

## **HUNGARIAN NATIONAL REPORT FOR 2006**

(situation of the year 2005)

### **Introduction**

In Hungary, it was only in the mid 1990s that the real career opportunities were opened for servicewomen. Nowadays, women represent 17.5 percent of the total strength of the Hungarian Defence Forces.

Since Hungary abolished compulsory military service in 2004, we have noticed an increased interest to military service. We also have to notice that despite of continuing downsizing of the military ratio of servicewomen, especially among NCOs is still raising.

The Committee on Women of the Hungarian Defence Forces (HDF) was established in November of 2003 with the purpose to provide equal opportunities within the military by analyzing conditions of women in professional and contracted service, by studying specific topics related to female personnel and developing proposals for solution of problems to the leadership of the Ministry. Members of the committee were assigned by the high leadership of the MoD and HDF and they represent all the female personnel serving in organizations and units of the HDF.

### **Policy**

The Military Service Law assures equal rights of men and women and guarantees the promotion opportunities of the professional personnel without discrimination, and on the basis of professional skill, experience and performance, as well as service time, including payments related only to ranks and positions.

Since about a year president of the Committee on Women in the HDF has always been invited to the monthly meeting of the Defence Staff. Some of these meetings are held at units. Before of each such meeting Committee on Women holds a servicewomen meeting to collect local experience and prepare a report on concrete equal opportunity situation, local results and problems.

As I mentioned before, ratio of women in the military has been raising significantly in the 1990s. Combat positions have been opened for women since 1996. There are no regulation nor confirmation concerning allowed or forbidden branches and services for servicewomen. Consequently, theoretically, women are allowed to serve in all career fields. In practice, despite of openness serving in any branch most of servicewomen still are performing their duties in administrative, human, financial and medical positions. Number of women in combat positions is still about 4 percents, but among enlisted personnel it has already reached 7 percent.

### **Organization**

The conscript service was abandoned in 2004, so the Hungarian military became an all volunteer professional organisation.

As on 1 April 2006 there are 3926 servicewomen in the HDF, that is 17,5 % of the total personnel strength. Statistical data representing figures and percentages by services and rank categories and status of employment are shown below:

### FEMALE SOLDIERS IN THE HUNGARIAN DEFENCE FORCES

| Branches, services             | Enlisted   | NCO         | Officer    | Total       |
|--------------------------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| Army                           | 406        | 513         | 96         | 1015        |
| Air Force                      | 190        | 569         | 90         | 849         |
| Joint Logistics Support Centre | 32         | 287         | 79         | 398         |
| Medical Command                | 5          | 266         | 144        | 415         |
| MOD                            | 1          | 351         | 240        | 592         |
| General Staff                  | 87         | 448         | 122        | 657         |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>721</b> | <b>2434</b> | <b>771</b> | <b>3926</b> |

### PROFESSIONAL AND CONTRACTED FEMALE PERSONNEL IN THE HDF

| Branches, services             | Professional | Contracted  | Total       |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Army                           | 391          | 624         | 1015        |
| Air Forces                     | 503          | 346         | 849         |
| Joint Logistics Support Centre | 315          | 83          | 398         |
| Medical Command                | 179          | 236         | 415         |
| MOD                            | 574          | 18          | 592         |
| General Staff                  | 465          | 192         | 657         |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>2427</b>  | <b>1499</b> | <b>3926</b> |

### WOMEN NCOs PER RANKS IN THE HDF

| Branches, services             | Enlisted   | SGT        | SSGT       | MSGT       | WO         | SWO        | MSWO     | Total       |
|--------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------|-------------|
| Army                           | 406        | 129        | 148        | 161        | 72         | 3          | 0        | 919         |
| Air Forces                     | 190        | 95         | 112        | 209        | 136        | 17         | 0        | 759         |
| Joint Logistics Support Centre | 32         | 18         | 26         | 113        | 112        | 17         | 1        | 319         |
| Medical Command                | 5          | 5          | 65         | 121        | 61         | 14         | 0        | 271         |
| MOD                            | 1          | 9          | 73         | 105        | 104        | 58         | 2        | 352         |
| Defence Staff                  | 87         | 47         | 107        | 175        | 97         | 22         | 0        | 535         |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>721</b> | <b>303</b> | <b>531</b> | <b>884</b> | <b>582</b> | <b>131</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>3155</b> |

### WOMEN OFFICERS PER RANKS IN THE HDF

| Branches, services             | 2LT        | 1LT        | CAPT       | MAJ        | LTC       | COL      | GEN      | Total      |
|--------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|----------|----------|------------|
| Army                           | 35         | 26         | 23         | 9          | 2         | 1        | 0        | 96         |
| Air Forces                     | 24         | 29         | 29         | 7          | 1         | 0        | 0        | 90         |
| Joint Logistics Support Centre | 11         | 16         | 30         | 18         | 4         | 0        | 0        | 79         |
| Medical Command                | 17         | 23         | 33         | 38         | 28        | 5        | 0        | 144        |
| MOD                            | 34         | 65         | 48         | 64         | 27        | 2        | 0        | 240        |
| Defence Staff                  | 29         | 37         | 39         | 14         | 2         | 1        | 0        | 122        |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>150</b> | <b>196</b> | <b>202</b> | <b>150</b> | <b>64</b> | <b>9</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>771</b> |

### Percentage of servicewomen per ranks

| RANK           | NUMBER | RATIO   |
|----------------|--------|---------|
| SGT            | 303    | 12,4%   |
| SSGT           | 531    | 21,9%   |
| MSGT           | 884    | 36,3%   |
| WO             | 582    | 23,9%   |
| SWO            | 131    | 5,4%    |
| MSWO           | 3      | 0,10%   |
| Total NCOs     | 2434   | 100,00% |
| RANK           | NUMBER | RATIO   |
| 2LT            | 150    | 19,45%  |
| 1LT            | 196    | 25,40%  |
| CAPT           | 202    | 26,20%  |
| MAJ            | 150    | 19,45%  |
| LTC            | 64     | 8,3%    |
| COL            | 9      | 1,2%    |
| GEN            | 0      | 0,00%   |
| Total officers | 771    | 100,00% |

The rank distribution of female servicewomen do not show any differences comparing with male's one. The highest rank that a female officer is wearing is still colonel and there is not general among them.

#### Employment

Nowadays, servicewomen are integrated into the Hungarian Defence Forces. Women work and train together with their male counterparts and are subject to the same chain of command, standards of performance and discipline. As it is regulated by the Service Law eligibility requirements for employment are the same for women as they are for men. They are also granted the same opportunities for promotion as their male counterparts.

Servicewomen are entitled to maternity leave in case of giving birth. After 6 months of maternity leave they are allowed to be assigned in so called "personnel reserve status" for a year. However, continuation of their military carrier is ambiguous and more complicated, especially in cases if the units they have leaved have been disbanded during their absence due to restructuring of the military. Women reporting back to the work after giving birth to their babies are entitled to breast feeding breaks until their babies' 6 months age.

#### Recruitment

Due to continuing process of downsizing the military, a strong fall can be observed in recruitment, from more than 2200 in 2004 to about 600 in 2005, but the percentage of female recruits remained high 7-8 percent.

Currently there are 7 recruiting offices operating in the whole country. There is no gender discrimination in the recruitment process including medical, mental, physical, educational, moral requirements for women and men. A special so called Military Action Club with clubmeetings, different kind of competitions has been established to attract young men and women to serve in the military. The Military Action Club has also its own Internet site.

Female soldiers entering the service have to complete the integrated basic training. They are trained as their male counterparts, however female soldiers have different physical standards. Physical standards of the assigned personnel to positions are similar to male personnel, however these requirements may vary according to gender, age and filled position. All the personnel have to fulfil an annual test of physical fitness.

Because of high interest from female candidates for service currently there is no need to develop special recruitment programs for women.

## Training

The standards and requirements are the same for all the applicants to Hungarian Defence Forces regardless to their sex.

Candidates for professional NCOs are trained in the single NCO Training school. The length of the training is one year. Candidates for carrier officers are trained at the Miklos Zrinyi National Defence University for 4 years. The first women cadets appeared only in 1994 in some specialities, like finance, signal, etc. From 2005 year the previous restrictions for commanding positions training of women (light infantry, artillery and reconnaissance etc) have been lifted. Cadets completing the NCO or officer training are promoted to ranks of sergeant or second lieutenant accordingly, and are assigned to their first assignments.

Applicants for contracted service are trained at a central training base. Training is comprised of a 3 month long basic training and a 3 month long specialty training. This training cycle meets the requirements of the 3X6 months rotation period of the units.

## Deployment

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Hungarian military personnel have been deployed to missions since 1996 to support the efforts of the international community, such as IFOR, SFOR, KFOR, MSU, MFI, ISAF and SFIR. They have been served and continue to serve as doctors, medical technicians, observers, CIMIC, communication, administrative, guarding and patrol personnel.

Ratio of servicewomen in missions is about 8 percent. Several administrative measures were taken in order to encourage women to serve in the military and participate in operations, such as public information on the specific nature of the military profession, the role of the armed forces in international crisis management, the benefit taken from women's engagement in the military activities.

Nowadays, about 1000 of the Hungarian military servicepeople are deployed abroad, in crisis situation territory, too. Despite the Hungarian Defence Forces has had experience in various kinds of peace operations, including deployment of servicewomen since 2003 there has not been elaborated any kind of policy, concerning deployment of military servicewomen. By the time being, selection of servicepeople for peace operations takes place on voluntary basis and personal qualities, regardless of gender and there is no specific restriction to their deployment.

Recruitment policy for these missions is the same for women and men: the screening process includes physical and mental examination and military peacekeeping training. To improve preparation for the mission a 3-week pre-deployment training is conducted and to which special gender issues are built, such as sexual exploitation and abuses, child protection and information on women society of the operational area.

The Military Women Committee has already pointed out the necessity of elaborating policy concerning the deployment of servicewomen, but the situation has not changed, yet.

### **Career development**

Equal opportunities are granted for female and male personnel in career development. As for promotion the factors to be considered are professional qualifications, experience in the given field, evaluation and service needs. The person's sex is not taken into account when promotions are discussed.

### **Special events**

The committee members regularly visit units to conduct dialogue with women in the military in order to provide a closer contact, as well as to get better informed about concerns and suggestions for improving women's position and status in the service.

In order to have contact points at unit level the so called "helpers' network" was established.

To promote among the others gender awareness an Equal Opportunity Team was established some months ago under direct subordination of Deputy State Secretary for human policy. An Equal Opportunity Plan also was accepted.

We have to admit that attitude of the military leadership has began to change. In March this year, Land Forces Command held a conference on servicewomen in missions. Women with practice serving in missions shared their personal experience. In April land forces commanders' meeting discussed the positive and negative experience on gender equality and on how to make use of it in their commanding work.

Additional steps have been taken to improve the resting and hygienic conditions in the units. As a result the sanitary regulations of pregnant female soldiers became simpler.

### **Conclusion**

Currently servicewomen represent about 17,5 % of the total personnel strength. Ratio of female military personnel slightly increased last year. The density of women personnel is still the highest in "traditional women" position, like in the medical service. Women cadets have graduated from National Defence University since 1998. Servicewomen are integrated to the military and have equal rights.

The Hungarian Service Law provides the same opportunities for servicewomen without discrimination. Comparing to the Hungarian society the equal rights assert better in the Hungarian Defence Forces.

Female NCOs and officers take active part in the missions abroad. Ratio of women in deployed personnel is more then 8 percent.

The Committee on Women in the HDF pays an important role in promoting gender equality, its prestige has been raising.