

**NATIONAL REPORT 2008
 LITHUANIA**

Policies

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 stable over the years at the level of 12-15 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 Defence system consists of the Ministry of National Defence, 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 7094 professional service members; in addition, there are 201 military academy cadets.

Current PERCENTAGES (DATA from 2007) of total force by service:

	Total % of Female soldiers	% of female flag officers	% of female senior officers	% of female junior officers	% of female NCO	% female of soldiers lower rank than NCO	% of female operations soldiers participating in military
Army	8.1		2.5	3.7	6.9	9.9	1.8
Air Force	6.4		0	6.4	10.9	6.3	-
Navy	4.2		6.7	1.2	9.1	4.7	-
Others (logistics, medical, etc)	19.1		8.1	18.4	13.5	23.2	0.8
TOTAL	12.2		6.4	11.4	10.5	13.5	1

On 1st March 2008 there were 891 service women in the Lithuanian Armed Forces, which represents 12,2% of the total strength. There are in total 244 female officers out of 2361 strong officer corps in Lithuania. This means that female officers make up nearly 10% of Lithuanian officer corps.

Women are represented in each service branch, constituting 4,2% of the Naval, 6,4% 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.

Recruitment

Women enter the Lithuanian Armed Forces on a voluntary basis. There is no conscription for female personnel. No formal planning has been made in terms of commencing to recruit women as private. Women can enter the Military academy equally with men after passing competitive examinations such as medical, psychological, athletic as well as a personal interview.

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.

Training

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

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 some years later we can say that it was a success and currently we have 20 female cadets out of 201 total.

2 female cadets out of 20 are studying at the military academies abroad.

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.

Women NCO's are participating in a basic course, schools and courses of the respective branch and specialty.

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.

Deployments

Gender difference is not an issue for assignments in peace-keeping operations. Female personnel, having right qualifications, can apply or be appointed to participate without restrictions in international military operations. Already over 40 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.

Career Development

Promotion and length of military service are the same for men and women. Promotion rules are based on seniority and professional qualification. There are no legitimate leadership limitations for female officers.

Special Interest Items/Events (Recent and Projected Developments)

- The Armed Forces have not developed gender related programmes for mentoring and leadership.
- Pregnant service women are eligible to 8 weeks prenatal leave and can submit request for getting parental leave up to 3 years of the child age. Parental leave can be taken by either one of parents – man or woman. The first year of parental leave service member receive a 100% of salary, the second – 85%, the third is unpaid. During parental leave service members are transferred to the temporary reserve. When they are back to active duty, they are allocated in posts depending on the posts availability. This means they can be offered a post in different from their current living location towns or units.
- Unfortunately, no initiatives to improve the work-life balance, as, for example, flexible hours, part-time work etc., have been taken in the Lithuanian Armed Forces so far.

Conclusion

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.