

**Ms. Marinaki:**

First and foremost, we would like to extend our special thanks to Ms. Phumzile Mlambo- Ngcuka for presenting the report of the Secretary- General on women and peace and security (S/2016/822) and for her excellent leadership in promoting the agenda of UN-Women and also to Ms. Rita Lopidia for her moving testimony. It is an honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the European Union and its member States. I would like to express our appreciation to the Russian Federation, as the President of the Security Council, for organizing this open debate.

The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

The full and effective implementation of the women and peace and security agenda remains a priority for the European Union. The global strategy on the European Union's foreign and security policy sets a clear direction that women and peace and security will continue to be mainstreamed into all our external action. We firmly stand by our commitments set out one year ago and we promote as a priority the women and peace and security agenda. We have actively followed up on our pledges based on four main priorities.

First, we have promoted women's participation and leadership and we remain committed to leading by example, such as in the case of the conclusion of Iranian nuclear issue agreement in 2015, where High Representative and Vice-President of the European Commission, Ms. Federica Mogherini, as well as Secretary-General of the European External Action Service, Ms. Helga Schmid, were leading the European Union's negotiating team and now they are leading and providing proper guidance to the important next implementation phase. Out of our 10 civilian crisis management missions, five are now led by women. From Syria to Kosovo to South Sudan, we have been using our influence externally to support women's participation in peace and security processes and in humanitarian work.

Secondly, we have taken action against sexual and gender-based violence in conflict with a strong focus on the humanitarian dimension. We have funded transitional justice processes in Kosovo, Colombia and the Philippines to help address past abuses. We are supporting projects in Ukraine and Burundi to tackle the use of violence against women. Our humanitarian projects that address sexual and gender-based violence have reached almost 3.5 million direct beneficiaries and we continue to support the excellent work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Zainab Bangura.

Thirdly, we have further integrated gender into countering emerging threats, including terrorism and violent extremism, and in engaging women directly in tackling the root causes of violence and extremism. We have financed diverse community-based projects across the Horn of Africa, in Pakistan and in the whole of the Middle East and North Africa region.

Fourthly, we have strengthened our cooperative frameworks, both within the European Union and with our external partners. In June we also reconfirmed our strategic partnership with UN-Women, and we are finalizing the European gender focal points network and the women, peace and security national focal points network to connect all European stakeholders through the agenda on gender and women and peace and security. We have made progress in meeting the substantial financial

commitment we pledged a year ago, and we will shortly publish new project proposals to contribute to gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in partner countries.

Let me conclude by reaffirming our commitment as expressed during last year's debate (see S/PV.7533). The United Nations can continue to rely fully on the European Union's support, including in better, more broadly, faster and more effectively promoting the women and peace and security agenda worldwide.