

**České předsednictví
v Radě EU**

**Czech Presidency
of the Council of the EU**

**Présidence tchèque
du Conseil de l'UE**

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**Statement
on behalf of the European Union
by**

**H. E. Mr. Michael Kocáb
Minister for Human Rights and Minorities**

**at the opening session of
The Commission on the Status of Women**

on the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including

Ms. / Mr. Chair,

It is an honour and a privilege to address the opening session of the 53rd Commission on the Status of Women on behalf of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries Croatia, Malta, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Slovenia, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, and the United Kingdom

Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine align themselves with this declaration.

Ms. / Mr. Chair,

Let me at the beginning commend the Commission on its important work and congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on continuing the important duty to guide us wisely through the work ahead. We believe that our common goal is to achieve progress in all

development of our societies. It requires the full participation of everyone, male and female, and is not the concern of women alone. Men and women have to be able to enjoy the same rights and opportunities, and, at the same time, they must share responsibilities and tasks, both in the private and public sphere. This calls for an enhanced role of men in building gender equality. Men must be encouraged and enabled to take responsibility for their social and

family roles. Women's traditional preponderance in care giving both within and outside the

Ms. / Mr. Chair,

We welcome the opportunity offered by the priority theme of this Commission to discuss

plans that can be taken to reduce gender inequality in the workplace.

responsibility for their sexual and reproductive behaviour and to understand women's and men's joint responsibilities, so they can be equal partners in public and private life.

Ms. / Mr. Chair,

~~Gender equality, women's empowerment, non-discrimination and full enjoyment of human~~

rights are core principles and values for the European Union. The European Union will work further both internally and through external action towards policy responses to promote equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care-giving in the context of HIV/AIDS. On the practical level as a major donor to the Global Fund against AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, the European Union, has been involved in the development of the Global Fund gender equality policy and financed Global Fund supported projects to train caregivers and provide financial and other support to households that include people living with HIV and children orphaned by HIV. The EU has recently reaffirmed that women's rights are priority of its policy to defend human rights and a subject for long-term action by the

European Union. To this end, the Council adopted guidelines which make respect for women's rights and combating violence against them a priority of the external action of the European Union and its Member States.

The European Union also welcomes the topic of the emerging issue - The gender perspectives
of the financial crisis. Across the globe, women are disproportionately affected by the crisis.

environment. There is a need to work together to ensure that gender equality does not fall
victim to this new economic scenario and gender differences in employment rates should not

increase. Women's increased participation in the labour market is absolutely necessary for a
productive economic development, so greater equality in labour market and greater equality in
the sharing of the family and household responsibilities are inseparable in this process. We
must also ensure that adequate social policies are adopted to avoid the risk of women poverty.

The EU welcomed the adoption in June 2008 of resolution 1820 on "Women and peace and

