

Ljubljana: INTEGRATION OF GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN THE ACTIVITY OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

*Written by Tjaša Žgavec Tripković,
MoD Deputy Coordinator for Gender Equality*

Gender perspective has been implemented at the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Slovenia (MoD) for as many as 26 years. Women could freely join the Slovenian Armed Forces (SAF) from their very beginning, and represent nowadays almost 16 percent of SAF personnel. Likewise, female service members also deployed to first international operations and missions in 1997. Gender perspective represents an important regular activity of the SAF performed by the Gender Advisor in the General Staff and Advisors in SAF units. Also, gender perspective is part of different SAF work processes, including gender analyses.

At the level of the MoD, the work of Coordinator for Gender Equality, who also functions as Gender Perspective Advisor in the SAF General Staff and as the National Coordinator in NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives, and Deputy Coordinator for Gender Equality in the Minister's Office are interrelated in terms of different roles of women and men formed within a specific social environment and in accordance with the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and equality focusing on disproportionate impact of armed conflicts on women and emphasizing equal and full empowerment of women in conflict prevention, peace processes and peace establishment. The implementation of the Resolution 1325 in the MoD and the SAF focuses primarily on international operations and missions, while national coordination of Resolution 1325 implementation is entrusted to the Ministry of Foreign affairs.

The MoD puts particular emphasis on gender perspective and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda during pre-deployment training of SAF members for international operations and missions.

Gender perspective was also taken into consideration at the provision of SAF support during the massive influx of refugees and migrants. To this end, a special note on gender perspective was issued for SAF members involved in refugee crisis in the Republic of Slovenia, demanding compliance with UNSCR 1325 and especially integration of gender perspective to avoid incidents and ensure force protection. SAF members were requested to consider, to the greatest extent, the socially formed relationships between men and women deriving from the cultural environment (and religions) of the refugees' country of origin (Syria, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Libya, Ethiopia, Somalia, Iraq and others). They also received practical instructions, such as that female refugees and children were to be received by female SAF service members in cooperation with other female service members of the Police, Red Cross and other organizations.

Gender perspective was again practised at the beginning of this year during a joint exercise in mass disasters (internationally certified course) conducted among the members of the SAF, Police, rescue personnel and fire-fighters. Gender perspective and the associated current topics are regularly publicized by the MoD in different press media, notably in the Slovenian Armed Forces Magazine, where an

interview with the national representative to NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives was published in October 2016. In September of the same year, an entire issue of the scientific expert magazine Contemporary Military Challenges was dedicated to women, peace and security marking the 15th anniversary of the adoption of UNSCR 1325. MoD representatives also, as far as possible, attend agenda-related international events, and participate in round tables and various educational events. Among other things, in September 2016, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the MoD prepared an exhibition of 25 years of women integration into Slovenian security structures