

**ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA'S NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE
IN THE NATO FORCES' FEMALE MILITARY COMMITTEE**

The Republic of Bulgaria's policy with relation to the status of the BGR AFs' female military does not differ considerably from the legislation and normative basis of the NATO member nations' forces.

In 2008 changes were registered with respect to the current policy with relation to the update of the normative basis. In August 2008 new Regulations for the Military Service in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria were approved.

A new Law on Defence was passed by the Parliament. It does not discriminate the rights and obligations of the Bulgarian citizens in terms of their gender.

In the Republic of Bulgaria the issues related to the equality of genders are considered at national level by the National Council on Equality of Genders to the Council of Ministers. The MoD members of the National Council are: Deputy Minister of Defence, the MoD Coordinator on Equality in Rights and the National Representative in the NATO Forces' Female Military Committee.

The positions in the BGR AFs are not divided as regards gender. The same is valid for the selection process for expeditionary missions. In this context the female military are doing their functional duties on equal terms with the male military. For certain missions they avoid selection and appointment of female military in the contingents due to the existing SOPs of the respective military commands, the laws and cultural peculiarities of the individual countries and regions.

The advertising work for recruitment of candidates for active military service is one and the same for male and female military. There is no advertising work for females only. Annual information and advertising work is done, targeting the secondary schools students and the unemployed young people. The main forms that are used are the information markets, meetings with students, open doors days in the units of the Bulgarian Armed Forces, broadcasts through the regional mass media and the regular candidate student campaigns.

As far as gender is concerned, there are no differences in the evaluation criteria for the candidates for professional soldiers but there are differences for the candidates for the military educational institutions. During the physical fitness entrance test the exercises and the rates are different for females.

During the process of recruitment for active military service there are no quotas in terms of percentage proportion. There are quotas for the individual specialties in the military academies for which the females apply. The quota depends on the annual requests of the services of the armed forces in accordance with their needs.

The positions in the BGR AFs that cannot be occupied by females are regulated by regulations No 14/18.10.2005 of the MoD. A list of the activities during the active military service in the Armed Forces is published in it and gender is important professional requirement for those activities due to their specifics or conditions in which they are done. Such are the positions related to:

1. Search;

2. Command and control and maintenance of submarines;
3. Honour guard unit from the structure of the National Guard Unit.

Current percentage (2008 data) of the total number of military in the BGR AFs

	% of female military	% of female high ranking officers	% of female senior officers	% of female junior officers	% of female NCOs	% of female soldiers and sailors	% of female military participating in military operations
GS	1	-	1	-	-	-	0.2
JOC	7	-	1	1	6	-	0.2
LFs	15	-	0.3	3	8	21	5
AF	15	-	1	5	9	26	-
N	8	-	-	6	3	5	0.4
others	8	-	1	2	8	15	2
Totally	13	-	1	4	8	21	8

There is a permanent trend of increase of the number of female military in the BGR AFs. From the accession of the Republic of Bulgaria as full NATO member in 2004 until the end of 2008 the number of female military compared to the male military increased approximately twice in terms of proportion.

During the selection process of the national contingents for expeditionary missions they select military who meet the requirements of the job descriptions without aiming at increasing the number of females compared to the males and vice versa.

The experience shows that female military are assigned almost on the whole spectrum of positions in the contingents. The female military participate also in the process of operational planning and in operations of the Armed Forces in our country and abroad – Iraq, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Afghanistan, in NATO Commands and HQs.

Female military in expeditionary missions are most often appointed at the following positions: protection personnel, sanitary/medical instructor, physician in a medical team, nurse in a medical team, senior clerk, head of section for classified and non-classified information, communication node operator, accountant, interpreter/translator and staff officer.

More rare appointments for female military are those for commanding officers (company commander, platoon leader) and driver.

During the last five years, the number of Bulgarian military participating in Peace Support Operations is rising steadily. As a result, the number of the female military in expeditionary missions also rises but in terms of ratio their participation still remains within the framework of 8% of the total number of personnel.

During 2008, 7.5 % from the total personnel of the Bulgarian Armed Forces have rotated in missions abroad. The majority of the female military who have been deployed come from the Land Forces.

With regard to the rank ratio of the female military the NCOs hold the largest share – 12%, followed by soldiers and sailors – 7% and commissioned officers – senior - 2% and junior - 4%.

A Strategy for the MoD Social Policy and a Strategy Implementation Plan were adopted in 2008. The new document sets the scene for considerable improvement and steady development of all life standard components for the military and their families (payment; working conditions; motivation; health and pension insurance; lodgings; recreation etc.)

Within the framework of the training and preparation directive for the Bulgarian Armed Forces in 2009 and the informative briefings for the military and civilian employees a special lecture has been envisaged about: „Nature and content of the activities for ensuring equality of genders in the Bulgarian Armed Forces”.

In September 2008 a new page about the activities of NATO Forces’ Female Military Committee was added to the contents of the Automated Information System of the Bulgarian Armed Forces comprising also the text of UNSC Resolution 1325 and UNSC Resolution 1820. The content of the page will be updated regularly with the support of NATO Forces’ Female Military Committee.

The past year saw two educational workshops as a result of the close interaction between MoD and the NGO “Female Military Association”. The purpose of the workshops was to propagate the gender policies among the Bulgarian Armed Forces personnel.

In particular, the aim of the February workshop was to brief the service members about the European and national policies for ensuring equality of genders in the Republic of Bulgaria and Bulgarian Armed Forces.

The December workshop targeted at educating the service members how to develop projects for implementation of international gender policies in the Bulgarian Armed Forces with focus on projects for circulation and application of UNSC Resolutions 1325 and 1820.

In October 2008 the XI-th International Military Conference took place in the Military Medical College in Sofia under the motto: „The mental health of the service members and management of gender differences”.

The forum gathered 30 mental health experts from 10 NATO nations and around 70 experts and unit commanders from the Bulgarian Armed Forces, MOD and General Staff structures.

The goal of the conference was to improve interaction and dialogue among the experts in the interest of applying modern professional working standards in a

gender-mixed environment. The basic discussion topics were the following: mental health of the service members and management of gender differences; gender differences and their impact on team work; management of gender differences in an operational multicultural and multinational environment; management and control of gender differences in the framework of the military system.

The conclusions drawn by the moderators at the international conference fully comply with the basic social gender policy trends in the activities of NATO Forces' Female Military Committee.

**NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA
TO NATO FORCES' FEMALE MILITARY COMMITTEE**

20 May 2009