



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**

**Media Launch**  
**of the Main Results Report of the OSCE-led Survey**  
**on the Well-being and Safety of Women**

Opening Remarks by Secretary General Thomas Greminger

**Brussels, 6 March 2019**

Thank you so much for joining us this morning!

Today we are launching a landmark survey on violence against women. This survey could mark an important step towards ending the violence that many women and girls continue to suffer in parts of the OSCE region.

Preventing and combating violence against women is at the nexus of human rights and human security. Not only because of the personal trauma that individual victims suffer. But also because violence inhibits many women from fully taking part in political, economic and public life.

Violence against women and girls must not be overlooked any longer.

The survey we launching today sheds light on the prevalence of violence against women in seven OSCE participating States: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Moldova and Ukraine. The research was also conducted in Kosovo.

Let me share a few figures with you:

Over two-thirds of women living in these regions think that violence against women and girls is common in their communities. One fifth think it is very common. Just under a quarter personally know someone among their family and friends who has been subjected to violence. Three in ten say that they have

experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15 at the hands of a partner or non-partner. Altogether, some 16 million women have experienced some form of sexual harassment in the area covered by the survey.

These testimonials paint a grim picture.

At this point, I would like to personally acknowledge the openness and bravery of the more than 15,000 women who gave their time to be interviewed for this report, and thank them for their trust in us. For many women, participating in the survey wasn't easy. Many had to relive traumatic experiences to be able to answer the very detailed questions posed by the interviewers. The majority of them had never spoken about this before, to anyone.

The regions the survey covered, and the people living in them, share some common experiences. Many experienced violent transitions following the end of the Cold War. All of them, as our study reveals, are home to women and girls who have suffered, to different degrees, from violence.

International organizations and civil society have called for robust and comprehensive data to formulate and steer policies and actions against violence against women and girls. Until now, however, we did not have enough data for the participating States covered in this survey.

Our survey follows the same methodology that the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights used for a report published in 2014, for which more 42,000 women and girls living in the European Union were interviewed.

The data collected by both reports are comparable, giving decision-makers the information needed to plan and develop regional initiatives and actions, as well as local policies and services. As it turns out, the experiences of women and girls living in European Union countries and in the area covered by the OSCE-led survey are not so different.

The OSCE will discuss the findings of this study and the proposed next steps at a conference on 6-7 May with a wide range of government representatives, civil society organizations, and international organizations.

To tackle violence against women and girls, we have to address the attitudes, norms and behaviours that cause it: female subordination, blaming the victim rather than the perpetrator, and treating violence as a private matter.

We have to change the fact that a vast majority of women do not report violent behavior, including rape, to the police. And only few women feel well informed about the support that is available to them, so we have to expand services and women's access to them.

Our survey was implemented in spring and summer 2018. The report we are publishing today provides a cross-regional analysis of the prevalence and impact of violence against women and girls. We will publish reports on local results in April and May this year.

I wish to thank all the donors who made this work possible, in particular the European Union, which contributed 80% of the project budget, but equally also the UN Population Fund, UN Women and UNICEF as well as the governments of Austria, Finland, Germany, Italy, Norway, the United States and Sweden.

This survey provides the information needed to take action. It is now time to take concrete steps to prevent violence against women and girls: to change and implement legislation, improve services for victims, train police and other security service providers, and create a safer environment for woman and girls.