

DDA and the Gender Perspective

What is it?

Deterrence and Defence (DDA) is one of the Alliance's core tasks. In the 2022 Strategic Concept, NATO committed to an integrated and coherent approach to building national and Alliance-wide resilience against military and non-military threats and challenges to our security. Integrating the WPS and the gender perspective in DDA enhances NATO's ability to understand conflicts and operational environments, identify risks and advance gender-tailored solutions. By so doing, the Alliance is also capable of preventing and responding to threats that impact disproportionately women and girls.



Military Implications of Gender in DDA

NATO needs to be capable of responding to any threat, in order to be fully credible in its deterrence and defence. Integrating the gender perspective is fundamental in threat assessment and risk mitigation for the Alliance as it allows for the full understanding of the security environment and the changing nature of conflicts, its risks and its disproportionate impact on women and girls. Considering the gender perspective makes sure NATO's deterrence and defence is comprehensive.



Ignoring the effective implementation of the WPS Agenda and the gender perspective would mean losing a key element to the enhancement of the Alliance's global awareness capacity to deter, defend, contest and deny across all domains and directions. Internally, gender equality is included among the critical enablers in the NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept. Allies must consider the delivery of the "right people with the right skills" in their recruitment, training, promotion and retention system. NATO and Allies shall take advantage of both gender and diversity as force multipliers to cope with the speed, complexity and data-centric technology of the future security environment.

Case Study: Denmark's Armed Forces

As for recruitment in Denmark, conscription is constitutional and provided by Danish law. Plans were announced to implement female conscription from 2026. There is a two-fold rationale for conscription: equal rights and obligations and the creation of a modern military institution that reflects societal values. Initiatives to increase recruitment and generate interest include inclusive language, suitable equipment and uniforms and tailored exercise and training programs for men and women.



So what for NATO?

Applying a gender lens to threat assessment reduces cognitive bias and helps building a more accurate picture of the security environment. Further, the analysis of sex-age-disaggregated data can teach valuable lessons to the Alliance in order to develop tailored mitigation strategies in advance. NATO should also consider gender equality as a pillar within its force composition to build diversity of skillsets and mindsets. The Alliance shall also consider the integration of the gender perspective in strategic communication to reach the right audience in its DDA efforts and enhance the Alliance's resilience.

There is a critical need to incorporate the gender perspective into NATO's DDA strategies.

Continued integration of the gender perspective and the WPS Agenda is essential for developing a modern, resilient and inclusive military force capable of meeting contemporary security challenges.