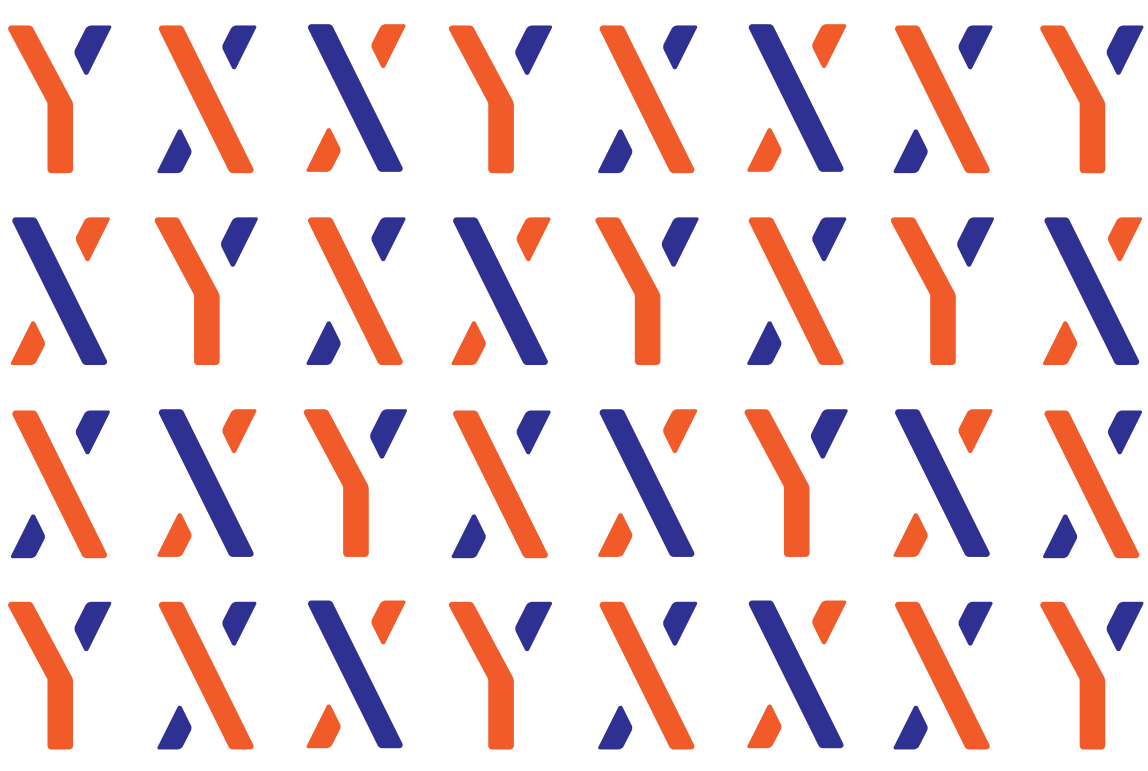


GENDER EQUALITY IN THE MILITARY



Strengthening of Regional Cooperation on Gender Mainstreaming in Security Sector Reform in the Western Balkans (II phase)



Working with the Ministries of Defence and the Armed Forces in the Western Balkans to **advance gender equality in the military through regional cooperation.**

“We need a global response that addresses the root causes of conflict, and integrates peace, sustainable development and human rights in a holistic way from conception to execution.”

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres at the UN General Assembly high-level dialogue, on “Building Sustainable Peace for All: Synergies between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”
24 January 2017

THE INTERNATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK

The **Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** adopted in 1979, stresses the need of women’s participation and leadership in all contexts. **General Recommendation No. 30 on “Women in Conflict Prevention, Conflict and Post-Conflict situation”** (2013) stresses the applicability of the CEDAW to a diverse range of settings affected by conflict and political crises and affirms the CEDAW’s linkages with the UN Security Council’s Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda.

In addition, the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted in 1995, draws attention to the “Women in Armed Conflict” as one of twelve critical areas of concern and emphasizes the participation of women in conflict resolution.

The **Women, Peace and Security agenda**, through several UN Security Council resolutions (1325 (2000); 1820 (2009); 1888 (2009); 1889 (2010); 1960 (2011); 2106 (2013); 2122 (2013); 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), and 2493 (2019)) has been positioning **conflict-prevention, women’s meaningful and equitable participation and sustaining peace at its core.**

The CEDAW and WPS agenda offer a substantive framework to ensure that **gender equality becomes integral to conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction and accountability.**

PROGRESS TO DATE

To ensure safety and security for all citizens, the security **sector must be responsive to the needs of women and men and promote and pursue gender equality.**

Significant progress in mainstreaming gender in Security Sector Reform in the Western Balkans has been achieved by four **Ministries of Defence (MoDs) and Armed Forces (AFs) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia**, with the support of UNDP SEESAC through the first phase of the regional initiative Strengthening of Regional Cooperation on Gender Mainstreaming in Security Sector Reform in the Western Balkans, implemented from 2012 to 2016:

- Strengthened regional cooperation on gender equality between the MoDs and AFs in the Western Balkans;
- Raised gender awareness of over 4,700 military and civilian staff in the MoDs and AFs;
- Increased capacities of Human Resources Departments in the MoDs and AFs to develop gender responsive policies based on the recommendations of the first regional survey **The Position of Women in the Armed Forces in the Western Balkans.**

The project thus brings the Western Balkans closer to fulfilling their global commitments for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by directly contributing to achieving SDGs 5 and 16 and implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

REMAINING CHALLENGES

Low representation of women in the Armed Forces at all levels in the Western Balkans, particularly in commanding and decision-making positions;

Persistence of gender stereotypes in AFs policies and practices;

Gender awareness improved, however lack of understanding on how to integrate gender perspective in the overall military curricula and training in order to prevent perpetuating gender stereotypes;

Limited capacities for gender-sensitive analysis and evidence-based policymaking, which should provide opportunities for equal career development of both men and women;

Low reporting rates related to gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment in AFs, coupled with limited capacities to prevent and address the reported cases.



FOCUS OF THE PROJECT

- Facilitating the regional platform on mainstreaming gender equality in the policies and practices of the MoDs and AFs in the Western Balkans;
- Strengthening the capacities of Gender Equality Mechanisms in the MoDs and AFs to achieve improved results through information exchange and knowledge sharing across the region, technical advice and expert support for small-scale projects;

- Working with Human Resources Departments in the MoDs and AFs to collect and analyse sex disaggregated data to develop and implement gender responsive policies based on evidence and to provide advisory services;
- Support to the AFs to prevent and respond to gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment through training, identification of gaps in policies and procedures, review of gaps in policies and procedures, development of guidelines, and toolkits;

- Strengthening the Regional Network of Gender Trainers by providing support for further capacity building of the network and knowledge sharing;
- Ensuring the next generation of AFs staff understands why gender equality is key to fulfilling their mission by developing gender-sensitive military curricula;
- Enhancing the knowledge of AFs commanders and MoD decision makers through the tailor-made “Gender Coach Programme”.

Gender equality is key for advancing peace and security agenda, and achieving sustainable development goals →

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:

5 GENDER EQUALITY → **Goal 5 – Achieve gender equality & empower all women and girls.**

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS → **Goal 16 – Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.**



Project is funded by the **Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs.**



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