

“Leading The Way”: The EU’s role in strengthening the Women, Peace and Security agenda

Roundtable discussion

Date: Wednesday 5 May, 10:00-11:00 CET

Oxfam and the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO)

In the face of conflict and insecurity, women across the globe are boldly advocating for women’s meaningful participation in decision-making on peace and security, and for the full and effective realisation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Yet they face many barriers – including a lack of political support for the agenda nationally and internationally, as well as shrinking civic space and attacks and defamation campaigns. The European Union continues to champion the WPS agenda, and in November 2020 adopted a Gender Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in External Action 2021–2025 (GAP III), which fully integrates the EU policy framework on WPS. This is a welcome step, which must now be followed by its full and effective implementation.

As EU Delegations and relevant services in Brussels are preparing country-level implementation plans for the GAP III, and aligning funding for these initiatives as part of the new multi-annual financial framework (MFF), it is a crucial time to take stock. What strategies are women in conflict-affected countries using to ensure their voices are heard, and what barriers do they face? How has the EU supported these efforts, and how could it strengthen them further? At a time when women’s rights are under threat globally - what opportunities do we see for the WPS agenda? During the roundtable **Oxfam will share findings from its timely research “[Leading The Way](#)”: Women Driving Peace and Security in Afghanistan, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Yemen.**

The research is based on interviews with Women’s Rights Organisations (WROs). It outlines lessons learned, and barriers for the full and effective implementation of the WPS agenda, including a lack of political will and accountability in policy implementation, the stigmatisation of WRO’s, the persistence of patriarchal norms, limited funding as well as other issues. **Concrete recommendations for the EU and its Member States will be shared. This will be followed by input from a Yemeni civil society speaker, a response from the European External Action Service (EEAS), and a Q&A and discussion on how the EU can further strengthen its support for the WPS agenda.** The session will be moderated by Sonya Reines-Djivanides, Executive Director, European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO)

Agenda

05	Welcome and introduction <i>Sonya Reines-Djivanides, Executive Director, European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO)</i>
15	Research findings and recommendations from ‘Leading The Way’ <i>Sarah Pelham, Policy Advisor Inclusive Peace and Security, Oxfam Novib</i>
25	Women, Peace and security in Yemen: barriers, strategies and EU support <i>Dr. Antelak Almutawakel, Founder and Chairperson, Youth Leadership Development Foundation (YLDF)</i>
35	Intervention on research findings and the EU’s support for Women, Peace and Security agenda <i>Kristin de Peyron, Deputy Managing Director, Human Rights, Global and Multilateral Issues, European External Action Service (EEAS)</i>
55	Q&A and discussion
60	Concluding remarks