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## The Ministry of Defence of the Republic of North Macedonia increases its capacities to prevent and respond to gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse

16-17 December 2020, Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia

Ten representatives of the internal complaints mechanism in the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the Army of the Republic of North Macedonia (ARM) participated actively in a two-day capacity building seminar on the prevention of gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse. This activity was organized at the request of the Ministry of Defence of North Macedonia to strengthen the capacities of the internal complaints mechanism to respond to gender-related complaints effectively.

Recognizing that gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse do not only violate the victims' rights but also harm the entire institution, the MoD of North Macedonia works actively towards the establishment of a nondiscriminatory working environment for men and women in the MoD and ARM.

The capacity building seminar, organized with the support of UNDP SEESAC, increased practical knowledge and understanding of fundamental terms and notions about gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse, national anti-discrimination legislative framework, as well as relevant international standards. Participants exchanged information on the steps to identify discrimination and stop harassment to ensure a safe environment and confirmed that the seminar improved their ability to recognize gender-based discrimination and distinguish it from other forms of abuse at work.

The seminar enabled exchange of regional experiences. Brigadier General Mirsad Ahmić, General Inspector of the MoD of Bosnia and Herzegovina, shared with representatives of the MoD of North Macedonia, invaluable experiences and good practices from BiH on handling the reported cases of gender-based discrimination.

In 2021, UNDP SEESAC will continue with education at the request of the MoD of North Macedonia to further enhance the capacity of the internal complaints mechanism to prevent and respond to gender-based discrimination.

The Strengthening of Regional Cooperation on Gender Mainstreaming in Security Sector Reform in the Western Balkans project is financed by the governments of Norway and the Slovak Republic. With the support of UNDP SEESAC, the project provides the Ministries of Defence and Armed Forces in the Western Balkans with a platform where, over the next years, they can exchange ideas and develop policies to ensure long-term and sustainable inclusion of the gender perspective in defence policies and practices.



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