

## ITALY

### NATIONAL REPORT

#### **1. Policy**

Voluntary female military service, established in 1999 by law n. 380, is part of the important ongoing process of transformation of the Italian Armed Forces, which has led to a full volunteer-based recruitment system with pre-established service terms of different duration.

In the reformed Armed Forces, Officers and NCOs will be all volunteers.

The new personnel policy pays a great attention to the female component and Italy benefits from her Allies' experiences in dealing with gender discrimination issues.

The fact of having lagged behind other nations was one of the main factors that determined the immediate opening of the military world to women without any preclusion at all.

However, in order to regulate women's "access", the above mentioned law has been supplemented with a number of delegated decrees based on the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment:

- delegated decree n. 24 dated 31<sup>st</sup> January 2000 governing recruitment, legal status and career;
- decree n. 114, dated 04.04.00, establishing specific fitness standards for admission to military service, with the addition of the specific pathologies that may affect women;
- annual decrees establishing the rolls, corps, specialties and specialisations of each Service in which servicewomen are to be enlisted. It is important to note that the year 2005 was the last year in which women were recruited based on the "quota system" . As of 2006, all the competitions and all positions will be open to women.
- decree dated 21 July 2004 establishing an Advisory Committee tasked with assisting the Defence Chief of Staff and the Commanding General of Customs & Financial Police in directing, co-ordinating and assessing the integration of female volunteer personnel into the Armed Forces.

The above-mentioned Committee is made up of 11 members (mostly women) with adequate experience and expertise in the field of women integration in the labour world. The members include :

- 6 representatives of the Minister of Defence;
- 4 representatives of the Minister for Equal Opportunities;
- 1 representatives of the Minister of Economy and Finance (the Customs & Financial Police report to this Minister).

During its first five years, the Committee kept in touch with the "military reality" visiting various military Units (Academies, Schools, Volunteer Training Regiments and combat Units) where women were serving. The visits were aimed at checking compliance with existing laws, regulations and the military code.

## 2. Organisation

The figures of the total strength in 2005 are as follow:

<b>ARMED FORCE</b>	<b>TOTAL STRENGTH</b>	<b>MEN</b>	<b>WOMEN</b>	<b>WOMEN %</b>
ARMY	117,778	114,684	3,094	2.6 %
NAVY	36,365	35,296	1,069	2.9 %
AIR FORCE	47,657	47,211	446	1 %
CARABINIERI	112,600	112,111	489	0.4 %
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>314,400</b>	<b>309,302</b>	<b>5,098</b>	<b>1.6 %</b>

In particular, at present there are 5,098 women distributed as follows:

<b>ARMED FORCE</b>	<b>CATEGORIES</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>ARMY</b>	OFFICERS	174	<b>3,094</b>
	NCO'S	30	
	TROOPS	2,890	
<b>NAVY</b>	OFFICERS	384	<b>1,069</b>
	NCO'S	130	
	TROOPS	555	
<b>AIR FORCE</b>	OFFICERS	125	<b>446</b>
	NCO'S	70	
	TROOPS	251	
<b>CARABINIERI</b>	OFFICERS	177	<b>489</b>
	NCO'S	244	
	TROOPS	68	

### **3. Employment**

The Italian legislation enshrines the principle of non- discrimination and ensures that male and female personnel have the same opportunities in terms of career development, training, combat commitments.

Non- restriction policies are already in force in the three Services, in the Carabinieri Corps and in the Customs & Financial Police.

Lesson learned from out of area operations are: firstly, women have shown great self-denial and the ability to adapt and integrate into different environments; secondly, their performance on the field gave remarkable feed back in relation to the selection and training criteria.

Female presence has been particularly appreciated in particular tasks requiring the involvement of local women.

### **4. Recruitment**

The manning planning was based on the need to have programmed and gradual admission of female personnel starting with officers and ending with troops so that, by the time of regular recruiting, female instructors would be available and ready to ensure the appropriate teaching capabilities accompanied by a command exercise closer to women's psycho-physical characteristics as well as to provide advice. In the beginning plans were made to admit female Officers only, as a first step and then recruit female NCOs and volunteers at a later date. Some circumstances, however, led to an extraordinary competition, published by the Army, which provided the opportunity to recruit female troop personnel.

The recruited female personnel were soon employed in operations on the field, as troop training is shorter than that of officers and NCOs. That was a clear sign of women's participation in the Armed Forces operations.

A considerable number of the above-mentioned personnel have been employed or are being employed in international operations, also on board naval units, in Kosovo, Bosnia, Albania, Afghanistan and Iraq, mainly positions involving remarkable operational activities .

### **5. Training**

Training has been and is being carried out normally and basically in the same way as before women's admission to the Armed Forces. Ultimately, military schools are like any other school with the exception of a greater emphasis on discipline. As for learning skills, no differences have appeared between male and female personnel; score lists at the end of the academic year showed no difference between male and female performances.

In general, the only differences between male and female personnel were in meeting the physical standards required, but that is obviously due to biological differences.

In that respect, volunteers have asked to increase physical training and recommended that female candidates be made aware of the importance of prior physical training.

## 6. Deployment

Excluding cadets, all the female personnel have been deployed in operational environment since the end of 2001.

Actually the following female personnel are employed in out of area operations:

<b>MISSION</b>	<b>NUMBER OF WOMEN</b>
BOSNIA	1
KOSOVO	47
AFGHANISTAN	32
IRAQ 42	53
FRANCE	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>124</b>

Female personnel are employed successfully in this Kind of operations. They are fully integrated with their male mates. They live and work in the Units in the same condition as their male mates. Their support is considered as very important for the relations with the local women and children.

## 7. Conclusion

It' is now possible to make an assessment of women's integration in the military environment, of any problem arisen during their training and operations, and of the applying regulations.

The admission of women to the Armed Forces has entailed two requirements:

- one is the adjustment of all units infrastructure to ensure untroubled cohabitation of male and female personnel, this process is still ongoing;
- the other is the acceptance of female personnel by their male colleagues and the integration of women into a traditionally male environment.

The experience gained so far by those who have briefed, trained and employed female personnel shows that there is a high level of acceptance and that women have been easily integrated into the military context. Perhaps, in the very beginning, there was some embarrassment on the women's side and thoughtfulness on the men's side, due to the novelty of the situation. Those attitudes, however, disappeared as attention was focussed on professional qualifications and skills and especially on employment in real situations.

The high degree of integration is due to the sound criteria established for selection and employment. The happy combination of those two elements made women's integration and professional training proceed gradually and in parallel with those of their male colleagues.

Obviously, we do not believe that all problems have been solved. As a matter of fact, based on the experience gained and with the aim to stress the importance of ethics and

irreproachable conduct, we have felt the need to revitalise the main features of military ethics and update them.

Therefore a directive, drafted by the Defence General Staff, was issued it is a sort of ethics and behaviour handbook providing guidelines to be followed within the military environment regardless of gender and any other type of difference.

In conclusion, we can express favourable comments on women's introduction into the Armed Forces as they easily identify themselves with the military environment. The good performance of women on the operational theatres has helped overcoming some initial prejudices and has proved that the employment of women in operational activities is a good choice.

Therefore we are satisfied with the work we have done so far and we will confirm the policy we have adopted.

However, more reliable and consolidated data will be available only after additional periods of employment.