

## NATIONAL REPORT-BULGARIA

The Ministry of Defence and the General Staff of the Bulgarian Armed Forces direct, control and analyze the process for integration of the female military in the Bulgarian Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria. The analysis of the accomplished activities convincingly shows the positive results from the working together for the achievement of the needed balance and equal positioning of sexes in the armed forces of the country.

By categories the female military in the Bulgarian Armed Forces are divided as follows: 193 officers, 805 NCOs and 2 200 regular soldiers and sailors.

- in the Land Forces - 1 434;
- in the Air Force - 1 070;
- in the Navy - 215;
- in the General Staff and its directly subordinated units - 479.

They occupy a wide variety of positions – command, administrative, logistic, medical and technical ones.

I. One hundred and sixty two women occupy command positions in the combat units and formations.

Commanders of combat units:

- positions of a second-in-command of battalions, company and platoon commanders - 39 officers;
- sections and crews commanders - 123 NCOs and soldiers.

II. At administrative, logistic and medical positions in the structures at different levels 2141 women have been assigned, and at technical positions in the engineer and signal units - 895 women.

Participation of regular female military in peace support operations and in humanitarian operations outside the territory of the country increases. During these operations they show high sense of responsibility and tolerance. They adapt themselves quickly to the conditions of the region, feel secure in the mixed teams and with their presence contribute for more solidarity, sympathy and concern to the personality and interrelations in the military teams.

Since the beginning of the participation of units of the armed forces in peace-support operations outside the territory of the country 154 regular female military have participated as a whole, and of them: 71– in Iraq; 8 – in Kosovo; 49 – in Bosnia and Herzegovina and 26 – in Afghanistan. Seventeen women are within the structure of units that are being prepared for rotation.

The educational qualification of the female military in the Bulgarian Armed Forces is high. 951 (officers-194 , sergeants-83, soldier- 674 ) female military are with university education, and 2247 women are with secondary education ( to 1-st of January 2007).

Women in uniform have a positive influence on the social-psychological climate in the teams, the competitive power, and the ethic and regulation interrelations among the servicemen.

The leadership of the General Staff of the Bulgarian Armed Forces believes that for the achievement of complete integration of women in the Bulgarian Armed Forces the work in the following main directions has to be continued:

1. Improving the skills of the command staff of the Bulgarian Armed Forces for work with the subordinate female military; interrupting the acts lowering the prestige of personal dignity and honour and non-admission of discrimination.

2. Optimization of the organization and conducting the daily training process and improving the syllabuses. Reporting on and stimulating the personal contribution of the regular female military in the process of the combat training.

3. Realization, together with the Ministry of Defence, of effective information-advertisement activities for recruiting regular female military and focusing on the most important activities in the armed forces and on the specific requirements needed for the positions, which they are assigned for.

At the beginning of 2007 an association of the female military from the Bulgarian Armed Forces was established in Bulgaria - **“BULGARIAN ARMED FORCES WOMEN ASSOCIATION”**. As a subject of activity the goals of the association are:

- Studying the social interests and needs of the female military.

- Rendering assistance to the leadership of the Ministry of Defence and the General Staff of the Bulgarian Armed Forces, when conducting social and professional programmes, consultations and sociological studies, concerning the female military.
- Working out specific proposals for improvement of the system for professional recruiting, training, education, career development, realization and social adaptation of the female military during the regular service and when going to the reserve.
- Participation in the working out of law projects and other normative documents, concerning the social status and the professional development of the female military.
- Ensuring legal assistance to the members of the Association and their families.
- Initiating and implementing programmes for supporting the families of members of missions abroad; the families of the casualties (deceased members) and the “Children of the Bulgarian Armed Forces” Foundation, etc.

With its activities the Association aims at unifying the efforts of all regular female military in the armed forces, officers and NCOs from the reserve and their families for the consolidation, development and increasing the prestige of the female military; supporting the social integration and personal realization of the female military; developing and consolidating the intellectual values of its members and sympathizers; organizing charity campaigns and participating in programmes for raising funds for supporting servicemen, who are in need and for rendering assistance to their families.