



CENTRE FOR SECURITY COOPERATION

Security Sector Governance Pillar

"Conference on the 20th Anniversary of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security – from Expectations to Reality”

SSR-H2-CF-20

2nd November 2020

RACVIAC, Rakitje, Croatia

Introduction

The “Conference on the 20th Anniversary of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security – from Expectations to Reality” was conducted by RACVIAC - Centre for Security on 2nd November 2020.

The purpose of this Conference was to celebrate the UNSCR 1325, a ground-breaking step for gender equality in international peace and security processes, and to take stock of the achievements and challenges in fully implementing UNSCR 1325 and corresponding resolutions both globally and in the countries of SEE in particular. Furthermore, the event offered an opportunity for countries of SEE to share their national views and perspectives on progress made and obstacles met in the implementation of the Resolution.

The Conference was divided into two panels: Panel I – International Context - How far have we come in WPS? and Panel II – Regional Context – Is SEE keeping up with progress in WPS?

The Conference gathered more than 40 participants, middle and senior level national officials and subject-matter experts from the security sector institutions, national gender focal points, individuals working on gender training within the security sector and other governmental or non-governmental organizations from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Finland, Georgia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom and Kosovo*, as well as representatives from various international organizations and agencies, such as Nordic Center for Gender in Military Operations (NCGM), British Embassy in Zagreb and KFOR.



Workshop opening

* This Designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the

Kosovo Declaration of Independence (In accordance with Arrangements regarding representation and cooperation).

Execution

The Workshop was opened with a Welcome address by RACVIAC Director Major General (ret.) Jeronim Bazo, who stressed: “The topic of “Women, Peace and Security” is very timely, not only because we are marking the 20th anniversary of the Resolution, but also because the empowerment and substantial inclusion of women are essential to comprehensive security especially during current coronavirus pandemic that is exposing and exacerbating the considerable difficulties women face in achieving their rights and fulfilling their potential. Therefore, we must redouble not only our resolve but also our efforts to ensure gender equality and women’s inclusion in all aspects of our peace and security agenda”.

The keynote speech was delivered by Admiral Robert Hranj, Chief of General Staff of the Croatian Armed Forces who said: “50% or more of the world population are women, and every development that tends to be sustainable starts with security. There is no security if everyone is not equally included. The values that we stand for (democracy, human rights, rule of law) cannot be achieved only by one gender. Even with examples of merit based accomplishments on women's parts, there is still a long way to go before everyone can be whatever they want to be, based solely on their abilities, knowledge and skills”. Furthermore he presented how the Croatian Armed Forces were implementing gender perspective and what was done to mainstream gender in military education, training, exercises and daily tasks.

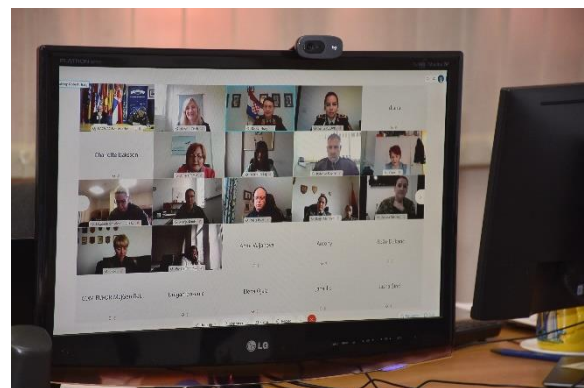


Admiral Robert Hranj, Chief of General Staff of Croatian Armed Forces

Panel I – International Context - How far have we come in WPS?

The first panel was moderated by BG Gordana Garašić, Head of the Planning Directorate of the General Staff of the Croatian Armed Forces, while the panellists were: Ms Claire Hutchinson, NATO Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security; Ms Charlotte Isaksson, Senior Gender Adviser of the European External Action Service; Ms Cristina M. Finch, Head of Gender and Security Division, Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance; LTC Diana Morais, Chair-elect of the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives, and MAJ Sanja Pejović, Gender Adviser at SHAPE.

The panellists emphasized that even 20 years after the adoption of the Resolution there was still a gap between ideology and implementation. Although gender perspective is recognized as an operational necessity, the WPS agenda cannot be successfully implemented without responsive and committed leadership and strong and solid partnership. Implementation of gender perspective requires strong political will, transformational and cultural change and increase of capacity and resources. The leading role in integrating gender perspective within security sector institutions lays on the armed forces. The panellists concluded that although much had been achieved in implementing WPS agenda, there was still a room for improvement especially in the pace at which the changes were happening.

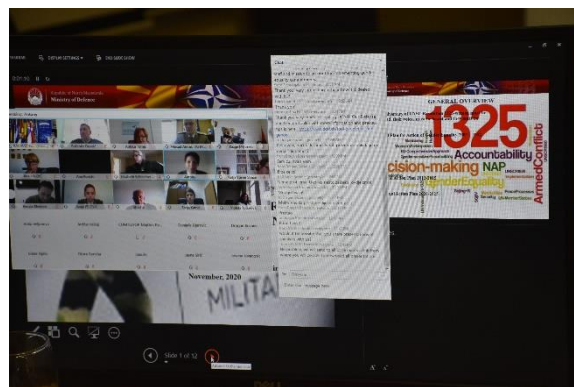


Workshop session – Panel I

Panel II – Regional Context – Is SEE keeping up with progress in WPS?

The second Conference panel focused on regional perspectives and progress made and was moderated by Dr Ankica Tomić, Adviser on Gender Equality, Participant Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI).

The panel was divided into two parts: in the first part, the regional organizations and Missions/Operations presented their work in advancing WPS agenda in the SEE region. The panellist were: MG Reinhard Trischak, EUFOR Commander; MAJ Dr Elisabeth Schleicher, Chief Gender Advisor to COM KFOR; Dr Ankica Tomić, Participant Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Adviser on Gender and Equality, MARRI; and Mr Dragan Božanić, Gender and Research Project Officer, UNDP SEESAC. The panellists stressed that although the 1325 resolution was being implemented at the slow and insufficient pace at the global level, it still remained a powerful tool for preventing and resolving conflicts and crucial for post conflict rehabilitation. It was also emphasized that Peace Support Operations were still one of the most important international instruments in conflict prevention. In that regard, over the past ten years a great improvement had been achieved in promoting and strengthening the position of gender advisers and gender focal points in missions and operations. In arms control, a paradigm shift from gender blind to gender responsive SALW (Small Arms and Light Weapons) control had been introduced and slowly integrated in all aspects of control. In addition, the participants were reminded that migration was not gender neutral, on the contrary, it was fundamentally shaped by gender and gender inequality and therefore it was very important to take into account gender perspective in order to ensure appropriate and effective response.



Workshop session – Panel II

The second part of the panel focused on the national views, achievements and challenges in WPS agenda. The speakers were LTC Alda Sula, Ministry of Defence, Albania; BG Mirsad Ahmić, Ministry of Defence, Bosnia and Herzegovina; COL Boženko Đevoić, Ministry of Defence, Croatia; and LTC Antonijela Stankovska-Budimir, Ministry of Defence, North Macedonia.

AL representative stressed the importance of having proper legal and strategic framework (such as National Strategy on Gender Equality or National Action Plan on the implementation of UNSCR 1325) and the need for its fully implementation. One of the main policies in the Albanian Armed Forces was to increase the participation of women in peacekeeping operations, conflict prevention and resolution, she underlined. Aims and measures from the Action Plan were accompanied by the continuous training of peacekeeping mission staff on gender equality and raising awareness of reducing gender stereotypes in the peacekeeping mission.

BA representative emphasized the leading regional role of BA in implementing the UNSCR 1325 at national level which added a great impetus to the steady increase of the percentage of female military personnel in both Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces. The participation of women in the Armed Forces was primarily a human rights issue as well as a question of non-discrimination and equal career opportunities for men and women, he stressed. Furthermore, a great accomplishment was achieved through engaging high ranking officers in monitoring the execution of measures and tasks from the Dynamic Plan thus contributing directly

to “lead by example” attitude. Finally, a comprehensive gender audit had been conducted with specific recommendations and proposals for improving the situation which had been assessed a unique example in the world, BA representative added.

HR gap in effective National Action Plan (5 years) allowed for a thorough analysis of objectives and measures from the first NAP which showed improvement in all areas with the greatest improvement in the security and defence sector. Furthermore, 2 new areas were added to the current NAP: security risk management and execution and reporting, HR representative stressed. Also, a second NAP 1325 working group, consisting of interagency experts and field practitioners, would continue its work throughout the implementation phase as “command and control” body. HR representative concluded that in implementation of gender perspective, in Croatia and other countries as well, the Armed Forces were definitely the driving force for the change.

MK officially established a gender structure which institutionalized for the first time a gender adviser in the Cabinet of the Chief of General Staff and a network of gender focal points in the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces, MK representative pointed out. Furthermore, this gender structure would be supported by appropriate policy as well as the gender responsive budgeting of the Military Academy, she stressed. The network of gender military trainers in the Western Balkans was a vehicle for change not only in the region but abroad as well through sharing expertise and best practices of their institutions.

Conclusion

2020 marks the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and as with any anniversary, the question arises: how much has been achieved in those 20 years?

In the two decades since the WPS Agenda began, there has been an increasing number of women at the table when decisions were being made, and increasing numbers of women in security sector institutions. Achieving the goals of the WPS Agenda ultimately requires a fundamental transformation in the organizational culture. Security sector institutions – including armed forces - play a critical role in achieving the goals of the WPS agenda and in a number of countries the armed forces have taken a leading role in integrating WPS agenda, SEE countries included.

Progress has been made in institutionalising gender training and integrating gender in military operations; still, a lot remains to be done while the focus shifts from “why” to “how”, in which a responsive and committed leadership plays a crucial role.

Women’s equality and their rights are not only women’s issues, they are relevant to humanity as a whole – to all of us.

Compiled by SSG Pillar
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