

Poland – National Report

Changes in the policy on women's military service

Membership in NATO and European Union set new direction for changes in women's military service in the Polish Armed Forces. At present, the policy on women's military service in Poland is directed at adoption to the NATO standards and requirements of the European law, among others, the directives of European Union preventing sexual discrimination. Works on update of present regulations and preparation of new ones are aimed at ensuring that women and men have equal rights, and career opportunities.

Leveling of men's and women's status in the Polish Armed Forces

The Law on Military Service of Professional Soldiers (pragmatic) of 11 September 2003 adopted by the Polish Parliament levels men's and women's status in the Polish Armed Forces. The provisions of crucial significance to women include:

- Giving women access to all posts available in the Polish Armed Forces
- Giving women possibility to serve in professional privates corps
- Leveling age of retirement from military service for men and women (60 years of age)

The issues for discussion

The growing number of women in the Polish Armed Forces and experience related to this fact result in a need to create new solutions regarding maternity, child care, marriages between soldiers and providing both mothers and fathers in military service with possibility to care for their children.

Equal rights and opportunities

It is not enough to level men's and women's rights to military service to give women equal chances of military professional career. The ongoing process of adoption of the Polish Armed Forces to the NATO standards include giving women equal opportunities to develop their professional military skills and reach various posts in the Polish Armed Forces.

At present women have a better chance to pursue military career thanks to giving women – students of military academies, a right to take a one year unpaid leave in case of pregnancy (art. 134, items 2 and 3 of the pragmatic law of 11 September 2003).

Chances to reach higher ranks and posts by women will grow together with increase of a number of women in our army and changes in attitude to women's military service presented by military circles. Restructurisation of the army is coupled with reinforcement of integration and building new relations between men and women in uniforms of the Polish Armed Forces.

Here we should stress importance of a role of the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Status of Women and Men, for women's military service, especially foundation of the National Program for Women. This program is aimed at implementation and reinforcement of a rule of equal opportunities for men and women in all spheres of social life in Poland.

Organisation of women's military service in the Polish Armed Forces

Professional service

As of January 1st, 2004 there were 346 women (regular and contract service) in the Polish Armed Forces.

Women's professional military service	Officers					Total officers	Total warrant officers	Total NCOs	Total
	LtCol	Maj	Capt	1 st Lt	2 nd Lt				
Regular service	1	17	76	23	21	138	46		184
Contract service			3	56	16	75	69	18	162

Total	1	17	79	79	37	213	115	18	346
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Due to restructurisation of the armed forces (mainly men were laid off), as of 1 January 2004, a share of women in the number of soldiers slightly increased last year, and now women constitute 0,47% of their total number (see Attachment no. 1).

The highest number of women soldiers can be found in Land Forces (170), in Air and Air Defense Forces there are only 45 of them, in Medical Service – 36, in Navy – 33 (see Attachment no. 1). In comparison with the previous year, the biggest change took place in Medical Services. Number of women serving there decreased during 2003 by 11 due to transformation of military medical centers into civilian entities, and redemption of military jobs there.

It should be noted, that in the year 2003, which was the 15th year of recruitment of women into military service in Poland, the first woman in the history of the Polish Armed Forces was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel (in the General Staff).

Students of military academies

As of 1 January 2004 There are 175 women – candidates for military service studying at military academies. The first women were admitted to officers' colleges and military academies in Poland in 1999. At present there are 108 fourth year students who shall join the ranks of professional service in the middle of the next year.

Employment

In the Polish Armed Forces women can be found in officers', warrant officers' and NCOs' corps. According to new regulations warrant officers' and NCOs' corps should be joined into one NCOs' corps, professional privates' corps is to be formed, and all corps should be available to women.

Figure 6. Women in the Polish Armed Forces by corps (1 January 2004)

Though women and men have the same right to employment in all kinds of posts in the Polish Armed Forces, majority of women serve in medical corps – 227 women. In 2003 we could see increase in number of women serving in telecommunications (up to 15), in logistics (up to 10), in legal services (up to 8) and in military police (up to 7) (see attachment no. 2).

Recruitment

- Deep restructurisation of the Polish Armed Forces resulted in domination of reduction of forces over recruitment in 2003. The a/m restructurisation consisted in reduction of number of soldiers in the Polish Armed Forces, changes in structure of individual corps, gradual increase in number of professional soldiers, reform of military academies and officers' colleges, and liquidation of many military units, including medical service units which employ majority of women serving in armed forces.
- Only Naval Academy conducted recruitment in 2003, and 9 women - candidates were admitted there.
- A new form of recruitment if a one year military training at Tadeusz Kosciuszko Land Forces Officers' College in Wroclaw provided to graduates from civilian universities. In 2003 8 women took this opportunity.

- In 2003 professional service was joined by 21 women after promotion to the first officer rank (2nd lieutenant): 17 women from military academies and 4 from officers' colleges.
- Since 1988 armed forces employed, as contract soldiers, women – graduates of civilian universities having various qualifications (without military training), according to current needs of the Polish Armed Forces.
- In the Polish Armed Forces a free will to remain in the service dominates over a wish to quit. Therefore there are no need to maintain programs for retention of women in the armed forces. Effort is focused on re-conversion programs addressed to soldiers dismissed from service, helping them in search for a job on a civilian job market or in foundation of their own business.

Number of women in professional military service in years 1988-2003

Corps	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Officers	2	15	32	64	87	101	110	111	125	146	160	182	200	213	214	213
Warrant officers							1	1	2	4	6	51	63	74	125	115
NCOs												5	14	16	17	18
Total	2	15	32	64	87	101	111	112	127	150	166	238	277	303	356	346

Trainings

Pursuant to the new pragmatic law, before promotion to a higher rank ever soldier should undergo a relevant training course. Basically women and men face the same service requirements regarding various forms of training in professional service and at military academies. Small difference can be found in physical fitness evaluation criteria applied to men and women. Different criteria for evaluation of physical fitness are applied during entrance exams and during studies at military academies. In 2000, Land Forces Training Division prepared *Physical fitness standards for women in professional service or at military academies*. In 2003 new standards were prepared. The new standards are adjusted to physical fitness of women with a view to various age categories.

Since 2003, in Land Forces, results of fitness tests are recorded into a soldier's records and has influence on his general opinion and valuation of her qualifications fitness for military service.

Career development

The new pragmatic law sets standards for career development paths though creation of the so-called military career model for officers and NCOs.

At present there the following opportunities are available:

- Post – graduate studies,
- Higher studies (day classes, evening classes, weekend classes – as a second faculty),
- Scholarly career – a PhD degree of a civilian or military academy,
- 2nd degree military studies at the National Defense Academy,
- participation in all kinds of trainings, courses, workshops, etc.

During military training women undergo leadership skills training. Some women have a chance to test their leadership skills so they can be developed during further professional training.

Participation in peace keeping operations

The number of women participating in peace keeping operations conducted by the Polish military contingents has remained on the same level for many years. This number does not exceed 20 women a year. Women supported SFOR, KFOR and UN peace operations, at present there are women in the Polish stabilization contingent in Iraq. The Committee for Women in the NATO Armed Forces recommends increasing number of women and enhancement of their role in contingents posted in the regions endangered with war or terrorism. Such missions constitute big opportunity to utilize women's specific skills, like negotiation skills.

In the Polish contingents there are no limitations regarding posts available to women, however they serve mainly in medical services. Such situation is results from the fact that majority of women in the Polish Armed Forces serves in medical corps (227 women out of 346 of women in regular and contract service).

Recruitment of soldiers for posts in peace keeping and stabilisation missions in conducted in line with the present demand of the Polish Armed Forces, without any reservations towards a soldier's sex.

Achievements, events and plans

1. On 11 September 2003 the Polish Parliament adopted the Law on Professional Military Service, adjusting the existing regulations to restructurisation of the Polish Armed Forces and to the process of integration with the NATO structures.
2. Thanks to this new law, a target of leveling of women's and men's status in the Polish Armed Forces has been achieved. The Council on Women in the Polish Armed Forces participated in works on this law as an opinion-forming body.

The new pragmatic law:

- Gives women access to all kinds of posts in the Polish Armed Forces;
 - Equalizes the age of obligatory retirement of men and women from military service (60 years) ;
 - Gives women access to professional privates corps;
 - In case of pregnancy gives women – students of a military academies, a right to one year, unpaid leave (in case of another pregnancy, a women is dismissed from service)
3. In 2003, a new program of physical fitness trainings was created and new standards of physical fitness for women, with regard to age categories, were established.
 4. In 2003, which was the 15th year of recruitment of women into military service in Poland, the first woman in the history of the Polish Armed Forces was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel (in the General Staff).
 5. In January 2003, the Chairwoman of the Council on Women in the Polish Armed Forces took part in the 5th Ministers' Conference of Equal Status of Genders, organized by the European Council in Skopje.
 6. In July 2003, first 21 women were promoted to the officers' rank (2nd lieutenant), who completed four years' studies at military academies and officers' colleges.
 7. In October 2003, the Ministry of National Defense and the Council on Women in the Polish Armed Forces organized a conference entitled 'Participation of women in the national security system' under patronage of the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Status of Women and Men.
 8. In the beginning of 2004 as a result of efforts of the Council on Women in the Polish Armed Forces, in the Military Training and Human Resources

Department a new post was created – a specialist for women’s military service.

9. The authorities consider releasing pregnant women – soldiers from a duty to wear a uniform during pregnancy.
10. The Ministry of National Defense has a plan to investigate whether sexual discrimination appears in military circles. In case it is necessary, a policy of prevention of such discrimination shall be implemented. The prevention policy will cover foundation and implementation of prophylactic programs. The Ministry plans include also an update of a decision of the Minister of the National Defense on evaluation of military discipline, with special attention to sexual discrimination issues.
11. Attempts have been undertaken to broaden the scope of women’s participation in peace keeping operations – according to recommendations of Committee on Women in the NATO Armed Forces.

Conclusion

In line with the provisions of the National Program for Women, the rule of women’s and men’s equal status has been consequently implemented. There is a need for further actions aimed at integration of military cadre, i.e. psychological and educational trainings for cadre and warrant officers aimed at elimination of wrong attitudes from human relations.

ATTACHMENT NO. 1

Place of women in the army structure by corps and subordination (1.01.2004)

Cadre	Officers					Total officers	Total		Total	To soldiers total (%)
	LtCol	Maj	Capt	1 st Lt	2 nd Lt		Warrant officers	NCOs		
Land Forces		1	33	34	10	78	80	12	170	0,45
Air and Air Defence Forces		1	7	11	4	23	17	5	45	0,26
Medical service		10	14	10	1	35	1		36	2,90
Navy		1	5	11	3	20	12	1	33	0,49
Military Police				1	1	2	4		6	0,48
MOD		1	1	4		6			6	0,97
The Warsaw Garrison Command			1	1		2	1		3	0,17

The Polish Armed Forces General Staff	1					1			1	0,001
Other units		2	18	7	18	45			45	0,91
Outside armed forces		1				1			1	0,22
Total	1	17	79	79	37	213	115	18	346	0,47

ATTACHMENT NO. 2

Women in the Polish Armed Forces by corps (1.01.2004)

Corps	Officers					Total officers	Warrant officers	NCOs	Total
	LtCol	Maj	Cap t	1 st Lt	2 nd Lt				
Medical	1	15	76	52	8	152	65	10	227
General military		1		5	2	8	2	6	16
Telecommunications					2	2	13		15
Administration		1	2	5	1	9	5		14
Logistics				3		3	4	2	9
Justice and legal			1	6	1	8			8
Air Forces				1	3	4	3		7
Military police				1	3	4	3		7
Navy				2	1	3	1		4
Anti-aircraft							4		4
Artillery							3		3
Radio-and-technical							3		3
Accommodation and housing				1	1	2	1		3
Military engineering							2		2
Chemical defence							2		2
IT				1		1	1		2

Meteorology and hydrology							2		2
Topographic				1		1			1
Non-defined				1	15	16	1		17
Total	1	17	79	79	37	213	115	18	346

ATTACHMENT NO. 3

Women – professional soldiers by age (1.01.2004)

Age	Officers					Total officers	Total warrant officers	NCOs	Total
	LtCol	Maj	Capt	1 st Lt	2 nd Lt				
50		1	1			2			2
49	1					1			1
47			1	1		2			2
46		1	1	2		4			4
45		2	2	1		5	1	1	7
44		2	5			7	2		9
43			5	1		6			6
42		5	10	2		17	1	2	20
41		1	7	3		11	3		14
40		2	9	1	1	13	1	1	15
39		2	14	3		19	5		24
38		1	13	3		17	5		22
37			5	4		9	3	2	14
36			4	3		7	2	1	10
35			1	4		5	3		8
34			1	8		9	4	3	16
33				10	2	12	3	3	18
32				10	1	11	4	1	16
31				10	3	13	6	1	20
30				1	1	2	5		7
29				6	5	11	8		19

28				5	2	7	11		18
27				1	3	4	7	3	14
26					2	2	1		3
25					1	1	4		5
24					16	16	12		28
23							24		24
Total	1	17	79	79	37	213	115	18	346