

Military career and the need for femininity

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Article published in the Romanian military weekly "Military Observatory"

The Ministry of National Defence hosted in Bucharest, from 13th June 2017 to 14th June 2017, an international conference named **"The Gender Mainstreaming in Security and Defence Leadership – a comprehensive approach"**, referring to women's career prospects in the field of security and defence. Military career and the need for femininity in a male-specific field, such as the military, women who have chosen this career and have excelled in various fields and have inevitably taken up leadership positions have had a strong social impact over the years. They have crossed the barriers of a mentality and continue to do so today.

For these women, devoted to their country first of all, there is still too little discussion. They have marked history and continue to do so up to this day. The Romanian Army, as well as other armies of the world, has women-general, but it also has young fighters who amaze with the professionalism with which they fulfill their missions. It is a good reason for the woman to be encouraged to enter a career such as the military. Especially since there are areas in the army that need femininity. In their support, at the level of the cabinet of the Minister of National Defence, there is even a gender advisor.

For two days, at the National Military Club Palace, representatives of the Armed Forces of Moldova, Italy, Georgia, Albania, Turkey, Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia, Greece, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and, implicitly, Romania, held talks on promoting women in the military career. On behalf of Romania, as a particularly active participant, including gender advisors and other structures of the national defence system, public order and national security, such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Protection and Guard Service and the Romanian Intelligence Service, joined as a very active participant. International Conference Dissemination of gender issues among leadership in the field of security and defence was conducted under the aegis of the Southeast European Defence Ministers Meeting (SEDM), and Romania organized it as the leading nation during 2017 of the Female Leaders in Security and Defence Project. Georgia will follow in 2018.

The international conference in Bucharest was attended not only by women, but also by men. **The Fleet Rear Admiral Tiberiu Frățilă**, head of the Personnel Division and Mobilization of the General Staff, was one of the participants: "I think it is for the first time that the Ministry of National Defence organizes such a conference, on gender perspective. It's a current issue within the defence area. Considering that in the last 20 years the army has opened its doors to women to join both the national military colleges and academies of the force categories. 17% of the staff of the Ministry of National Defence is female. Of course the legislative part needs to be updated to meet the needs, as well as internal rules".

An example of woman who chose the military career and got our attention, we met shortly before the State Department of the United States of America, which, through the US Embassy in Bucharest, gave a distinction for courage to young **captain Alina Țucă**. I met her among the participants at the conference: "The motivation for the distinction we have been honoured was precisely the representation of the image of the leading woman who demonstrates her qualities of indomitable defence. I was the first Romanian military woman in Congo. Obviously, the mission in Congo was a challenge, first of all to prove to myself that I can". One of Captain Țucă's personal priorities is the founding of a family and, of course,

being blessed with the privilege of becoming a mother. Is there a balance, a career impediment? "The family nevertheless should not be considered as a balance, on the contrary. It is the one that provides the energy that motivates you and offers you with that inner balance to meet the challenges professionally". And concludes: "This conference is very topical, for the first time in Romania, and will bring the benefit not only on a professional but also on a social level".

Of the same participants, the **brigadier general Sheba Manushaque** of the **Albanian** Armed Forces, a beautiful woman who wears her military outfit with elegance, shares with us briefly: "10 years ago I came to the NATO family when my country was invited to become a member of the Alliance. And now I'm a gender adviser. I'm the first woman-general in my country. I have 33 years of army, graduate of military academy and financial specialist. I participated in external missions in Iraq, for example, in 2007. I am married and have two children. And I can say with certainty that my family has been a great career support. My children consider me an example and I hope they are always proud of me. Albania's defence minister is also a woman, Mimi Kodheli. She very much supports the women in our army".

That is why we gathered together, to exchange ideas and types of projects, explains **expert Daniela Roman**, from the International Defence Cooperation Directorate, organizing the event: "What we want to highlight, as an organizing country, is that this concept, of a gender adviser, is important. It should not necessarily be a woman, but also a man, and even a structure, of which both men and women should belong. It is time to find a balance on the subject. We all learn. We learn together".

Gender issues in Romania and in the SEDM states are underpinning the implementation of UN Resolution 1325, entitled Women, Peace and Security. The resolution encourages women's presence in the field of security and defence by increasing the number of participants in missions in theatres of operations, by increasing the number of women leaders in key positions and, last but not least, by debating this gender issue towards encouraging a more active female presence in this eminent field of men.