

Italy – National Report

1. Policy

In 1999 the law n. 380 offered to the women the possibility to join the Armed Forces. Since then female personnel started being recruited with no restrictions of rolls, branches and categories according to the application of the idea of equal opportunities. The recruitment has been scaled in order to gain experiences and to adequate structures. For this, every year, the Minister of defence, in agreement with the Ministry of Equal Opportunities, establish the percentage and the qualifications for each armed service in which female personnel could be enlisted. Consequently, recruitment has been conducted since 2000 in officers rolls, academies and a limited number of volunteers in short enlistment term (just in the Army), and since 2001 in NCOs schools as well. This measure should change soon and there will not be restrictions at all.

In order to accomplish the above mentioned ordinary law, Italian Government has approved:

a. The executive Law decree (Delegate decree n. 24 on 31st January 2000) intended to give provisions on recruitment, military status and career progression.

The decree envisages the participation of Italian citizens of both sexes in competitions to attend regular courses in Military Academies, Institutes and basic military Schools and also in competitions for short term enlistment volunteers.

It has also disposed in matter of parenthood that the current regulations for civilians female servants are fully applicable to military female personnel. At the end of 2002 a sentence of the Italian High Court has stated that also married people are allowed to take part to competitions.

b. Decree on Military Service Fitness Test

Ministerial Decree n. 114 on 4th April 2000 established specific fitness standards for admission to military service; the relevant existing decree has not been changed except for the updating with the specific illnesses that may affect women.

Another Decree stated the minimum height standards for male and female for participating to competitions (165 cm for male and 161 cm for female).

Studies are beginning to verify and if necessary to update the specific standards established in 2000.

c. Ministerial decree on Defence Committee

A Committee has been established for advising the Chief of the Defence General Staff about the integration and quality of life of female military personnel. The committee is mainly composed by female members who are involved in political, academic and social fields related with female issues. The same members had already taken part in the works for establishing female military service. This Committee has also taken part in the drafting of a document (Military Ethics – published at the end of 2002) about social conduct in the Armed Forces, with a particular focus on sexual harassment and mobbing.

2. Organisation

The number of total strength in 2003 are as follow:

ARMED FORCE	RANK	TOTAL STRENGTH	MEN	WOMEN	WOMEN %
ARMY	Officers	12.930	12.884	46	0,4 %
	NCOs	26.082	26.072	10	0 %
	Volunteers in permanent service	23.811	23.811	0	
	Volunteers in short -enlistment terms	29.704	28.817	887	3 %
	Cadets (academy and NCOs schools)	1.547	1.448	99	6,4 %
	Conscripts	29.164	29.164	0	
TOTAL		123.238	148.884	1.042	0,9 %

ARMED FORCE	RANK	TOTAL STRENGTH	MEN	WOMEN	WOMEN %
NAVY	Officers	4.150	4.087	63	1,5 %
	NCOs	16.673	16.630	43	0,3 %
	Volunteers in permanent service	3.405	3.405	0	
	Volunteers in short -enlistment terms	5.870	5.870	0	
	Cadets (academy and NCOs schools)	1.357	1.128	229	17 %
	Conscripts	5.286	5.286	0	
TOTAL		36.741	36.406	335	0,9 %

ARMED FORCE	RANK	TOTAL STRENGTH	MEN	WOMEN	WOMEN %
AIR FORCE	Officers	5.799	5.750	49	0,8 %
	NCOs	31.970	31.946	24	0 %
	Volunteers in permanent service	1.678	1.678	0	
	Volunteers in short -enlistment terms	2.100	2.100	0	
	Cadets (academy and NCOs schools)	831	739	92	11 %

	Conscripts	6.752	6.752	0	
TOTAL		49.130	48.965	165	0,3 %

ARMED FORCE	RANK	TOTAL STRENGTH	MEN	WOMEN	WOMEN %
CARABINIERI	Officers	3.267	3.250	17	0,5 %
	NCOs	47.753	47.711	42	0 %
	Troops	48.701	48.701	0	
	Cadets (academy and schools) and NCOs	791	656	135	17 %
	Conscripts	12.000	12.000	0	
TOTAL		112.512	112.318	194	0,2 %

3. **Employment**

In theory, no restrictions are envisaged on women's employment. The idea is that men and women should be employed in accordance with their skills and professionalism on the basis of common standards. So, female officers, NCOs and volunteers immediately after finishing the basic and specialised training phases in military basic training and specialization school are now working in all the areas in relation with their ranks and specializations and they have been posted to Units, HQs/Agencies or aboard ships since the end of 2001, in accordance with general requirements of each single service. They have been employed in training exercise or in real operations abroad (Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq) just like the malemates.

In particular, at the moment, the main assignments for the volunteers are both logistical (Communication operators, computer operator, drivers) and operative (artillery and mortar operator, tank crew, anti tank missile operator).

About the cadets, they will attend single services courses, each one of different duration according to the final assignment or future employment as an officer of those particular specializations/branches in the single service academies or military schools before being employed on the field. In other words, every single course has its peculiar educational and training standard in order to ensure to each cadet the required professional knowledge and military expertise they need in their first assignment service as officers of that service and roll (i.e. for Officer, from 4/5 years for combat rolls up to 6 years for medical Corps; about 3 years for NCOs schools).

4. **Recruitment**

Concerning the recruitment procedures different limits in fitness standards are required for female personnel taking into account physiological differences as above mentioned.

In 2003 competitions the number of female intakes are as follows:

- Military Academies - up to 20% of available positions.

This limitation is required also because of the infrastructure situation.

This kind of recruitment stands for the main recruitment source for Officers with no restriction for women such as combat/combat support rolls.

ARMED FORCE	TOTAL NR OF PLACES	NR OF AVAILABLE PLACES FOR WOMEN	NR OF WOMEN ENLISTED	% OF AVAILABLE POSTS
ARMY	156	31	13	42%
NAVY	157	31	31	100 %
AIR FORCE	111	22	9	41%
CARABINIERI	50	10	4	40%

- officers holding a specific university degree - up to 100 % of available positions. It represents a complementary source aimed to recruit selected qualifications, usually technical, administrative or medical for unrestricted admission to all rolls involved (medical, logistic, etc.).

ARMED FORCE	TOTAL NR OF PLACES	NR OF AVAILABLE PLACES FOR WOMEN	NR OF WOMEN ENLISTED	% OF AVAILABLE POSTS
ARMY	24	24	3	12,5 %
NAVY	10	7	2	29 %
AIR FORCE	14	14	1	7 %
CARABINIERI	20	20	4	20 %

- NCOs up to 20% of available positions (the same reason mentioned above for the academies) .

ARMED FORCE	TOTAL NR OF PLACES	NR OF AVAILABLE PLACES FOR WOMEN	NR OF WOMEN ENLISTED	% OF AVAILABLE POSTS
ARMY	163	32	10	31%
NAVY	148	29	29	100%

AIR FORCE	78	15	15	100%
CARABINIERI	300	60	60	100%

For 2004, in compliance with the principle of gradual recruitment, in order to realize a complete integration of female personnel with their male counterparts, has been confirmed the recruitment sources activated during the past and in some rolls has been raised the ceiling, and it will be opened the ordinary recruitment for volunteers (permanent service and short enlistment term volunteers in the Navy and in the Air Force).

In general, women presence in the Service is quickly increased from about 400 in the year 2000 to 2500 in the year 2003.

5. **Training**

Training as well as educational and professional qualifications are fundamental for the future employment of all personnel. There are no differences in basic training for men or women; the idea is that training must be related to the work that personnel will probably carry out at the end of educational and professional training courses when posted to unit/HQ or others duties. Currently in Academies and in other military schools, men and women work completely integrated.

For the short term female volunteers, recruited in the Army, training programs are the same as their male colleagues. They are divided in three phases:

- the basic military training;
- the advanced military training in combatant specialisation;
- the specialized military training in infantry regiments, tank groups, parachutist schools, mountain infantry school to achieve the military skills, professional knowledge and expertise they need for their job in the operational field.

As for men, the selection of the specialisation is based on a combination of:

- Service requirement;
- personal aims;
- physical and fitness standard;
- psychological profile;
- previous experiences in civilian life.

During this training period the only difference adopted is additional time dedicated to physical training, because it was observed that female personnel need more time to reach the minimum standards.

After training phase, people are assigned to Units so that they are involved in operational rhythm (exercises and operations).

6. **Deployment**

Excluding cadets, Female personnel (officers recruited by direct appointment and troops) have been deployed in operational environment since the end of 2001.

Actually the following officers and volunteers are deployed in operations:

MISSION	OFFICERS	VOLUNTEERS
BOSNIA (Joint Endeavour)		3
KOSOVO (Joint Guardian)	1	44
AFGHANISTAN		19
IRAQ	1	15
TOTAL	2	81

This experience of female employment in international operations is favourable. They are fully integrated with their malemates. They have lived and worked in the Units in the same condition as the men, without differences. Their support has been considered very important for the relationships with the local women and childrens.

7. Conclusion

The admission of women into the ranks of the Armed Forces marks an important social and cultural shift from the past since it helps to bring them increasingly in keeping with a social community in which a growing number of women fill leading positions.

As a matter of fact, women's entry into such particular world has been far from easy; yet, the favourable opinion expressed by the first female personnel in all rolls (officers, NCOs , and volunteer) bears witness to the work of the Government and the Armed Forces as a well-done job.

Of course, the road to full integration is still long and there will be stumbling blocks on the way to the complete achievement; nevertheless, in the light of this first experience we are fully convinced that the presence of female personnel will improve the quality and professional skills on the Armed Forces.