

## LITHUANIA - NATIONAL REPORT 2006

### WOMEN IN NATO FORCES CONFERENCE

This report gives an overview of the progress of women's integration in the Lithuanian Armed Forces over the last years.

#### PERSONNEL POLICY

The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania assures equal rights of men in women in any aspect of civilian, political, economical, social and cultural life. In Military Service Law there is no difference in treatment for male and female military personnel. All positions are opened to both women and men. The ratio of women in the military has been more or less stabile over the years at the level of 15-12 per cent. Although women are allowed to serve in almost all career fields most of them are still performing their duties in administrative, human, financial and medical positions.

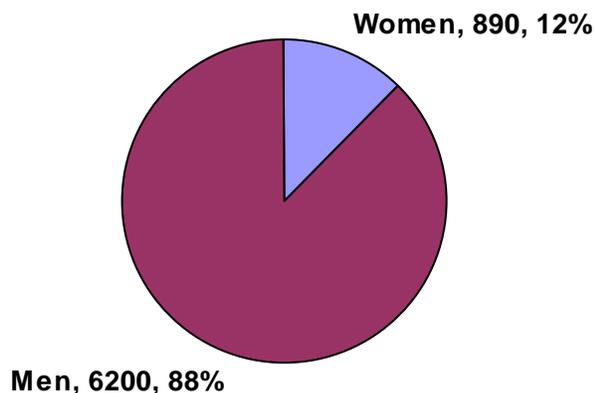
Promotion systems and payroll are the same for women and men. Promotion is based on seniority, personal qualities, professional qualification and merit.

#### ORGANISATION

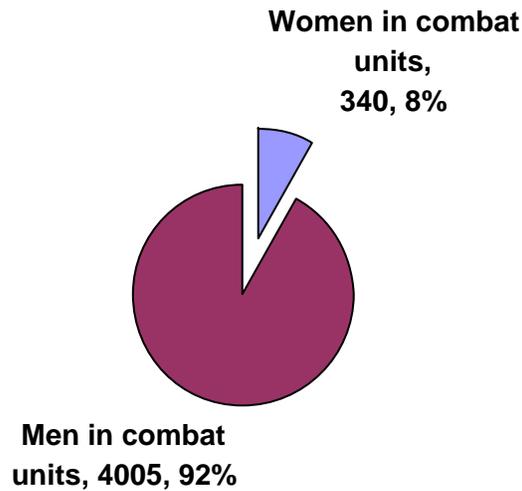
Lithuanian National Defense system consists of the Ministry of National Defense, the three branches of service (Land Force, Navy and Air Force) and various supporting commands and units, such as Logistics, Training and doctrine, Special Operations, etc.

Currently there are 7090 professional service members; in addition, there are 258 military academy cadets.

On 1<sup>st</sup> February 2006 there were 890 service women in the Lithuanian Armed Forces, which represents 12% of the total strength.



Women are represented in each service branch, constituting 4% of the Naval, 7,5% of the Air Force and up to 8% of the Land Forces professional strength. The highest representation of women is in the Military Medical Service, where almost 50% of professionals are female. Following chart shows the percentage of women in combat units of the Lithuanian Armed Forces. The percentage of women in these units is lower than the overall force average.



Most women serve in non-combat units, especially the Military Medical Service, where women comprise over 50% of service members.

### TRAINING

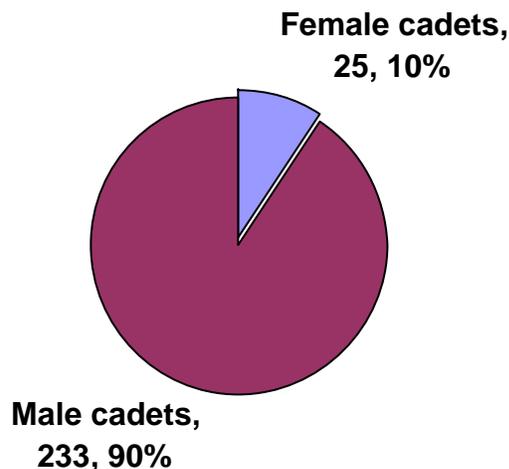
The training programs for women are identical to those of their male colleagues and organized in the same schools and training centers. During their career, service women can attend the same specialization courses and participate in all activities required for promotion to higher ranks.

Next chart presents the percentage of women at the Lithuanian Military Academy, which is the primary source of commission for Lithuanian officers.

There has been a big cultural change in Lithuania, when the previously all-male Lithuanian Military Academy started accepting female cadets in 2000. There were some doubts and worries about the success of integration of women into cadet corps and the overall success of this undertaking. But five years later we can say that it was a success and currently we have 25 female cadets out of 258 total.

Also, four female cadets are studying at the military academies abroad – two at the United States Air Force Academy, one at the United States Naval Academy and one at the Royal Danish Naval Academy.

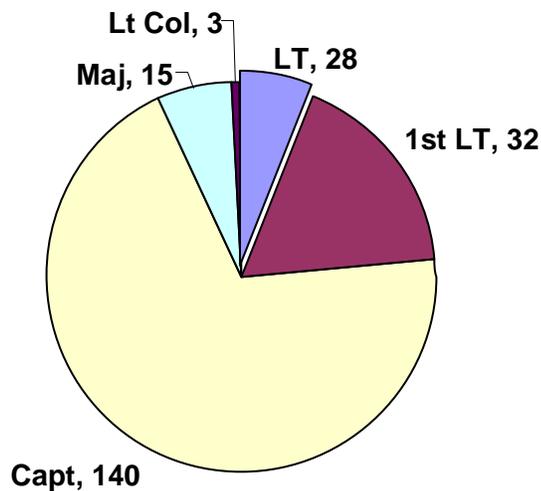
Female cadets comprise 10% of the cadet corps, which is a little bit lower than the overall force average of 12%, but is very similar to the percentage of women in the officer corps.



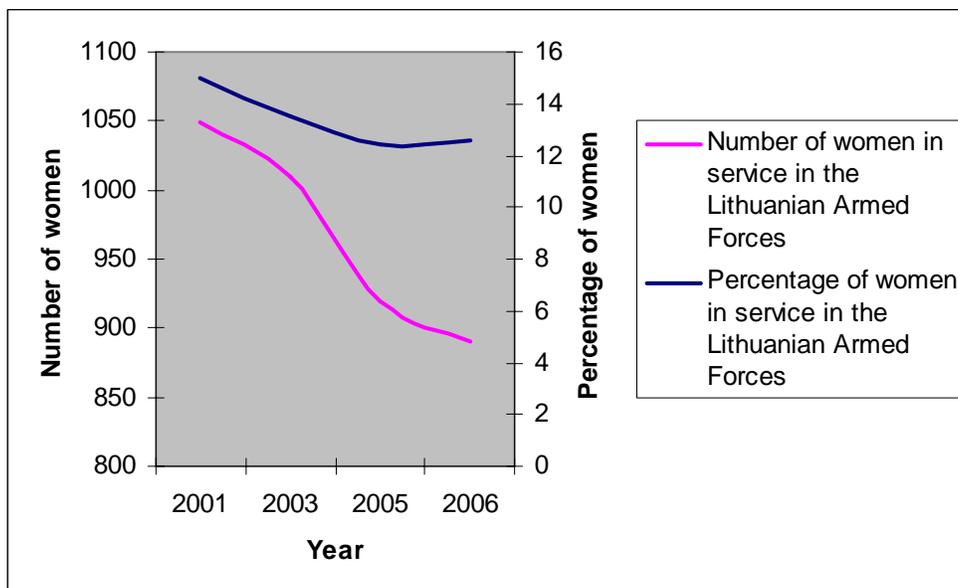
Physical fitness policy is enforced equally for all service members regardless of sex, however, scores are lower for women than men. There is a requirement to pass the test twice a year for service members in combat units and once a year in other units.

**CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

There are in total 218 female officers out of 2217 strong officer corps in Lithuania. This means that female officers make up nearly 10% of Lithuanian officer corps. The pie chart breaks down all female officers by rank. The highest rank achieved by a woman in the Lithuanian Armed Forces is a Lieutenant Colonel. There are also 15 Majors, 140 Captains, 32 First Lieutenants and 28 Lieutenants.



The chart below illustrates the change in number of women in the Lithuanian Armed Forces over a six year period and is indicated by the pink line. The blue line indicates the change in percentage of women in the Lithuanian Armed Forces over the same period of time.



As it seen from the chart, the actual number of women has decreased significantly since 2001. This is due to the fact that Lithuania is implementing its defense system reform and is cutting its overall personnel strength. The decrease in percentage of women in the Armed Forces is also prominent, but it does not mean that women are primary targets of the personnel cuts. As a consequence of the defense reform, many military job positions, especially in the non-combat sector, were turned into civilian. As the majority of women occupied positions in the non-combat sector, naturally, they were the ones most affected by this reform.

Speaking about the policies and culture with regard to women in the Lithuanian Armed Forces, legally women can serve without restrictions in all units. Some cultural barriers that prevent women from serving in units, such as Navy Flotilla or Special Operations Forces, still exist, but the remaining “glass ceilings” are quickly diminishing.

Women also have no restrictions regarding service in the multinational missions abroad and already over 30 women have seen service in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan. The majority of these women were military doctors and medics as well as logistic support personnel.

Currently, women occupy responsible and highly demandable posts, such as international and domestic staff positions, department directors and pilots. There are no legal obstacles for women to develop professionally and to pursue a successful career in the Lithuanian Armed Forces and the remaining cultural barriers are being tackled as more and more women prove themselves to be outstanding military leaders.