

## March 8, 2024 - International Women's Day

CSP WG women and gender realities



In 1914, the celebration of March 8th turned into a demonstration against the arrest of Rosa Luxemburg who spoke out against weapons and imperialist wars.

In 1975, the United Nations proclaimed March 8 the „Day of the United Nations for the rights of women and world peace!“

We as women and partners from NGOs in different conflict zones in the OSCE area (from the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia, to Western Europe) are aware of the complex relationship between women's rights and peace. It's evident to us that women are often the first to bear the brunt of the devastating repercussions of these conflicts. We continuously invest in gendered conflict analysis and are committed to stop economic, physical, psychological and sexual violence that women face every day. We protest against the destruction of our natural environments and the lack of economic security, social and health services. Together, we do our best to investigate and document crimes systematically.

**In 2024**, we oppose the alarming surge in militarism, which not only leads to cuts in essential social services but also diverts funds intended for environmental sustainability and climate justice towards weaponry and military alliances. The increasing reliance on nuclear deterrence instead of embracing disarmament treaties like the TPNW poses a grave threat to the entire planet. We firmly reject the notion of preparing for war and advocate solely for preparations for peace.

**In 2024**, we resist the growing rise of right-wing extremism and totalitarian patriarchal structures, which systematically marginalize women's interests and equality in the public sphere. These groups propagate hate speech, harassment, and violence, particularly targeting the most vulnerable segments of society.

**In 2024**, we oppose asylum and migration policies, coupled with militarized border controls, exacerbate the plight of vulnerable individuals, refugees and migrants, including many women and children who have lost everything, and are trapped at borders, facing persecution, health issues, food scarcity, and the threat of sexual violence. We advocate for a welcoming approach that prioritizes the rights and protection of people on the move. We urge the inclusion of their input in peace negotiations and societal rebuilding efforts.

**In 2024**, we stand in solidarity with Ukrainian women who suffer from the war, the terrible destruction of infrastructure, losses of and separation from beloved people, insured and traumatised partners and the complete change of their lives in exile. We support consciousness objectors, men and women, dissidents and non-violent activists that are persecuted and their (women) supporters considered as threat for “national security” instead of calling them precious human rights defenders.

**In 2024**, we are aware that Palestinian women and children are targets of **the** genocide in Gaza. Women are not only killed during everyday lethal bombardment and sniper fire; they are exposed to displacement, hunger, lack of water and shelters. Destruction of health care services expose those wounded, sick and pregnant to additional suffering. We stand in solidarity with all women victims of violence, in the West Bank, exposed to night raids and violence by the settlers, in Israel traumatized by the terrorist attack. We raise our voices against antisemitism and antimuslim racism and support dialogue efforts in the region and beyond to opt for peace and justice for all.

**In 2024**, tensions in the Balkan region are rising with terrible consequences from new waves of violence. Even years after the wars, women who survived different forms of war violence, including CRSV, forced displacement and genocide. In Kosovo, they are still struggling to enjoy their rights, they are left to deal with the war consequences on their own and to ensure the implementation of adequate reparation

mechanisms. In Serbia, there is still no law that recognises the status of women victims of CRSV. In Albania, because of potential conflict threats in the Balkans, and lack of human security, Albanian women feel completely unprotected and seek refuge in other European countries. In Croatia, the Law on the Rights of Victims of Sexual Violence entered into force on 18 June 2015. The law provides for the right to psychosocial and legal assistance the right to compulsory and supplementary health insurance, the right to financial compensation. Bosnia and Herzegovina is the first country in the region to recognize survivors of wartime sexual violence as a special category in 2006 in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and they are getting monthly financial compensation. Children born due to the war achieved legal recognition as civilian victims of war in July 2023, when the Assembly of the Brcko District of BiH, within the framework of the Law on Civilian Victims of War, enabled the recognition of this status.

**In 2024**, we recognize that the recent war in Armenia forced 120,000 residents, especially women, children and elderly from their homes. The nine-month blockade exacerbated the crisis, leading to shortages of essential supplies and a surge in miscarriages. We support women-led NGOs, addressing social needs and reproductive rights of displaced individuals, advocating for targeted investments in creative training and peace-building efforts, particularly focusing on young women.

We prioritize solidarity and a compassionate approach in our political actions, focusing on addressing urgent needs. Together, we raise awareness about women's protection and the prevention of further violence. We condemn the rise of toxic masculinity and femicides, shifting mindsets, and the dangerous militarization of societies, which squander precious resources for economic gain at the cost of lives. Through collective efforts, we envision inclusive models of community life and locally tailored approaches to implementing responsive projects.

We insist that it is time to start and continue galvanizing voices against war and for a redefinition of what security is from a human and planetary perspective to make women feel safe. We insist on the (re-) development of a caring society that must be engaged in active prevention, in peaceful resistance, in disarming our mind-sets. This is the link between the struggles for our rights with the struggles for peace. The struggle for peace intersects with climate justice, curbing resource exploitation, and mitigating the destructive fallout of war, including environmental devastation and CO2 emissions. The capitalist pursuit of growth and resource extraction is unsustainable, fueling conflicts that disproportionately harm women through violence and exploitation.

Our feminist commitment underscores the imperative for the cessation of all wars. We advocate for inclusive talks, dialogues, and negotiations, with meaningful participation of women at all levels. Our goal is to rebuild societies for the collective benefit and to ensure a future marked by dignity for all. We appeal to political representatives in the OSCE region, to OSCE institutions to vote for cease-fires and invest their connections and expertise in all 3 dimensions and cross-dimensionally in negotiations and diplomacy to prioritize solutions for the safety and well-being of the people - and not follow geo-strategic interests.

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