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Food for Thought 11-2022

# Unpacking Female Representation in the Military

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**FINABEL**

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This Food for Thought paper is a document that gives an initial reflection on the theme. The content is not reflecting the positions of the member states but consists of elements that can initiate and feed the discussions and analyses in the domain of the theme. All our studies are available on [www.finabel.org](http://www.finabel.org)

## **DIRECTOR'S EDITORIAL**

The military has always been an area where women have had a hard time being properly represented at all levels. Nevertheless, women represent an important asset for Western modern Armed Forces and NATO, with the latter setting up an ad hoc Committee on the subject, to foster gender-oriented policies of NATO Member States. This paper will go through the main considerations around greater female involvement in the Armed Forces, compare statistical data from NATO Member States, and finally depict the main gaps and opportunities for gender balance within the Alliance.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mario Blokken', with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

**Mario Blokken**

Director PSec

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The involvement of women in the army constitutes a thorny issue in several countries where women are found in the margin compared to male combatants and there are several nuances to the topic which will endeavour to highlight. In the same context, this paper will attempt to delineate the current situation as well as explore the current initiatives taken in order to ameliorate the issues. Furthermore, it is essential to underline any gaps which account for an obstacle in the development of this situations. Firstly, we will reflect on the current state of art whilst we will introduce a theoretical framework to contextualise how the literature approaches the bipartition “women combatants or women civilians”. In

order to have a more complete image of the situation, it is essential to utilize and compare statistical data. These data not only reflect the current circumstances but also identify what has already been done while underlying any existing gaps. The data used here can be found in the 2019 NATO The Annual Summary of the National Reports where all NATO member states submitted their national data. Furthermore, such National Reports are of significant importance due to their comprehensive analysis of the situation for both women and men in the armed forces. Lastly, we will discuss the gaps as well as the opportunities aiming to integrate women thoroughly in the army.

## **WOMEN IN ARMED CONFLICTS: THEORY OUTLINE**

Within armed conflicts, the involvement of women can be seen from a dual perspective: women combatants or women civilians. In this regard, this FFT aspires to introduce a theoretical framework to contextualise how the literature approaches this bipartition.

The literature on the women's role during highly charged situations such as insurgency fights, guerrilla wars and armed conflicts may be divided into three camps. The first camp (Cock, Segal, Shannon) pushes the modality of the abuse towards women, which manifested in their taking the back seat. Being a

victim eliminates any actorness, assigning mostly reactive than proactive roles. Thus, Hansen (2001) stated that numerous rape cases during wartime evidence weaponising of female bodies to accumulate and mount up psychological warfare. This process is marked by the high level of male dominance within the military structures. Succumbing to male dominance was highly criticised by feminist scholars (McDowell, Ward, Sawyer), who tried to understand why women were written off. According to Ward (1989), scholars must shift the focus from inscribing women into the historical context to exploring the causes

of women's omission. These musings allowed Dowler (1998) to conclude that women's real identities were blurred by deliberately relegating them to the 'supportive'/domestic sphere. Dowler (1998) argues that spatial metrics – public vs private – bring new value to researching gender as a factor in any form of violence application in Europe. At some point, the simmering tensions were reduced to the overt scene (prisons, drinking clubs) and covert (back)stage (preserving the sanctity of the hearth in the barracks). This dichotomy between the 'visible' and 'invisible' was supposed to provide a complex and multi-dimensional picture of the outlined developments.

The second camp (Murray, Ryan) assumed that any involvement of female actors in military-related activities was precipitated by male influence. These musings were frequently reflected in the media coverage, predominantly in the form of defining women through the prism of their age, marital status or kinship with their male counterparts (Kaufman, 2021). The use of terms such as 'girls', 'girl-friends', 'sisters', 'wives' or 'mothers' levied the dependence of women on the men or at least portrayed them as something opposite to the male actors. These practices did not only pin the male shadow even in terms of defining women as separate human beings but also contributed to constructing and preserving the most popular gender stereotypes.

The third camp (Aretxaga, Bloom, Gill, Horgan, D'Arcy, Jacobsen, Reinisch) builds on the notion that even though the women were exposed to forceful relegation, they never accepted it. They were highly devoted to the

cause, and they were ready to do whatever it took to accomplish their ultimate goals, even if they ran contrary to their 'assigned' duties. Both Aretxaga (1997) and D'Arcy (1981) agreed on understanding how women perceived themselves and their actions. Bloom et al. (2012) reasonably pointed out that remaining behind the scenes was women's deliberate choice; they did not want to risk the disclosure of their identities so that they could feel safe while doing anything for the military cause.

Overall, the brief literature review shows a high level of interest in the topic related to the role of women in the military. Navigating among divergent angles allows us to understand better the complexity of the matter in focus. These findings provide a robust basis for further exploring gender-based stratification and its manifestation within military structures. Considering the egregious examples outlined above, this paper will unpack the female representation in one (if not the only) of the most successful security alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), highlighting the salient gaps in the status quo and addressing the concerns which cannot be fully covered only by one or two of the aforementioned camps.

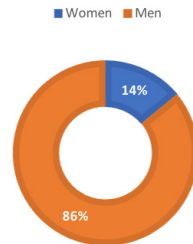
## **'GENDER-BALANCED' SIDE-STREAMING**

To further comprehend female representation in the army, it is essential to proceed to the presentation of key data which are withdrawn from the 2019 Summary of the National Reports of NATO Member and Partner Nations to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives. More precisely, all NATO members have provided national reports which include pertinent data on several sections from which we will focus on the representation and distribution of women and men by military component, representation and distribution of women and men by military occupation, representation and distribution of women and men in military operations, representation and distribution of women and men by military rank, as well as percentages of women and men leaving the military. We will not analyse the data in-depth, but instead, this will be a brief presentation of statistics which will allow us to have a better understanding and a general idea of where female representation stands in all NATO member states. Furthermore, based on the statistics, we conclude that the overall female representation is lower than that of men in the armed forces in all NATO states.

### **Republic of Albania**

The percentage of women in the full-time Albanian Armed forces increased by 8%, thus touching 14% in 2019, whilst men represent 86%. However, if we take a closer look at each sector of the Armed Forces, we see that female representation in the Air Force and the Navy

Percentage of Women and Men in the Full-Time Armed Forces of Albania in 2019



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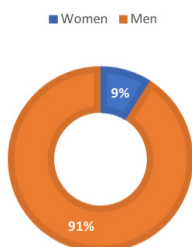
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constitutes a higher number compared to the land forces since 16% of women are found in the Air Force, and 8% are found in land and navy forces. However, no women were found in Pilot positions due to the restriction the Albanian Army Forces posed on the specific occupation. Furthermore, the majority of women are occupied in the Ministry of Defence (39%) and the minority in the Land Forces, whereas men occupy a large percentage (35%) of the Land forces instead. Only 7% of women participated in all NATO operations. The highest representation of women in the Albanian Army can be tracked in the Health Care and the Logistics Sector, whilst in areas like artillery, armour, legal, marine systems engineering and pilots, there is a concerning zero percentage of female representations. On the other side of the spectrum, men have the highest representation in these five sectors.

The reasons behind the null character of female representation in the above-mentioned sectors could be reflected in policies which do not allow them to pursue a career there. The representation of women in other and Officer Ranks stands at 11% and 20%, respectively, whilst the representation of men is at 89% and 80% equally. Across military ranks, females represent 7% in Other Ranks 1-4 grades, whereas, in Officer Ranks, they represent 28% in 1-2 grades and 11-14% in 6+ grades. Lastly, 14% of women left the army, in comparison to 86% of men.

## Kingdom of Belgium

Percentage of Women and Men in the Full-Time Armed Forces of Belgium in 2019



*Summary of the National Reports of NATO Member and Partner Nations to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives (2019),*

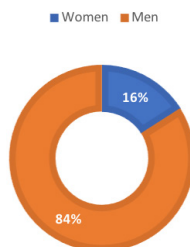
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In the Belgian Armed Forces, the overall female representation accounts for 9%, whilst male for the rest of 91%. More precisely, the majority of women are serving the Land forces ((35%), the Air forces (29%) and the Medical sector (23%). In Belgium, the army does not entail military medical personnel,

but rather the department is independent. Similarly, male representation is equally high in these sectors since 60% of men serve in the Land Forces, 27% in the Air force and 7% in the Navy. In detail, when focusing on supporting services within the Armed Forces, the service with the highest female representation was the Legal one, whilst the one with male representation was the Infantry. In Legal services, there is an equal representation of male and female personnel. In general, Infantry constitutes the most important military occupation since it accounts for 39% of the total Belgian Armed Forces. The representation of women in Other and Officer Ranks stands at 8% and 14%, respectively, whilst the representation of men is at 92% and 86% equally. Across military ranks, females represent 8% in Other Ranks 1-4 grades, whereas, in Officer Ranks, they represent 18% in 1-2 grades and 3% in 6+ grades. Lastly, 6% of women left the army, compared to 94% of men.

## Republic of Bulgaria

Percentage of Women and Men in the Full-Time Armed Forces of Bulgaria in 2019



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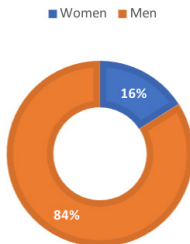
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The female representation in the Bulgarian Armed Forces constitutes 16% which is more than the average NATO number (12%), whilst male representation accounts for 84%. The highest representation can be reflected in the Land and Air Forces, with 18% and 17% of women serving them respectively. Moreover, 10% of women participated in all military operations but only 9% in all NATO operations. The female representation in Reserve Forces constitutes 17%. Across military ranks, females represent 21% in Other Ranks 1-4 grades, whereas, in Officer Ranks, they represent 11% in 1-2 grades and zero in 6+ grades. Lastly, 6% of women left the army, compared to 94% of men.

## Canada

Percentage of Women and Men in the Full-Time Armed Forces of Canada in 2019



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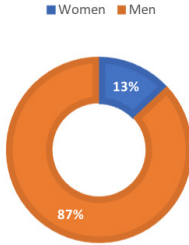
Similarly to Bulgaria, the female representation in Canada amounts to 16% and male representation to 84% with women having the highest percentage of representation in

Air Forces (19%) and the lowest in Land Forces, where male representation is the highest. Within the Land Forces, the majority of women are occupied in the Artillery (6%), and Armour sector whilst only 1% is occupied in Infantry, a sector highly occupied by men (99%). In the same context, female representation decreased in posts like armour, aerospace control, aerospace engineering, marine systems engineering, naval combat systems engineering, engineers and legal since fewer women were recruited in comparison to men. Overall, most women can be found across military occupations like Personnel Selection, Health Care, Public Affairs, Legal and Logistics whilst male ranking across military occupations is higher in a submarine, diver and infantry occupations. Only 12% of women took part in all military operations and 9% in all NATO operations. In addition, 17% of women are found in Reserve Forces. The representation of women in Other and Officer Ranks stands at 14% and 19% respectively, whilst the representation of men is at 86% and 81% equally. Across military ranks, females represent 14% in Other Ranks 1-4 grades, whereas, in Officer Ranks, they represent 20% in 1-2 grades and 10% in 6+ grades. Lastly, 16% of women left the Canadian Army, compared to 84% of men.

## Republic of Croatia

In Croatia, 12% of women and 88% of men constitute the Croatian Armed Forces, with female representation being the highest (15%) in Other Forces, which the Croatian Army has not specified. Their representation in Land, Air and Navy Forces constitutes only

### Percentage of Women and Men in the Full-Time Armed Forces of Croatia in 2019



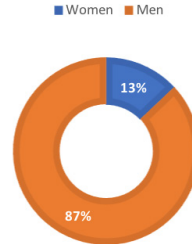
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34% in total, in comparison to male representation, which stands at 89% in each of the above-mentioned Forces. Concerning Officer positions, the female representation accounts for 18% per cent and the male for 82%, with the majority of women only appearing in low-grade positions (23%) and only 3% in high-level positions in comparison to men who occupy high-grade positions with 97%. Moreover, 7% of women participated in all military operations, and 6% of women participated in all NATO operations. The representation of women in Other and Officer Ranks stands at 10% and 18% respectively, whilst the representation of men is at 90% and 82% equally. Across military ranks, females represent 10% in Other Ranks 1-4 grades, whereas, in Officer Ranks, they represent 23% in 1-2 grades and 4% in 6+ grades. Lastly, 9% of women left the army, compared to 91% of men.

### Czech Republic

#### Percentage of Women and Men in the Full-Time Armed Forces of Czech Republic in 2019



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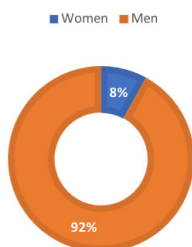
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Women in the Czech Republic Armed Forces represent 13% whilst men are 87%, with the majority of the female representation being concentrated in the Support Services (18%) compared to Land and Air Forces with 9% and 12% respectively. The Czech Republic does not have Navy Forces. On the other hand, male representation remains once again on high levels, especially in Land Forces, where men constitute 91%. Likewise, in the sector of Land Forces, women represent significantly low percentages in occupations like Artillery (3%) and Infantry (1%). However, a higher percentage can be found in Land Forces Support Personnel (12%). Concerning the representation of women in different military occupations, most women are found in Personnel Selection and Health Care with 47% and 42% respectively, and the least in Infantry (1%), Artillery (3%), and Armour (2%) where on the contrary, the majority of

men are found. Moreover, 4% of women participated in all military and NATO operations. Also, female representation in Reserve Forces constitutes 9%. The representation of women in Other and Officer Ranks stands at 11% and 20% respectively, whilst the representation of men is at 89% and 80% equally. Across military ranks, females represent 7% in Other Ranks 1-4 grades, whereas, in Officer Ranks, they represent 23% in 1-2 grades and 4% in 6+ grades. Lastly, 10% of women left the army, compared to 90% of men.

## Kingdom of Denmark

Percentage of Women and Men in the Full-Time Armed Forces of Denmark in 2019



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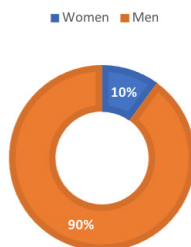
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Female representation in Denmark stands at 8%, while the rest, 92%, is represented by men. The majority of women are found in the Danish Navy (10%), and only 7% and 8% of women are found in the Land and Air Forces. Male representation in these forces exceeds 90%. In detail, in every military component, most women served in Land Forces (45%) and the Navy Forces (22%), whilst the

least of them served in the Special Operations Command and the Joint Arctic Command. Moreover, 13% of women represent Reserve Forces. The representation of women in Other and Officer Ranks stands at 9% and 7% respectively, whilst the representation of men is at 95% and 93% equally. Across military ranks, females represent 9% in Other Ranks 1-4 grades, whereas, in Officer Ranks, they represent 9% in 1-2 grades and 5% in 6+ grades. Lastly, 10% of women left the army, compared to 90% of men. Lastly, 12% of women left the army.

## Republic of Estonia

Percentage of Women and Men in the Full-Time Armed Forces of Estonia in 2019



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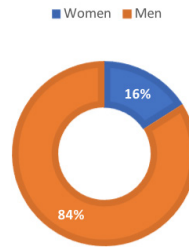
In Estonia, the number of women in the Armed Forces had increased compared to previous years leading to a female representation of 10% and the rest 90% is represented by men. The majority of women can be located in the Air Forces at 13%, followed by the Navy (9%) and the Land Forces (7%).

In addition, specifically to military components, most women are found serving the Land Forces (32%), the Command Support (22%) and the Air Forces (10%). Their distribution in Air Forces and Command Support is higher than that of men. When focusing on military occupations, we see that female representation is higher in Aerospace Control (45%) and Chaplain(18%), where male representation is the lowest. The majority of men are found in Pilot (100%) positions and Armour (97%). Furthermore, within Land Forces, most women are found in Armour, whilst Air Forces are found in Aerospace Control. What is striking is that no women are found in Officer Ranks in 6+ grades where of course, male representation reaches 100%. The representation of women in Other and Officer Ranks stands at 10% and 9% respectively, whilst the representation of men is at 90% and 91% equally. Across military ranks, females represent 7% in Other Ranks 1-4 grades, whereas, in Officer Ranks, they represent 12% in 1-2 grades and zero in 6+ grades. Lastly, 9% of women left the army, compared to 91% of men.

## French Republic

In France, the percentage of women in the Armed Forces reaches 16% and men 84%. The majority of women are found in Land Forces (41%), followed by Air Force (26%) and the Navy (17%). In Land Forces, the highest per cent of women are occupied in Administration (36%) and Aerospace Control (25%), whilst there are zero females in Legion. On the contrary, men represent 100% of the Legion, followed by Submarine

Percentage of Women and Men in the Full-Time Armed Forces of France in 2019



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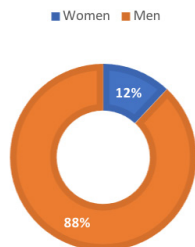
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(99.9%). Moreover, 9% of women participated in all military operations and 13% in NATO operations. Female representation in Reserve Forces accounts for 21%. The representation of women in Other and Officer Ranks stands at 16% and 16% respectively, whilst the representation of men is at 84%. Across military ranks, females represent 13% in Other Ranks 1-4 grades, whereas, in Officer Ranks, they represent 19% in 1-2 grades and 4-8% 6+ grades. Lastly, 14% of women left the army, compared to 86% of men.

## Federal Republic of Germany

The German Armed Forces consist of 12% of women and 88% of men. The majority of women serve in the Joint Medical Service (41%), followed by the navy (10%). Only 7% of women took part in both German and NATO military operations in comparison to 93% of men. Also, 4% of women are found in Reserve Forces. The representation of women

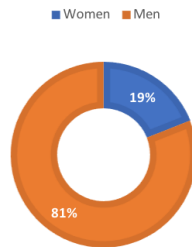
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Percentage of Women and Men in the Full-Time Armed Forces of Greece in 2019



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in Other and Officer Ranks stands at 12% and 12% respectively, whilst the representation of men stands at 88%. Across military ranks, females represent 11% in Other Ranks 1-4 grades, whereas, in Officer Ranks, they represent 12% in 1-2 grades and 1% in 6+ grades. Lastly, 13% of women left the army, compared to 87% of men.

## Hellenic Republic of Greece

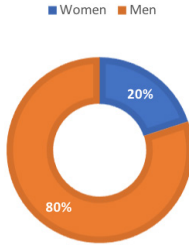
Female representation in the Greek Armed Forces constitutes 16%, and male representation is 84%. More than half of women are found serving in the Common Corps (53%), followed by Land and Air Forces with 15% and 16% respectively. More specifically, in Land Forces, most women are occupied in the Infantry sector and the least of them in the Armour. In general, in military occupation, women had the most representation in Health Care (49%) and Personnel Selection (38%), whilst men had the highest representation in Military Police (100%) and Pilots

(99%). Female representation constitutes 15% in all military operations and 13% in NATO operations. Women account for 20% in Other Ranks and 18% in Office Ranks. In the same context, in Other Ranks, female representation reaches 40% in grades 1-4, whereas in Office Ranks, the highest percentage is that in grades 1-2. Interestingly, the number of women who chose to leave the army constituted only 9%, while men represented 91%. Lastly, only 9% of women left the army.

## Republic of Hungary

In Hungary, women represent 20% of the Armed Forces and men the remaining 80% of Hungary does not have Navy Forces. In-depth, the highest representation can be located in Other Military Occupations (28%), followed by the Air Force (19%), Support Services (18%), and Land Forces (13%), while men showcase low representation in Other Military Occupations and the highest

### Percentage of Women and Men in the Full-Time Armed Forces of Hungary in 2019



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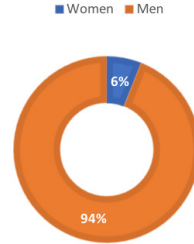
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representation in Land Forces. Data concerning representation by military occupation in Land Forces indicate very low percentages since only 1% of women is occupied in Armour, followed by Artillery (8%) and Infantry (7%). Male representation is much higher, reaching 99% in Armour. However, in the Air Force, the female representation is much higher in Aerospace Engineering (25%) and Control (12%). Concerning Support Services, the majority of women are found in the Legal department and Signals, whilst no woman is found in Chaplain. Moreover, 8% of women participated in all military operations and 7% in NATO operations. In the same context, 16% of women serve in Reserve Forces, whilst zero reserve women participated in NATO operations. The representation of women in Other and Officer Ranks stands at 20% and 21% respectively, whilst the representation of men is at 80% and 79% equally. Across military ranks, females represent 11% in Other Ranks 1-4 grades, whereas, in Officer Ranks,

they represent 27% in 1-2 grades and zero in 6+ grades. Lastly, 15% of women left the army, compared to 85% of men.

### Italian Republic

#### Percentage of Women and Men in the Full-Time Armed Forces of Italy in 2019



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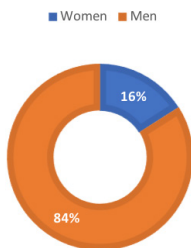
[https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/2021/9/pdf/NCGP\\_Full\\_Report\\_2019.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2021/9/pdf/NCGP_Full_Report_2019.pdf)

Female representation accounts for 6% of the Italian Armed Forces, and men represent the remaining 94%. The majority of women are found in the Land Forces (8%), followed by the Navy (5%) and the Carabinieri Corps (5%). Furthermore, the majority of women are occupied in Armour and Artillery with 7% respectively. Male representation is high in every military occupation, with over 90%. Taking a closer look at female representation in military occupations, we can see that the majority of women can be found in Naval Healthcare (20%) and Healthcare (15%), whereas there is zero female representation in Chaplain and Riders. On the other side, male representation touches 100% in Chaplain and Riders, followed by the Carabinieri

Corps. Moreover, 4% of women participated in all military operations and NATO operations. Female representation in Total Italian Reserve Forces constitutes 13% and 34% in Italian Selected Reserve Forces. The representation of women in Other and Officer Ranks stands at 6% respectively, whilst the representation of men is at 89% and 80% equally. Across military ranks, females represent 8% in Other Ranks 1-4 grades, whereas, in Officer Ranks, they represent 13% in 1-2 grades and 1% in 6+ grades. Lastly, 6% of women left the army, compared to 94% of men.

## Republic of Latvia

Percentage of Women and Men in the Full-Time Armed Forces of Latvia in 2019



*Summary of the National Reports of NATO Member and Partner Nations to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives (2019),*

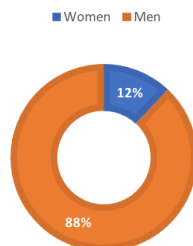
[https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/2021/9/pdf/NCGP\\_Full\\_Report\\_2019.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2021/9/pdf/NCGP_Full_Report_2019.pdf)

Women in the Latvian Armed Forces constitute 16%, and men 84%. Likewise, women have a higher representation in the Air Force (18%) compared to the Land Forces (16%) and the Navy (12%). In the sector of Land Forces, the majority of women are occupied in Artillery and Infantry. However, more

women are occupied in Air Force occupations such as Aerospace Control (22%). In addition, the highest female representation can be seen in military occupations like Public Affairs (100%) and Health Care (85%), whilst men in the military showcase high representation in Communication electronics engineering and marine systems engineering with 100% respectively. Moreover, 4% of women participated in all military operations whilst only 2% in NATO operations. Likewise, 13% of women represent Reserve Forces. The representation of women in Other and Officer Ranks stands at 15% and 19% respectively, whilst the representation of men is at 85% and 81% equally. Across military ranks, females represent 12% in Other Ranks 1-4 grades, whereas, in Officer Ranks, they represent 22% in 1-2 grades and zero in 6+ grades. Lastly, 18% of women left the army, compared to 82% of men.

## Republic of Lithuania

Percentage of Women and Men in the Full-Time Armed Forces of Lithuania in 2019



*Summary of the National Reports of NATO Member and Partner Nations to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives (2019),*

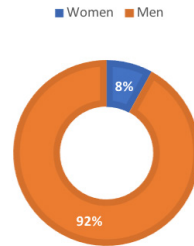
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Female Representation in Lithuania constitutes 12% compared to 88% male representation. More women serve in the Land Forces (10%). The majority of women in military occupations are found in Aerospace Control (20%) and Other Land Forces (16%), whereas in Pilot, Naval Engineering, and Aerospace Engineering, there is zero female representation and 100% male representation. The major occupations for women in the Lithuania armed forces constitute Healthcare (57%) and Personnel Section (52%), whilst there is zero female representation in aerospace engineering, naval combat system engineering, among chaplains, pilots and engineers. On the contrary, men had the highest representation in these occupations. Additionally, 14% of women are part of the Reserve Forces compared to 86% of men whilst 20% of reserve female members participated in NATO operations. Moreover, the representation of women in Other Ranks accounts for 12% and in Officer Ranks for 13%. More precisely, the percentage of women in Other Rank grades 5-9 accounts for 14% whilst Office Ranks grades the highest percentage is found in grades 1-2. There is zero female representation in 6+ grades for Officers Ranks. Lastly, women who left the army constitute 6% compared to men, who represent 94%.

## Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

Women in Luxembourg represent 8% of the Armed Forces, with men representing 92%. The majority of women serve in the Musician sector (30%), followed by the Air Force (11%) and lastly, the Land Forces (7%). It is essential to underline that the Musician

Percentage of Women and Men in the Full-Time Armed Forces of Luxembourg in 2019



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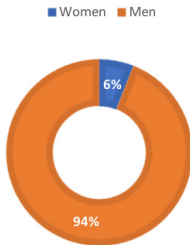
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military component is bigger than the Air Force in the Luxembourg Armed Forces. Concerning Military occupations, only 8% of women serve in Logistics in Land Forces, while there is zero female representation in Pilot, Administration (Air Force), and Liaison (Air Force). Women had the highest representation in Loadmasters, whilst men had the highest representation in Air Force administration, chaplains, liaisons, pilots and intelligence personnel. Luxembourg does not have Reserve forces. In addition, the representation of women in Other Ranks stands at 8% and their representation in Officer Ranks increased to 11%. Only 10% of women are found in Other Ranks 5-9 grades, whilst zero women are found in Officer Ranks 6+ grades since most of them are found in 1-2 grades. Lastly, only 5% of women left the army compared to 95% of men.



## Montenegro

Percentage of Women and Men in the Full-Time Armed Forces of Montenegro in 2019



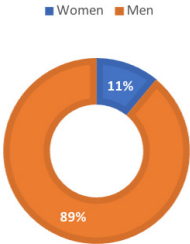
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Female representation in Montenegro accounts for 6%, and male representation for 94%. Most women are found in Land Forces with 7%, followed by Air Force (6%) and the Navy (3%). Women had the most representation in Healthcare (67%) and Personnel Selection (22%), whereas there is zero representation in Aerospace engineering, Intelligence, and Legal. The representation of women in Other and Officer Ranks stands at 5% and 10% respectively, whilst the representation of men is 95% and 90% equally. Across military ranks, females represent 8% in 1-4 Other Ranks, whereas in Officer Ranks, they represent 18% in 1-2 but zero in higher grades. Lastly, 9% of women left the army compared to 91% of men.

## Kingdom of the Netherlands

Percentage of Women and Men in the Full-Time Armed Forces of The Netherlands in 2019



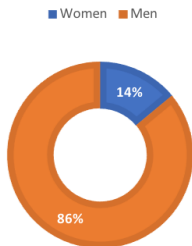
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Female representation in the Netherlands accounts for 11%, and male representation for 89%. Most women serve in the Royal Marechaussee (15%), followed by the Navy (13%), the Air Force (11%) and the Land Forces (3%). Additionally, 10% of women participated in all military operations and 9% in NATO operations. Moreover, women represent 15% of the reserve armed forces and men the remaining 85%. In the same context, 28% of reserve women took part in military operations and 36% of Reserve Women in NATO operations. The representation of women in Other and Officer Ranks stands at 10% and 14% respectively, whilst the representation of men is at 90% and 86% equally. Across military ranks, females represent 9-10% in Other Ranks grades, whereas, in Officer Ranks, they represent 16% in 1-2 and only 3% in higher grades. Lastly, 10% of women left the army compared to 90% of men.

# Kingdom of Norway

Percentage of Women and Men in the Full-Time Armed Forces of Norway in 2019



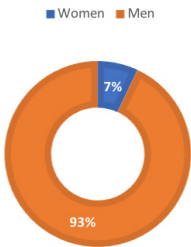
Summary of the National Reports of NATO Member and Partner Nations to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives (2019), [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/2021/9/pdf/NCGP\\_Full\\_Report\\_2019.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2021/9/pdf/NCGP_Full_Report_2019.pdf)

Female representation in Norway accounts for 14%, and male representation for 86%. Most women serve in the Other Forces (17%), followed by Land Forces (14%), the Air Force (13%) and the Navy (12%). Additionally, 12% of women participated in all military operations. The representation of women in Other and Officer Ranks stands at 16% and 11% respectively, whilst the representation of men is at 84% and 96% equally. Across military ranks, females represent 19% in Other Ranks 1-4 grades, whereas, in Officer Ranks, they represent 13% in 6+ grades.

# Republic of Poland

Female representation in Poland accounts for 7% and male representation for 93%. Additionally, 4% of women participated in all military operations and 3% in NATO operations. Moreover, women represent 20% of

Percentage of Women and Men in the Full-Time Armed Forces of Poland in 2019

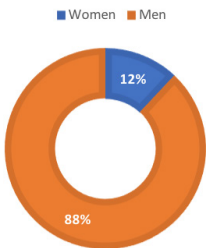


Summary of the National Reports of NATO Member and Partner Nations to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives (2019), [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/2021/9/pdf/NCGP\\_Full\\_Report\\_2019.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2021/9/pdf/NCGP_Full_Report_2019.pdf)

the reserve armed forces and men the remaining 80%. Most Reserve women are found in the Air Force (27%) and Land Forces (17%). Only 4% of women left the army in comparison to 96% of men.

# Portuguese Republic

Percentage of Women and Men in the Full-Time Armed Forces of Portugal in 2019

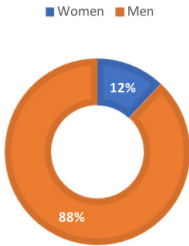


Summary of the National Reports of NATO Member and Partner Nations to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives (2019), [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/2021/9/pdf/NCGP\\_Full\\_Report\\_2019.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2021/9/pdf/NCGP_Full_Report_2019.pdf)

Female representation in Portugal accounts for 12%, and male representation for 88%. Most women serve in the Air Forces (17%), followed by the Navy and the Army. Women had the highest representation in Legal and Healthcare occupations, whilst men had the highest representation amongst marines, divers and chaplains, where there is zero female representation. Additionally, 5% of women participated in all military operations and 6% in NATO operations. The representation of women in Other and Officer Ranks stands at 10% and 16% respectively, whilst the representation of men is at 90% and 84% equally. Across military ranks, females represent 11% in Other Ranks 1-4 grades, whereas, in Officer Ranks, they represent 1% in 6+ grades. Lastly, 10% of women left the army compared to 90% of men.

### Slovak Republic

Percentage of Women and Men in the Full-Time Armed Forces of Slovakia in 2019



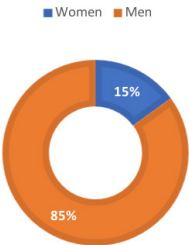
*Summary of the National Reports of NATO Member and Partner Nations to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives (2019),*  
[https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/2021/9/pdf/NCGP\\_Full\\_Report\\_2019.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2021/9/pdf/NCGP_Full_Report_2019.pdf)

Female representation in Slovakia accounts for 12% and male representation for 88%.

Most women serve in the Air Forces (13%), followed by the Land Forces (12%). The Slovakian Army does not have a Navy. Women had the highest representation in Personnel Selection (38%), and Healthcare (34%) occupations, whilst men had the highest representation in Air Force Other (98%) and Pilot (98%). Additionally, 7% of women participated in all military operations and 5% in NATO operations. The representation of women in Other and Officer Ranks stands at 10% and 18% respectively, whilst the representation of men is at 90% and 82% equally. Across military ranks, females represent 11% in Other Ranks 1-4 grades, whereas, in Officer Ranks, they represent 23% in 1-2 grades but zero in 6+ grades. Lastly, 8% of women left the army compared to 92% of men.

### Republic of Slovenia

Percentage of Women and Men in the Full-Time Armed Forces of Slovenia in 2019



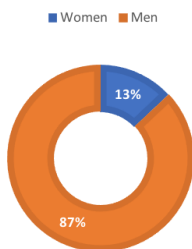
*Summary of the National Reports of NATO Member and Partner Nations to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives (2019),*  
[https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/2021/9/pdf/NCGP\\_Full\\_Report\\_2019.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2021/9/pdf/NCGP_Full_Report_2019.pdf)

Female representation in Slovakia accounts for 15% and male representation for 85%. Most women serve in the Civilian Person-

nel (42%), followed by Land Forces (15%). Women had the highest representation in Legal (61%), and Public Affairs (58%) occupations, whilst men had the highest representation in Naval Warfare (100%) and Aerospace Engineer (98%). Additionally, 10% of women participated in all military operations and 12% in NATO operations. In the Slovenian Armed Forces, there is 3% of Reserve women. The representation of women in Other and Officer Ranks stands at 14% and 18% respectively, whilst the representation of men is at 86% and 82% equally. Across military ranks, females represent 17% in Other Ranks 1-4 grades, whereas, in Officer Ranks, they represent 22% in 1-2 grades and 5% in 6+ grades. Lastly, 17% of women left the army compared to 83% of men.

## Kingdom of Spain

Percentage of Women and Men in the Full-Time Armed Forces of Spain in 2019



*Summary of the National Reports of NATO Member and Partner Nations to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives (2019),*

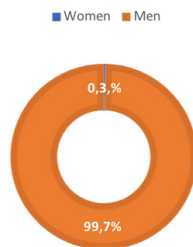
[https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_files2014/assets/pdf/2021/9/pdf/NCGP\\_Full\\_Report\\_2019.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_files2014/assets/pdf/2021/9/pdf/NCGP_Full_Report_2019.pdf)

Female representation in Spain accounts for 13% and male representation for 87%. Most women serve in the Common Bodies (30%),

followed by Air Forces (14%), Navy (13%) and Land Forces (12%). Women had the highest representation in Healthcare (37%) and Legal (37%), whilst men had the highest representation in Chaplain (100%) and Submarine (99%), where we find zero female representation. Additionally, 8% of women participated equally in military operations and NATO operations. The percentage of women in Reserve forces constitutes 17%, whilst zero reserve women participated in NATO operations. The representation of women in Other and Officer Ranks stands at 13% and 10% respectively, whilst the representation of men is at 87% and 90% equally. Across military ranks, females represent 16% in Other Ranks 1-4 grades, whereas, in Officer Ranks, they represent 14% in 1-2 grades and 0-0.5 6+ grades. Lastly, 5% of women left the army compared to 95% of men.

## Republic of Turkey

Percentage of Women and Men in the Full-Time Armed Forces of Turkey in 2019



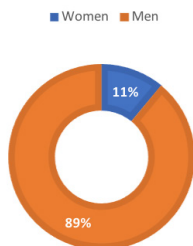
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Female representation in Spain accounts for 0.3% and male representation for 99.7%. Most women serve in the Navy (0.7%), followed by Air Forces (0.5%) and the Land Forces (0.2%). Women had the highest representation in Training Development (9%) and Legal (9%), whilst men had more than 90% representation in every occupation and 100% representation in Infantry and Armour. The representation of women in Other and Officer Ranks stands at 0.01% and 4% respectively, whilst the representation of men is at 99.9% and 96% equally. Across military ranks, females represent 0.1% in Other Ranks 1-4 grades, whereas, in Officer Ranks, they represent 3% in 1-2 grades and zero 6+ grades.

## United Kingdom

Percentage of Women and Men in the Full-Time Armed Forces of The UK in 2019



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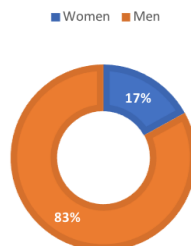
[https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/2021/9/pdf/NCGP\\_Full\\_Report\\_2019.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2021/9/pdf/NCGP_Full_Report_2019.pdf)

Female representation in the United Kingdom accounts for 11%, and male representation for 89%. Most women serve in the Air Force (15%), and there is equal representation

of 10% in the Navy and the Land Forces. The percentage of women in Reserve forces constitutes 15%. The representation of women in Other and Officer Ranks stands at 10% and 14% respectively, whilst the representation of men is at 90% and 86% equally. Across military ranks, females represent 10% in Other Ranks 1-4 grades, whereas, in Officer Ranks, they represent 14% in 1-2 grades and 4% in 6+ grades. Lastly, 9% of women left the army compared to 91% of men.

## United States of America

Percentage of Women and Men in the Full-Time Armed Forces of USA in 2019



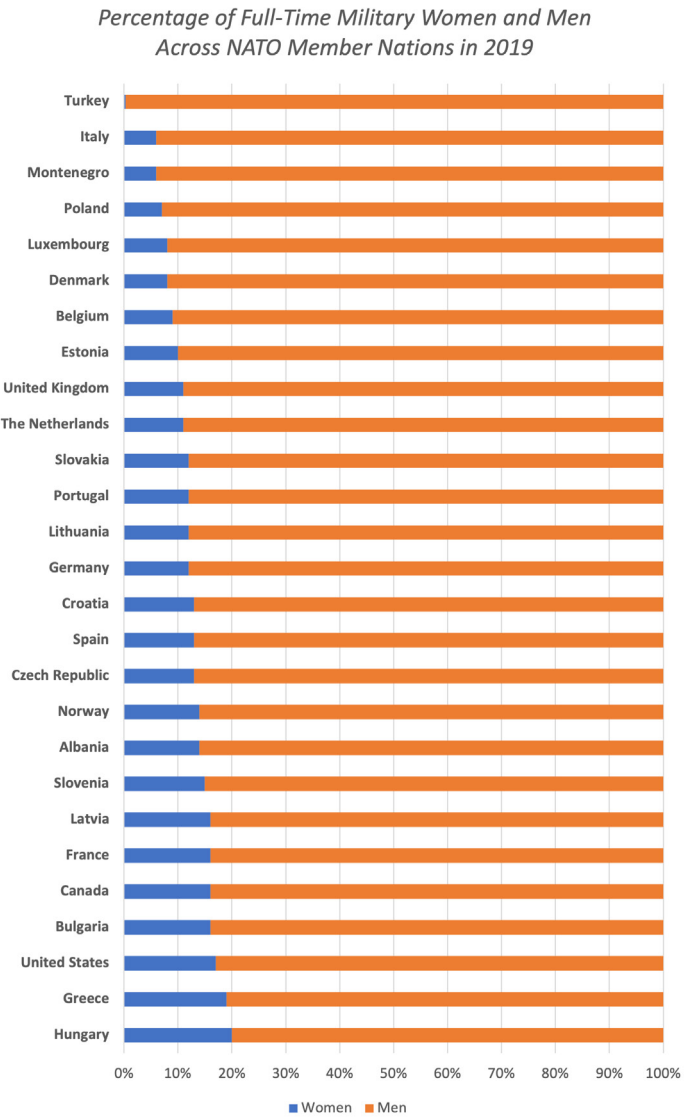
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[https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/2021/9/pdf/NCGP\\_Full\\_Report\\_2019.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2021/9/pdf/NCGP_Full_Report_2019.pdf)

Female representation in the United States accounts for 17%, and male representation for 83%. Most women serve in the Air Force (21%), Navy (20%) and the Army (15%) and lastly, the Marines (9%). Additionally, 4% of women participated equally in military operations. The percentage of women in Reserve forces constitutes 23%. The representation of women in Other and Officer Ranks stands at 17% and 18% respectively, whilst the repre-

sentation of men is at 83% and 82% equally. Across military ranks, females represent 18% in Other Ranks 1-4 grades, whereas, in Officer Ranks, they represent 20% in 1-2 grades and 7% in 6+ grades.

To sum up:



## **NATO'S GENDER MACHINERY**

NATO has for long worked towards the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and a proper representation of women in the armed forces. The Alliance identifies the integration of gender perspectives within the organisation and its work as an integral part of its mandate, not only necessary for its success but also imperative as a critical component of NATO's common values and culture of human rights and civil liberties.

Though the formalisation of gender mechanisms within NATO's institutional framework did not take place until 2007, initiatives to foster equal representation and gender realities in the Alliance had been ongoing for decades under the leadership of female advocates within the organisation. In 1961, senior military women led the first NATO Conference on Women to raise awareness about women's challenges and opportunities within NATO armed forces. This conference, followed by the Director's Conference of Senior Women Officers in 1966, led to the creation of the ad hoc Committee on Women Forces (CWINF) in 1973, intending to share information among NATO Members to foster women's conditions in the workplace. Still, and despite the Committee holding conferences every year, it was not until 1996 that the Military Committee created the Office on Women in NATO Forces within the In-

ternational Military Staff to support the work of the Committee. This first step towards the institutionalisation of gender-focused organisations within NATO allowed us to start implementing UNSCR 1325 early on, both among NATO Members and in cooperation with NATO Partners.

These initiatives were reinforced by NATO's first Policy and Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) in 2007, which included considerations for gendered perspectives in operational contexts and introduced the figure of the Gender Advisor (GENAD), and later on also Gender Focal Points (GFP). Since then, the network of GENADs has expanded to all of NATO's military and civilian headquarters and missions across the Alliance. This includes GENADs in NATO's Strategic Commands –ACO and ACT–, as well as its missions in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Kosovo. GENADs are tasked with providing advice on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 at the strategic, operational and tactical level, as well as reporting and mainstreaming. Instead, GPS are dual-hatted personnel at NATO's headquarters, divisions or offices who support the integration of gender perspectives and promote gender mainstreaming within certain functional areas. At the headquarters level, the Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security acts as a focal point for the international staff, whereas

the IMS GENAD Office monitors and provides advice on gender perspectives within the International Military Staff. Along with the institutional structure, NATO counts on an Action Plan for the implementation of UN-SCR 1325, which is updated periodically. The latest version is the NATO 2021-2025 Action Plan on WPS, which incorporates a renowned commitment to promote gender equality and ensure that gender perspectives are integrated into NATO's core tasks – deterrence and defence, crisis management, and cooperative security (NATO 2021a).

The literature has found that integrating gender mainstreaming in military organizations offers operational benefits and leads to greater military capacity, enhanced intelligence gathering, better peacebuilding practices, and a decrease in sexual misconduct (Whitman and O'Neill 2012; Harrell and Miller 1997; Bridges and Horsfall 2009; Baksh-Soodeen 2005). Still, hypermasculine military organizations are among the most resistant to gender-focused reforms, which would compromise NATO's ability to integrate gender reforms despite the benefits they offer (Cohn 2012; Eichler 2013; Sjoberg 2015). And yet, it is undeniable that NATO has devoted time, funds and effort to welcoming and even institutionalising gender perspectives by creating several gender-specific mechanisms in an intrinsically military organisation. For this reason, feminist movements have not only been surprised by NATO's work towards gender equality and mainstreaming but sometimes

remain suspicious of the policies pioneered by the Alliance and their actual implementation, arguing that NATO does not pursue feminist ends but co-opts women's rights for military purposes (Hardt & von Hlatky 2019; Bastick & Duncanson 2018).

Overall, the Alliance has successfully improved women's representation in the armed forces of NATO Members and Partners and fostered the integration of gender perspectives in their work, structure and culture. In the past 20 years, the representation of women as full-time members of the military has doubled in the NATO Member States, with steady annual increases in the proportion of women in officer ranks (NATO 2019). Over 40% of NATO Members count on specific policies to promote women's recruitment, while the share of Members introducing retention and support policies for women in the military has increased recently. This also includes networks to report sexual harassment or the presence of Gender Advisors.

On the ground, NATO put in place programmes to enhance the representation of female soldiers in a conflict zone. This includes, for example, the Lioness Programme in Iraq (2004), which introduced women in military units to carry out searches on women and children in Iraq. Another initiative was the Female Engagement Teams (FETs) in Afghanistan, under which American female soldiers would encourage and foster the collaboration of local women in counterinsurgency



and pro-government missions (Azarbaijani-Moghaddam 2014). However, this project was considered a failure despite obtaining mixed results because it assumed that women would always speak to other women and be transparent (Rushchenko, 2022).

Though the extent to which the improvement of women's representation and the integration of gender perspectives within the militaries of members is due to NATO's policies cannot be ascertained, the Alliance has undoubtedly contributed to the process. NATO's ability to infuse change in national militaries even when gender reforms are unexpected in strong environments that embody hegemonic masculinity is precisely its deep military nature. In this regard, NATO has the potential to act as a "teaching machine" (Enloe 1983), given that it is something beyond a military alliance against a common enemy – it is a political community tied by shared values, aligned interests, and a common identity (Kitchen 2010). The Alliance does not act as a forum for organization-wide discussions but is integrated by small, functionally-specialised committees, which allows for certain states to introduce and push for their agendas, ultimately having transformational impacts (Wright 2016). The introduction of gender issues in informal settings across the organisation allowed for a cross-pollination of values and agendas regarding gender equality and mainstreaming, fostering inter-socialization among the Member States and vis-à-vis Partners. Moreover, the creation of an extensive,

fully-funded network of gender-related institutions has allowed NATO to work towards the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (Wright 2016). These efforts can be criticised because NATO uses UNSCR 1325 instrumentally to increase its operational effectiveness and its soft power clout, considering gender issues as an additional dimension of the Alliance rather than an integral one (Wright 2016).

Still, NATO has paradoxically been found to be better at adopting gender mainstreaming than certain civilian organisations. The Alliance has aimed at imitating other international security organisations - namely the United Nations - but it has achieved greater success due to its military nature. Military officials mandated to implement gender policies and guidelines adopted standard operating procedures to ensure their proper implementation, even when they were contrary to organisational culture and structure (Hardt & von Hlatky, 2019). Moreover, the accountability attached to military hierarchy required commanders to see those gender directives were implemented, having to respond for their inaction otherwise (Hardt & von Hlatky, 2019). Last, at the time when NATO started creating formal institutional arrangements related to gender, military officials saw the operational value of adapting to gender requirements after their experiences in the war in Afghanistan (Hardt & von Hlatky, 2019).

However, this adoption of UNSCR 1325 is also criticised because it may reinforce un-

derlying gendered perspectives of the role of women in the armed forces and conflict by side-streaming women, i.e. overrepresenting them in gender-related roles within the organisation, which ultimately threatens to

confuse gender with women and reinforce the same assumptions that UNSCR 1325 aims at dismantling (Zalewski 2010; Cockburn 2010; Shepherd 2008).

## **WALKING THROUGH GAPS & JUMPING AT THE OPPORTUNITIES**

NATO's approach to implementing UNSCR 1325 and the WPS Agenda is through gender mainstreaming, and so its members and partners around the world have been prompted to and over 40 have adopted National Action Plans on gender mainstreaming in the field of defence and security. These plans, along with NATO's gender machinery working for the implementation of WPS objectives, have facilitated the institutionalisation of the gender agenda in national militaries and provided both domestic and supranational mechanisms to monitor their implementation. Besides the formal architecture and informal means of influencing its members and partners' role in increasing the representation of women and gendered perspectives in the armed forces, NATO has also worked to extend the gender mainstreaming approach to specific technical and policymaking settings: by providing technical assistance in implementing gender-sensitive units and policies in Tunisia and Jordan, to promoting debate and sharing guidelines and best practices regarding the role of women in current security challenges (Rushchenko 2022).

These efforts have successfully increased the visibility of gender in the armed forces of NATO Members and Partners, both within the military organisation and deployed on missions. This has resulted in the implementation of policies on the recruitment, promotion, inclusion, and retention of women, as well as in the engagement with women and children on the ground. Despite the institutional and policymaking advances attained, several challenges remain in ensuring effective, complete implementation of UNSCR 1325 and the WPS agenda.

The increase in the share of women in the militaries of NATO Members that have resulted from the implementation of the WPS in recent years has undoubtedly improved the representation of women in the armed forces. This, among others, is often used as an indicator to assess the success of gender policies in the military. However, this approach fails to include the extent to which women can actually participate and are, therefore, appropriately represented across the armed forces.

For example, women are often overrepresented in supportive roles in the armed forces rather than participating in combat positions as men. Moreover, though their presence in combat roles and their deployment in peace-keeping missions has generally improved, they are still underrepresented in decision-making and policymaking positions. Even when their participation in combat roles and their deployment in missions is fostered by the gender mainstreaming approach under the WPS agenda, their responsibilities often revolve around gender issues. Despite often being more aware of gendered perspectives of conflict and thus more fit to attend to the needs of women and children on a mission than men, assuming the link between women and gender issues risks are perpetuating the very same underlying premises that gender mainstreaming aims at dismantling. In this regard, the overrepresentation of women in gender-related roles incurs a form of side-streaming that, though positive in favouring the overall representation of women in the armed forces and implementing the WPS agenda, may inadvertently cluster women in specialised and often low-status positions that may eventually prevent a proper representation of women in national militaries and international peace-keeping missions (Newby & Sebag 2020).

Despite the existence of the Women Peace and Security Agenda and the several efforts to enhance female representation, women have rather finite participation in peace-keeping processes. Likewise, according to data provided by the United Nations, only 2.5% of

signatures were derived from women in 24 peace-keeping processes (Dimou, 2021). In the same context, even though the low numbers of women in peace-keeping missions are gradually starting to increase, still, female representation in policy and decision-making processes remains at low levels (Rushchenko, 2022). There have not been initiatives which allow women to become more involved in these processes, thus constituting their role limited.

Concerning future developments, NATO policies must concentrate on the political and cultural aspects of gender-oriented programmes to include experiences lived by women in the armed forces and therefore allowing for more cohesive and enhanced policies in WPS (Rushchenko, 2022). Furthermore, the WPS agenda has been influenced by terrorism and violent extremism, amongst other emerging issues. Women should not be treated solely as victims but also as someone capable of preventing or sustaining a terrorist action. As a result, programmes based on minimising radicalisation and examining women's role in this process should be initiated by governments in cooperation with the United Nations (Dimou, 2021).

Based on the national reports provided by NATO member states and partner states, there is a lack of programs and policies concerning the support of work-life balance as well as support and facilitating single/divorced parents who are employed in the armed forces. How-

ever, the majority of the member states argue that the biggest void in policies can be found in the field of education. More precisely, training programs for education focusing on gender perspectives should be established on a national level which will then impact NATO policies, while military education needs to also emphasise gender perspectives. Lastly, several member states claimed that there is a necessity to appoint personnel responsible for overseeing allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse whilst also enhancing the role of Gender Advisors in the armed forces.

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Created in 1953, the Finabel committee is the oldest military organisation for cooperation between European Armies: it was conceived as a forum for reflections, exchange studies, and proposals on common interest topics for the future of its members. Finabel, the only organisation at this level, strives at:

- Promoting interoperability and cooperation of armies, while seeking to bring together concepts, doctrines and procedures;
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Finabel aims to be a multinational-, independent-, and apolitical actor for the European Armies of the EU Member States. The Finabel informal forum is based on consensus and equality of member states. Finabel favours fruitful contact among member states' officers and Chiefs of Staff in a spirit of open and mutual understanding via annual meetings.

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