

BULGARIAN NATIONAL REPORT

TO

NATO COMMITTEE ON GENDER PERSPECTIVES

**Policies**

a. The Republic of Bulgaria has elaborated a National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality for the Period 2009-2015. The National Strategy outlines the specific objectives which have to be achieved in order to eradicate all obstacles for achieving actual equality of women and men in the country. The Council of Ministers adopts an Annual National Action Plan for Promotion of Gender Equality each year. Monitoring and assessment of the implementation of the objectives set out in the Strategy and the Annual Action Plan are carried out by the National Council on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men with the Council of Ministers, of which Deputy Defence Minister is member.

In 2010, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) of the Republic of Bulgaria continued to pursue consistently its policy aiming at assuring equality of women and men members of the Bulgarian Armed Forces (BUAF).

b. The effort was primarily focused on removing restrictions existing with regard to women occupying certain positions; on opening to women all degree programmes offered by military higher education institutions, as well as on the explication and implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. To this aim, Defence Minister Anu Anguelov has endorsed Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) at the MoD.

Activities on gender issues are regulated in the responsibilities of Deputy Defence Minister who is a member of the National Council for Equal Opportunities for women and men to the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria.

c. A joint project has been implemented together with the Bulgarian Armed Forces Women Association on NATO's experience related to equality of genders in the Armed Forces, approved and financed by US State Department. The goal of the project is to enrich the knowledge and to raise awareness among the servicemen in the Bulgarian Armed Forces of the good practices in the sphere of equality of genders; to improve the professional climate through prevention of discrimination on the basis of gender, and improve the equal opportunities for career development. The project's duration was 6 months, from December 2009 to June 2010. Within the framework of training seminars in Sofia, Veliko Tarnovo, Plovdiv and Varna, the participating members of the armed forces (women and men of various ethnicities, representatives of the three main categories – officers, NCOs, privates and cadets) were briefed on and trained to use modern practices implemented in the armies of NATO Member States.

**1. Personnel**

**Current percentage (data as of 2010) of the total number of women members of the Bulgarian Armed Forces**

	Total % of female military	% of female flag officers	% of female senior officers	% of female junior officers	% of female NCOs	% of female soldiers and sailors
Land Forces	14,08%	-	0,43%	4,06%	9,47%	18,65%
Air Force	16,93%	-	0,70%	7,40%	11,80%	28,55%
Navy	8,93%	-	0,50%	10,38%	4,96%	13,07%
Others*	14,25%	-	2,24%	12,72%	20,94%	18,12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,11%</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,36%</b>	<b>7,25%</b>	<b>11,73%</b>	<b>19,75%</b>

**Current percentage (data as of 2010) of the total number of women members of the Bulgarian Armed Forces participating in operations.**

	Total % of female military	% of female flag officers	% of female senior officers	% of female junior officers	% of female NCOs	% of female soldiers and sailors
Land Forces	3,64	-	0,06	0,27	0,75	2,56
Air Force	6,66	-	-	-	6,66	-
Navy	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	21,01	-	3,4	2,84	14,77	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,53</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0,42</b>	<b>0,55</b>	<b>2,31</b>	<b>2,25</b>

\* **Others**, includes any other categories not mentioned above (i.e. military police, medical personnel, administrative personnel and logistic personnel)

## **2. Recruitment**

a. Acceptance to military service in the Bulgarian Armed Forces is carried out on the basis of the principle of non-admission of discrimination.

Military service positions are open to all applicants meeting the relevant requirements and conditions necessary to fill, and perform the duties of, such position, regardless of gender.

d/e. In 2010, Ordinance No. 14 dated 18.10.2005 of the Minister of Defence, imposing restrictions on positions in the armed forces which were not to be filled by women, was repealed: The positions in question were:

- Conducting body search or personal search;
- Management and servicing of submarines;
- Paying honours and saluting by a unit of guardsmen from the structure of the National Guards.

## **3. Education and Training**

Bulgarian citizens receive education in military educational institutions in the country on the basis of the Law on Defence and Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Higher Education Act and other bylaws and regulations.

The terms and procedure for enrolment and education are set out by means of Ordinance of the Minister of Defence.

a. As regards academic year 2011-2012, all degree programmes are open to women, and the quota principle has been abolished as well.

The degree programmes most popular with women are Organization and Management of Logistic Support Tactical Units and Organization and Management of Communication and Information Systems in the Tactical Units.

b. The physical criteria to be met by the physical training test take different values for women and men

All classes within all degree programmes and post-qualification courses are coeducational, in compliance with schedules endorsed by the Chiefs of the Departments of the educational institutions, following unified syllabi and curricula.

## **4. Deployments to Missions and operations**

a. None of the positions to be filled in the contingents of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria are strictly reserved for women members of the armed forces.

b. The legislation of the Republic of Bulgaria in place does not put restrictions to the participation of women members of the armed forces in missions and operations outside the national territory.

c. Experience shows that women members of the armed forces taking part in missions and operations abroad do not encounter difficulties carrying out their functions and duties at the positions they occupy.

## **5. Career Development**

The principles of career development of the military personnel in the Bulgarian Armed Forces are the same for both genders. Both the interest of the personnel and the interest of the military service are taken into account.

No legislative obstacles are posed to the career development of women members of the armed forces as a result of the most recent amendments of the laws and regulations pertaining to the Bulgarian Armed Forces. The military personnel appraisal methodology has been developed in such a way as to avoid creating preconditions conducive to differences in the appraisal of the performance of duties or skills.

## **6. Special Benefits**

b. Women members of the armed forces enjoy all rights to which women in the Republic of Bulgaria are entitled in the event of pregnancy and childbirth, stemming from the Code of Labour. Mothers of children below three years of age are not commissioned without their consent.

c. In the event of pregnancy and breastfeeding, women have the option to perform their duties under relaxed conditions.

d. Women members of the armed forces may voluntarily choose to have inoculation against the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). This inoculation is not included in the national calendar of vaccinations.

## **7. Gender Equality Advisers**

The Minister of Defence has endorsed duties to be carried out by a servicewoman who will be responsible for the continuous interaction with international organizations and governmental institutions formulating and implementing gender policies.

## **8. Education and Training with relation to UNSCR 1325 and 1820**

Taking into account NATO documents with relation to UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and the recommendations issued by NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives, the Ministry of Defence has prepared a Plan for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 (2000) at the MoD. The policies set forth in the document open new possibilities for specific changes to be made in the education and training plans for the

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units of the Bulgarian Armed Forces and the military educational institutions. The personnel to be deployed to missions and operations are to get familiar with UNSCR 1325 and 1820 and Bi-SC Directive 40-1 of NATO's Strategic Commands, SHAPE and ACO.

**9. Conclusion**

In 2010, the leadership of the Ministry of Defence and Minister Anguelov personally engaged in public events related to the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UNSCR 1325 (2000). The initiatives organized by the MoD and the Bulgarian Armed Forces Women Association were supported by the US Embassy and the Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway in Sofia. The consistent policy with regard to implementation of international gender equality documents will continue to be pursued in 2011 as well.