⁴

The historic significance of the document signed at the Moscow Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE (10 September to 4 October 1991) is that it proclaimed for the first time that human rights,

21 Document of the Copenhagen Meeting, cited above (Note 1), section 2.

22 Document of the Moscow Meeting, cited above (Note 1), section 18.

23 Document of the Copenhagen Meeting, cited above (Note 1), section 25.4 (emphasis added).

24 *Ibid.*, section 40.6.

fundamental freedoms, democracy, and the rule of law are matters of international concern, and that the OSCE human dimension commitments do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the state concerned.²⁵ In other words, human rights and freedoms are matters of the security and stability of the OSCE region and the whole international community.

The OSCE's approach to gender is derived from the principle of justice that provides the basis for the rule of law. According to the Moscow Document, "the participating States recognize that full and true equality between men and women is a fundamental aspect of a just and democratic society based on the rule of law. They recognize that the full development of society and the welfare of all its members require equal opportunity for full and equal participation of men and women."²⁶ The same section of the Moscow Document enumerates 13 commitments relating to gender equality. It states, in particular, that the participating States "will comply with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)" and "take appropriate measures to implement the United Nations Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (FLS)" as well as ensuring that "all CSCE commitments relating to the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms are applied fully and without discrimination with regard to sex".²⁷

The Moscow Document enshrines the principle of "equal opportunities" for men and women. It is important to note that this concept, explicated in section 40.4, is "de facto equality", where the "goal [of the participating States is] to achieve not only *de jure* but *de facto* equality of opportunity between men and women and to promote effective measures to that end".²⁸ This de facto equality includes ensuring equal opportunities for women in the following areas:

- political and social life, decision-making processes, and international co-operation;
- the economic sphere, including non-discriminatory employment policies and practices;
- study and work, including in non-traditional areas for women;
- access to education and training;
- combining employment with family responsibilities; and
- access to information.

The Moscow Document also includes an important provision that structural adjustments in the economic sphere should not have discriminatory consequences for women. The participating States "will seek to ensure that any

25 Cf. Document of the Moscow Meeting, cited above (Note 1), p. 606.

26 Ibid., section 40.

27 Ibid., sections 40.1-40.3.

28 Ibid., section 40.4 (emphasis in the original).

structural adjustment policies or programmes do not have an adversely discriminatory effect on women”.²⁹ This provision remains extremely relevant for the post-Soviet countries, where women have had to pay an extremely high price as a result of structural adjustments (perestroika).

Many other provisions of the Moscow Document regarding the status of women are also growing in relevance at the present time, particularly those concerning the problems of violence against women, trafficking in human beings, and sexual exploitation. The participating States undertook to seek the elimination of all forms of violence against women, and all forms of exploitation of and trafficking in women in 1991, including by ensuring “adequate legal prohibitions against such acts and other appropriate measures”.³⁰

The participating States also recognized the “rich contribution of women to all aspects of political, cultural, social and economic life” and committed themselves to “promote a broad understanding of these contributions, including those made in the informal and unpaid sectors”.³¹ They further acknowledged the “vital role women and women’s organizations play in national and international efforts to promote and enhance women’s rights by providing, *inter alia*, direct services and support to women and encouraging a meaningful partnership between governments and these organizations for the purpose of advancing equality of women”.³²

The participating States were aware of the need for and committed to ensuring that “information regarding women and women’s rights under international and domestic law is easily accessible” and that this required “collection and analysis of data to assess adequately, monitor and improve the situation of women”.³³

Crucially, the commitments and principles contained in the Moscow Document form the basis for key OSCE policy and programming documents with a current application. The 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality transforms these commitments into practical tasks and responsibilities to be carried out by the various OSCE institutions. This includes the application of a thorough process of “gender mainstreaming”³⁴ in

29 Ibid., section 40.6.

30 Ibid., section 40.7.

31 Ibid., section 40.10.

32 Ibid., section 40.9 (emphasis in the original).

33 Ibid., sections 40.11 and 40.13.

34 Cf. OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 14/04, cited above (Note 15), p. 38. The definition of gender mainstreaming adopted there (footnote 4) is: “Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.” This definition was taken from: United Nations, General Assembly, Official Records, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 3, A/52/3/Rev.1, New York 1999, Chapter IV, para. 4.

all planning, policy, programming, and monitoring processes undertaken by OSCE institutions, both internally and in its relations with external actors. Furthermore, the OSCE Secretary General was requested to issue annual reports on the implementation of the Action Plan. This analytical report is an important monitoring and reporting instrument, to which every part of the OSCE contributes. It provides the participating States with an accurate picture of how the OSCE and its various structures have been progressing in implementing the priorities of the Action Plan. The OSCE has taken further steps to reinforce its commitment to gender equality by nominating a Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Gender Issues in 2010. This high profile position, currently held by Wendy Patten, is used to highlight critical gender-equality issues that deserve prioritization on national and OSCE policy agendas.

Remaining Challenges

The main goal of the Moscow Meeting was to confirm and complement the commitments previously undertaken by the participating States in the Copenhagen Document, and thus to broaden the framework of the OSCE human dimension. The participating States reiterated the principle of shared responsibility in the area of human rights and freedoms and democratic government, and further underlined the interdependence between human rights and freedoms, democratic principles, and security in the region. Today, these provisions continue to be innovative and groundbreaking in the area of gender equality in political life.

At the same time, there is a persistent gap between the declarations renewing the commitment to implement fully the principles of gender equality, and the actual situation for women aiming to actively participate in public life and enter politics. The implementation of the OSCE's gender-related commitments remains uneven and incomplete in the participating States. The patchy implementation of commitments on gender equality, and the political participation of women, which is largely a result of the specific circumstances of each country regarding its social, economic, and political development, creates a situation where some OSCE participating States can serve as an example to those that are further from reaching the benchmarks of successful gender-equality policies. "Gender-developed countries" should therefore guide states that are still at the beginning of the reform process by sharing positive examples and other information relevant to women's participation.

As a prominent international organization, the OSCE should strengthen the existing mechanisms for monitoring the "gender code" of participating States. It is vital to avoid concealing the real situation regarding gender equality in a particular country. The possibility of creating an enhanced

mechanism on gender equality within the OSCE framework is also worth considering. The 2004 Gender Action Plan itself should be updated to include indicators, timelines, benchmarks, responsible actors, and the allocation of budgetary resources. A concrete action plan of this kind would be far more useful as a monitoring tool. It would also serve as a comprehensive reference resource for participating States as they develop and update their own national action plans on gender equality. The active position of certain OSCE participating States can be an important means of resolving the problems of gender equality in countries where the situation is most critical. This could include sharing positive examples of co-operation between civil-society organizations and government entities.

Conclusions

The Copenhagen and Moscow Documents cannot be considered in isolation from the missions and other activities of the OSCE. In view of the problems that exist in ensuring women's equal representation in politics alongside men, the OSCE should broaden its efforts. It has the capacity to do so. Promoting the ideas contained in the Copenhagen and Moscow Documents is the most important instrument by which this work can be pursued. Achieving equality between men and women is an essential element of the policy and practice of the OSCE. It is also a historic mission of this international organization. In reality, gender equality and genuine democracy are closely linked processes, and it is within the mandate of ODIHR to assist the participating States to achieve greater levels of gender equality. The 2004 Gender Action Plan tasks ODIHR to assist OSCE participating States in complying with international instruments for the promotion of gender equality and women's rights, and in reviewing legislation to ensure appropriate legal guarantees for the promotion of gender equality in accordance with OSCE and other commitments. Furthermore, the OSCE tasks ODIHR with actively assisting participating States in developing and implementing positive measures to achieve the equal participation of women and men in democratic processes.³⁵ Non-discrimination and democracy are OSCE values, and the participating States can play a very important role in representing and sharing examples of good practices.

It is important not to consider gender issues exclusively as "women's problems" that should be dealt with by women only. The participants in the OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting (SHDM) on the Promotion of Gender Balance and Participation of Women in Political and Public Life, held in Vienna on 6-7 May 2010, called for more active efforts to promote women's participation in public life. The objective of the SHDM was to consider the progress achieved and the problems remaining in the area of

35 Cf. 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, cited above (Note 15), section 44(d).

gender equality and the effective participation of women in public life. It included discussions on the empowerment of women as members of political parties and as elected officials. The ODIHR Director, Ambassador Janez Lenarčič, stressed the importance of gender balance for any democracy: “If the high degree of legitimacy that democracy enjoys is to be sustained, achieving de facto equality needs to top the agenda of policy-makers.”³⁶ The Ambassador rightly noted that democracy remains a mere aspiration if a considerable part of a country’s population continues to be excluded from public life. The final report of the SHDM event highlights key recommendations developed by participants to promote gender equality and enhance the participation of women in political and public life. These included:

- establishing national mechanisms for the advancement of women;
- developing effective gender equality and anti-discrimination legislation; and
- implementing specific measures to achieve gender balance in political parties as well as legislative, judicial, and executive bodies.³⁷

Also at the SHDM, a proposal was made to establish an OSCE Eurasian Institute on Gender Equality in Astana, Kazakhstan, which could be a catalyst for the promotion of gender mainstreaming in the region.

The OSCE documents and their implementation in the human dimension have become the necessary background against which the culture of international behaviour is shaped. Patterns of behaviour developed by the progressive international community (who have also determined the functional development of the OSCE institutions and commitments) are embodied in the OSCE’s documents on gender equality; they reflect the need for more effective representation and participation that exists in the majority of participating States. The significance of the Copenhagen and Moscow Documents is therefore due to the fact that they both express the idea of interdependence between stability and security, acknowledging that the internal stability of states depends on the implementation of human rights and freedoms. These two documents remain cornerstone agreements for the OSCE’s human dimension commitments. They lay the basis for a comprehensive working philosophy on gender equality and effective representation and participation.

36 OSCE/ODIHR press release, *OSCE meeting on gender equality begins with calls for more action on increasing women’s participation in public life*, Vienna, 6 May 2010, at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/69253>.

37 Cf. OSCE, *Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting, “Promoting Gender Balance and Participation of Women in Political and Public Life”, 6-7 May 2010, Vienna, Austria, Final Report*, pp. 4 and 16, at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/71180>.