



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council No. 1340 Vienna, 21 October 2021

#### **EU Statement on the International Day of the Girl Child**

1. On 11 October, we celebrated the International Day of the Girl Child, highlighting the needs and challenges girls face, while promoting girls' empowerment and the fulfilment of their human rights. This year's theme was "Digital Generation. Our Generation".
2. During the COVID-19 pandemic we have all discovered how digital platforms have played a major role in our outreach throughout the world through connecting, working and learning online. In today's world, girls know their digital realities and the solutions they need to excel on their diverse pathways as technologists for freedom of expression, joy, and boundless potential.
3. The gender digital divide is real. Women and girls are more likely to be cut off from the digital world due to lack of internet access. Girls are less likely to get STEM education, which hinders them in gaining access to tech-related skills and jobs.
4. Supporting girls and young women in learning new skills towards the futures they choose is therefore important. Education is a fundamental right every child should benefit from. It is important to support girls and young women which do take up the role as tech-trailblazers, widening the pathways so that every girl of this generation, regardless of race, gender, language, ability, economic status and geographic origin, lives her full potential.
5. The OSCE concept of "comprehensive security" benefits from girls and young women developing the skills they want to learn. Strong involvement of women in every aspect of our security model will make this concept more robust.

6. In light of the Generation Equality Forum's five-year commitments for bolder solutions to gender inequality earlier this year, the EU welcomes strong and independent girls and women and looks forward to their essential contribution to making our societies better and more equitable

The Candidate Countries the REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, SERBIA\* and ALBANIA\*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country ICELAND, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

\* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.