



The Special Representative on Gender Issues

Minister Dora Bakoyannis
Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE

Ambassador Marc Perrin De Brichambaut
Secretary General of the OSCE

Ambassador Janez Lenarcic
Director of the OSCE ODIHR

Stockholm, 7 May 2009

Dear Minister,
Dear Ambassadors,

As you know, I have continually been pointing to the lack of gender equality in the hierarchy of the OSCE, calling for more women to be nominated and appointed to the higher staff levels in the OSCE Secretariat, the Institutions and within Field Operations.

It has come to my attention that two of the most senior positions at the OSCE ODIHR are about to be filled, and that the leading candidates again are two men. We hope this is not the case. The OSCE ODIHR is by far the largest OSCE Institution in terms of numbers of staff and also here, the leadership has been and is still far from balanced. In the OSCE PA 2008 Gender Report, we concluded that in the ODIHR, only one leadership position (positions P5 and above) out of six is held by a woman.

Bearing in mind this context, I would like to remind you of your particular responsibility to work to rectify this imbalance. The Gender Action Plan from 2004 which was adopted by the Ministerial Council stresses the need for positive action to promote and appoint women candidates. Hiring two men for these high-level positions in the OSCE ODIHR in my view constitutes yet another failed opportunity to make positive changes in our Organization. As I am sure you will agree, words alone do not make a difference, it takes political will. I sincerely hope that efforts will be made to increase the number of women in senior positions so that the OSCE becomes a workplace where gender balance is a priority. The OSCE is a value based Organization, and we implement the principles that we stand for and promote. As I have pointed out several times, if you cannot find qualified women for such positions, my colleagues in the Assembly and I would be happy to assist you with this.

The Special Representative on Gender Issues

In this regard, I would like to ask you to clarify the staffing procedures for high level positions. In addition, I would appreciate it if you would inform me about the number of women and men who applied for these two positions, as well as the number of women and men shortlisted and interviewed.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours sincerely,



Tone Tingsgård,
OSCE PA Vice-President
and Special Representative on Gender Issues

CC: Ambassador Mari Marinaki, Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council
Members of the OSCE PA Standing Committee