

June 2012

Policy Paper



Belgrade Centre for Security Policy

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# CHALLENGES OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN SERBIAN PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS

## Summary

This paper discusses the challenges of women's participation in peacekeeping operations, global characteristics of the inclusion of women in peacekeeping operations, and the challenges of the related policy in Serbia. The attempt is to answer what obstacles to peacekeeping operations are present in Serbia, and what additional barriers women participating in the peacekeeping operations of Serbian military and police need to overcome. Based on interviews with the men and women participating in the missions and using secondary sources, an attempt will be made to present to the public the main challenges related to the participation of women in peacekeeping missions and to provide a number of recommendations to improve the situation in this area.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Define the foreign policy strategy and clearly specify foreign-policy goals of deploying police and the Serbian Armed Forces (SAF) in peacekeeping missions.
2. Create preconditions for more active participation of women in more intensive SAF exercises, training, and courses for men and women SAF officers and non-commissioned officers, so as to compensate for not having six years of relevant work experience.
3. Actively promote gender-sensitive policy when selecting men and women candidates for participation in missions; give preference to women who have the same qualifications as men so as to increase their representation in accordance with the provisions of NAP.
4. Value the participation in peacekeeping operations by including mission participation in other promotion criteria.
5. Inform the members of SAF and police who are getting ready for a mission about the challenges of gender policy in the countries in which the mission takes place.
6. Ensure institutional support for parents going to peacekeeping missions through specific benefits – frequent leaves of absence, paid stay with family after returning from mission, etc.
7. Establish institutionalised channels for transferring the knowledge and experience from peacekeeping missions into the defence and security system.
8. Conduct in-depth research in MoD/SAF and Mol so as to examine why women decide (not) to join PKMs.
9. Conduct a survey on the citizens' attitudes about deployment of police and military in peacekeeping operations.

## Characteristic of modern armed conflicts

The end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the division of the world into opposing blocks were celebrated as the “end of history”, as ingress into a peaceful phase of conflict-free development. Unfortunately, these forecasts were proven wrong by reality, as the world, mostly Africa, saw an escalation of armed conflicts, most commonly in the form of civil wars in the so-called failed states. The altered nature of conflicts, with the domination of informal armed groups, militias, and military fractions was noticeable in a large number of infringements on human rights and civilian casualties. In an attempt to prevent the conflicts and massive infringements on human rights, the number of UN peacekeeping missions also skyrocketed in this period (see *Graph 1*). When reporting from the seat of war, the global media brought photos of civilian victims to ‘living rooms’ all over the world, which was strongly echoed in the public condemnation of crimes against civilians.<sup>1</sup> This was also reflected in the changed nature of peacekeeping missions – the introduction of the ‘peace enforcement’ policy, the ‘responsibility to protect’ (Glušac 2009: 80-92), the Brahimi Report (2000), and the UN SC Resolution 1325. These changes concern a more proactive role of peacekeeping forces in the mission, which are no longer only cease-fire observers, but also moderators of the peace process. It was also recognised that it is necessary to ensure the protection of civilians, particularly women and children, in conflicts in which warring parties are not capable (willing) to provide it. That is why, because of their specific contribution to peace building, focus was placed on a more active role of women in the operations. Peace builders encountered a number of problems which “soldiers were not able to resolve on their own” (D. Hamarseld), and thus opened room for inclusion of women in the ranks of peace builders.

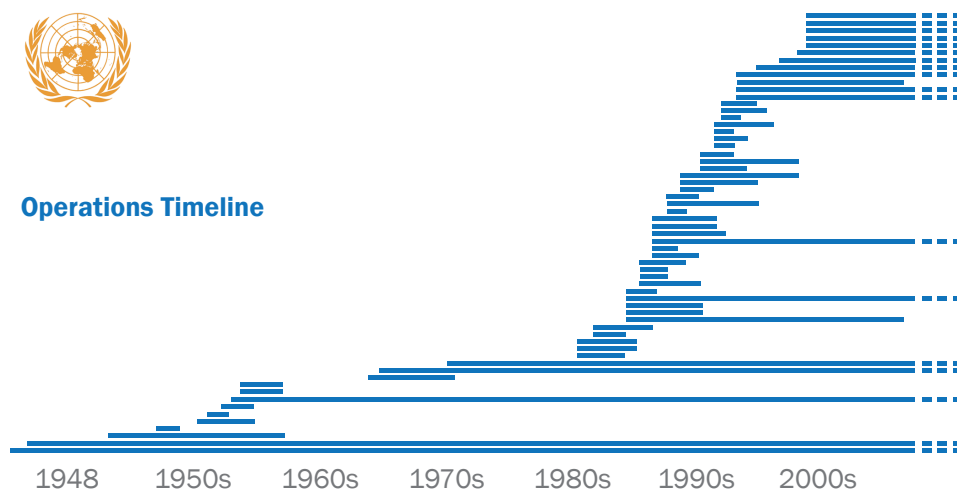
<sup>1</sup> Let's not make a mistake – the ratio between the civilian and military casualties in the post-Cold War era was about 50:50%, which corresponds to the ratio of civilian/military casualties in the WW II. It was the sensitivity of citizens to civilian casualties that grew.

## Peacekeeping missions then and now

The peacekeeping missions discussed in this paper primarily include UN missions. At the time of the Cold War, peacekeepers were typically placed between the warring parties upon mutual consent to a ceasefire. The responsibility of UN members in this period was, therefore, to maintain peace in post-conflict situations (peacekeeping missions). This passive role was mainly played by neutral and nonaligned countries, with less frequent participation of countries from the two opposing blocks. It was believed, possibly with good reason, that the deployment of any of the global powers would put a question mark over UN's impartiality in the conflicts concerned.



### Operations Timeline



Graph 1. UN missions\*

It was only after the Cold War ended, namely after 1990, that soldiers from NATO and the former Warsaw Pact started to take part in UN missions. In this period, the UN began to implement other types of peacekeeping missions, such as peace enforcement. The characteristic of these missions is a more active engagement of peacekeepers with a measure of bias – acting against the warring parties' goals and human force. Peace enforcement led to peace building and peace support. The origin of the changed nature of UN deployment in peacekeeping missions should be primarily sought in the altered nature of conflict, which now featured asymmetrical threats, escalation of civil wars, and a large number of civilian casualties. This evolution imposed new tasks and challenges on the traditional actors (soldiers) and required certain adjustments to be made. Ensuring living conditions for the population necessitated the deployment of civilians – for example, experts in some complex assignments, such as demobilisation, disarmament, reintegration of conflict participants, and care for victims, with a particular focus on women and children since they are the primary targets for sexual violence and exploitation within the conflicts.

Since the need was felt to change the character of the missions and to ensure its functional adjustment in the field, the UN adopted a number of resolutions,<sup>2</sup> as well as the Brahimi Report in 2000.<sup>3</sup> One of the characteristics shared by all these documents is the emphasis on the gender dimension of peacekeeping missions. The increased deployment of members of UN missions was accompanied by increasing incidents of abuse of their position and the mission's mandate, as well as infringements on human rights. For example, the increased number of prostitutes in Phnom Penh (from 6 000 to 25 000) at the time when the UN mission took place there, and the UN prostitution rackets in Bosnia (Arizona marketplace) and Mozambique, suggest that there is a darker side to peacekeeping operations (DeGroot 2009). The peacekeepers' gender unawareness, namely their ignorance of the gender dimension, only diminishes peace building possibilities.

<sup>2</sup> Resolutions 1261 (1999), 1265 (1999), 1296 (2000), 1314 (2000)

<sup>3</sup> Making of this Report was prompted by the 1990s developments when the UN failed to effectively respond to the challenges of modern conflicts. The purpose of this Report is to change, namely to improve, the UN's approach in the planning and implementation of peace support operations. Report of the Panel on UN Peace Operations, 2000, [http://www.un.org/peace/reports/peace\\_operations/](http://www.un.org/peace/reports/peace_operations/)

\* Downloaded from the UN website <http://www.un.org/depts/dpko/dpko/timeline/pages/timeline.html>

Date of access: 21 October 2008

## How the inclusion of women in MNOs contributes to the success of missions?

It is believed that the participation of women in peacekeeping operations has a positive effect on the peacekeeping processes. The presence of women staff in a contingent of peacekeeping forces opens new possibilities for more effective peace building. Women are responsive when talking with other women, and certain cultural stereotypes in some social communities forbid any contact between men and women. Women peacekeepers thus report more cases of violence by abused women and girls. When an environment in which women are not afraid to speak openly about the problems they face, particularly about sexual violence, is created, the local population, particularly women and children, feel more protected. At the same time, this increases the sensitivity and willingness of male members of peacekeeping operations to act in the event of infringement on women's rights, primarily events of sexual and physical abuse, which do not always cease with the termination of armed conflicts (Odanović, 2009: 73-80). Moreover, the presence of women medical staff offers the possibility of providing healthcare to women, which otherwise would not be possible in countries where traditional culture forbids any physical contact between men and women.

Women peacekeepers may also act proactively to alleviate pressures in post-conflict zones. One example is to provide "same-gender inspection" at control points, without provoking unnecessary tension. Another illustration of good procedure is the practice of Dutch units in Iraq which, observing local rules of male-female interaction, always take a woman when going to search residential premises so that the local population perceives the Dutch as local police, rather than the occupying army.<sup>4</sup> Indirectly, a mixed male-female composition provides for a higher sensitivity to infringement on women's rights in male members of the mission. Moreover, some authors mention that "different studies show that men respond differently to a confrontation with men and women members of police. Consequently, women account for one fourth of the composition of most police forces in Europe and North America. Women are not employed to satisfy the gender representation standards but rather because they are good at what they do (DeGroot, 2009)."

Numerous positive examples confirm the above preconditions for women's contribution to peace building. In 2009, India sent to Liberia the first all-women police squad (105 women members of India's reserve police force).<sup>5</sup> Their presence did not only enhance law enforcement but also had a positive effect on the women of Liberia, since they were taught self-defence techniques and PC skills. In addition, the task of this unit was to provide first aid and promote hygiene policy, which contributed to the improvement of living conditions in the country.<sup>6</sup>

Recognising how important the gender dimension is for the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions, the UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) set, in accordance with Resolution 1325, a number of principles which the UN mission personnel are to apply in their everyday work:

1. the *inclusivity* principle, obligating the peacekeepers to consult men and women in post-conflict regions with regard to all decisions that concern the population in question,
2. the *non-discrimination* principle, obligating the staff of peacekeeping missions to back all activities and decisions that support women's and girls' equality rights and protect them from adverse effects of traditional practices,
3. the *standard setting* principle, according to which the representation of men and women members of DPKO and UN missions reflect the models of gender equality and the inclusion of women in decision-making processes,
4. the *effectiveness* principle in peacekeeping activities, according to which all human potentials in post-conflict societies (women, men, boys, and girls) need to be deployed with the aim to build and maintain the peacekeeping process.

4 US needs to learn from Dutch troops, Daily News, 27. 12. 2003. Available at <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1696&dat=20031227&id=dQsbAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=PkgEAAAAIIBAJ&pg=4237,3014429> Date of Access: 23 February 2012

5 Female police keep the peace in Liberia. <<http://www.un.org/works/sub3.asp?lang=en&id=51>> Date of access: 5.3.2012.

6 Ban Ki-moon's address note at the ceremony of decorating Indian women police, available at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=33027&Cr=liberia&Cr1> Date of access: 5.3.2012.

## Challenges of women's inclusion in MNOs

In opposition to the arguments in favour of a greater deployment of women in peacekeeping operations, there is a deep-rooted belief that the security sector is a domain reserved for men (if we take into account the percent of male representation, and systemic preconditions for entry into this sector). The patriarchy has structurally reproduced itself in this sector in the sense that women are only rarely employed, and the common argument justifying this is that they are physically less capable or professionally less competent to perform security tasks. On the other hand, the fact that military and police educational institutions have until recently been closed to women and that military obligation is imposed exclusively on men produced, as a consequence, a number of women perceiving themselves as incompetent to perform military or police duties, which was a reason for the number of women's applications for these jobs being much smaller than those of men.

Resistance to the inclusion of women in the security sector rests on the preconceptions about gender inequality, and on finding examples of 'aggressive' women. Namely, the critics of the inclusion of women strive to, through individual examples, demonstrate that some women are aggressive, and then generalise this to all women in the security sector. One of the most apparent examples is the incident in the Abu Ghraib prison where a group of American soldiers brutally abused the detainees. Out of the eight persons accused of torturing the detainees, three were women and the prison commander was a woman (Gen. Janis Karpinski). Despite this, these critics lack clearly structured elements indicating the obstacles; rather, this is simply an attempt to generalise individual examples (DeGroot, 2008).

## The case of Serbia

After 10 years of non-participation in UN missions (since 1991), Serbia (at that time still FRY) has been participating in peacekeeping operations since 2002, when it took part in the UN military mission to East Timor. Out of the total 296 military staff from our country deployed in the ten peacekeeping operations<sup>7</sup> since 2002, women account for 13 percent. The police started their first mission in 2004, within the UNMIL mission to Liberia, and 10 women participated in the three police missions that have been thus far undertaken (Liberia, Haiti, and Cyprus). When the share of women from Serbia in peacekeeping missions is compared with official UN statistics, which state that women's share in military UN missions is only 2% but can grow to 8% in police missions,<sup>8</sup> a conclusion may be drawn that Serbia is within the average of the realistic representation of women in the missions.

The general challenges Serbia faces in respect of its engagement in peacekeeping missions do not affect the implementation of Resolution 1325; namely they do not present a challenge for a greater participation of women in peacekeeping operations.

## Challenges of Serbian participation in MNOs

The main obstacle to the increased engagement of our military and police forces, and consequently of women, in MNOs is the absence of a foreign policy strategy and material support for participation in missions. Peacekeeping missions are one of three military missions (the other being to defend the country and to assist in

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<sup>7</sup> Serbia currently takes part in six peacekeeping operations under UN auspices, with the members of the Ministry of Defence and the Serbian Armed Forces taking part in five of them and the members of the Ministry of Interior in other three. See more at the official websites of the Armed Forces <http://www.vs.rs/index.php?content=bce7dcf0-fd29-102b-9fa8-28e40361dc2e> and the police [http://www.mup.gov.rs/cms\\_cir/sadrzaj.nsf/mirovna-misija.h](http://www.mup.gov.rs/cms_cir/sadrzaj.nsf/mirovna-misija.h) (Date of access: 13.6.2012.)

<sup>8</sup> See at the UNDPKO website [http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/documents/gender\\_sces1325\\_chart.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/documents/gender_sces1325_chart.pdf) Date of access: 5.3.2012.



emergency situations).<sup>9</sup> By taking part in several peacekeeping operations since 2002, Serbia has expressed its intent to assume a part of the responsibility for global peace. Considering their decade-long modest contribution, however, the impression is that the ruling elite still do not have a clear vision of the benefits that taking part in multinational operations bring to the citizens and the country, nor that the citizens were informed about all the advantages and adverse effects of participating in multinational operations. According to the MFA members we interviewed<sup>10</sup>, an important problem is the absence of a foreign policy strategy and the position of MNOs defined in it. At this time, only the National Security Strategy, with certain restrictions<sup>11</sup>, envisages engagement in UN peacekeeping operations. Without a foreign policy strategy, multinational operations remain a task or a mission of the defence and law enforcement ministries, rather than representing a coordinated effort of the state to achieve its foreign policy goals.

In return, the above remarks have as a consequence a relatively minor public support for “cross-border deployment” of blue helmets. A survey conducted in several rounds by the Centre for Civil-Military Relations in 2003-2005 showed that almost 50% of citizens do not support participation in MNOs, while about one third of respondents have a positive attitude towards the deployment of our forces in MNOs (Hadžić, 2006).<sup>12</sup>

The provision on the adoption of the Annual Plan of participation in multinational operations has been in effect since the implementation of the new law governing deployment in peacekeeping operations (Official Gazette, 2009). This document, annually adopted by the Parliament, enables citizens to learn about the costs of individual missions in the year concerned.<sup>13</sup> The financial funds that Serbia allocates for this purpose do not even compare to the amount allocated by neighbouring Croatia, for instance. For its 500 members distributed across 11 missions, Croatia allocates about 4.7% of its defence budget (Savković, 2011). For its seventy or so participants in eight missions, the Serbian Armed Forces allocate less than 1% of the country’s defence budget.

**1%**  
of the military budget  
is allocated for the  
only permanent mis-  
sion of the Serbian  
Armed Forces.

## Women in Serbian security sector



Member of SAF in the peacekeeping mission in DR Congo  
Source: Website of the Serbian Armed Forces

Since 1972, the police have been admitting girls to their Police High School (before 2001 girls accounted for 10%), and in 2001, after they finished the relevant course, women received the possibility to be employed as uniformed police officers. Women’s share in police and MoI has since continuously grown and now women’s share in the total number of employees is 21% (Gender and Security Sector Reform, 2010).

Before 2011, only men were summoned to regular military service in the Serbian Armed Forces. This discriminated against men in the labour market, but, through military professionalization, also had an effect on the systemic preconditions for women.

9 MoD, Doctrine of the Serbian Armed Forces, 2010, p. 12, available at <http://www.vba.mod.gov.rs/Doktrina-Vojske-Srbije-kraj.pdf>  
Date of access: 13.6.2012.

10 Interview with the representatives of MFA about Serbian participation in multinational operations, BCSP, June 2010

11 National Security Strategy envisages deployment only in the UN peacekeeping operations, whilst the 2009 Law on MNOs has a more extensive scope and includes the deployment in EU missions too. MoD)

12 There were no similar surveys to indicate that the citizens’ attitude has changed since 2005; bearing in mind, however, the increased MoD, SAF, and MoI deployment in peacekeeping operations, it is presumed that the perception is somewhat different now

13 *Decision on the Adoption of Annual Plan for Deployment of the Serbian Armed Forces and Other Forces in Multinational Operations in 2011*, available at the website of the National Assembly [http://www.parlament.gov.rs/upload/archive/files/lat/pdf/akta\\_procedura/2012/145-12Lat.zip](http://www.parlament.gov.rs/upload/archive/files/lat/pdf/akta_procedura/2012/145-12Lat.zip)

Namely, by introducing professional military service, the preference for employment was given to candidates who have completed military training; women, who were not summoned to serve in the army, were marginalised. The Programme of the Training for Women Candidates for Professional Soldiers was adopted in January 2009. Since January 2009, when training for women candidates for professional soldiers started and until September 2010, 725 women candidates attended this training. The process of shifting to a professional army develops concurrently with the inclusion of women in the army ranks. Today, SAF has about 13% of women (19.1%)<sup>14</sup> in its ranks, and the Minister of Defence, when addressing the media, said that he believes this to be “a widely-accepted standard”.<sup>15</sup> A systemic problem is that women were relatively later (compared with the police force) included in the army ranks and that the Military Academy opened its doors for girl students late. It was not until 2011 that the first generation of women officers, enrolled in 2007, graduated from the Military Academy. Due to this fact, only an insignificant number of women in the military are in decision-making positions – the requirements for these positions include years of service and graduating from the Military Academy (which was closed to women until that time).

## Systemic obstacles to women’s participation in MNOs

Systemic preconditions make it harder, consequently, for women to have greater participation in peacekeeping missions. Namely, in order to be sent to a military mission, one needs to be either an officer or a non-commissioned officer and have a minimum of 6 years of work experience,<sup>16</sup> and, in the case of a police mission<sup>17</sup>, one needs to have spent 5 years in the national service. Military requirements have thus far been met only by women members of medical teams, considering that medical institutions are opened for women, with a large number of women at the Military Medical Academy (VMA). Thus far, 23 women members of MoD and SAF were engaged, namely 1 physician and 22 nurses, in 29 mandates. In addition, four women members of MoD and SAF were, at their request, deployed in two mandates, and one woman member of MoD was deployed three times.

It was not until 2011 that the first women sub-lieutenants graduated from the Military Academy<sup>18</sup>, but they will still have to wait several years for formal requirements to be met in order for them to be sent to peacekeeping missions. Their counterparts in the police force, on the other hand, “have longer years of service” and thus meet the formal requirements for participation in peacekeeping missions. One of the reasons for the inadequate participation of women in the operational ranks of UN peacekeeping operations is the fact that their share in the operational ranks of the military and police is low – women account for only 8% of the total number of employed professional soldiers in the ranks of the Serbian Armed Forces and for slightly more than 7% of the police uniformed ranks. This situation may change if positive discrimination is applied in the coming period. This means that it is necessary to actively promote gender sensitive policy when selecting male and female candidates for participation in missions, namely to give precedence to women who have the same qualifications as men, with the aim of increasing their representation in accordance with the provisions of NAP.<sup>19</sup>

One of the obstacles to sending professional units on missions is the inadequate interoperability reflected in the inadequate level of knowledge of a foreign language. Since participation of Serbian peacekeepers is modest, it

14 According to the BCSP from September 2011, the share of women in MoD and SAF in the total number of MoD and SAF employees, in respect of gender and staff, in September 2011, was: 0.2% of women officers, 0.1% of women non-commissioned officers, 16.0% of women civilian staff, 2.8% of women professional soldiers, in the total number of employees, namely the total of 19.1% of women in the total number of employees in the above mentioned period

15 Šutanovac: *Women Account for 13.62% of the Serbian Armed Forces*, Tanjug 6 December 2011, available at <http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Drustvo/294127/Sutanovac-U-Vojsci-Srbije-1362-odsto-zena> Date of access: 27 February 2012.

16 *The rulebook on selection criteria and the manner of selecting the members of the Serbian Armed Forces and the employees of the Ministry of Defence who are to be prepared and trained for participation in multinational operations and the competence certification*, Official Military Journal 10/10-121, Belgrade 2010.

17 *The rulebook on the requirements and manner of selecting the police official seconded to work abroad, and the latter’s duties, rights, and responsibilities while on service abroad*, Official Gazette of RS, No 5/07, Belgrade 2007.

18 From the first generation of girl students enrolled (school year 2007/2008), 19 girls graduated.

19 NAP envisages that the participation of women in MNO should be increased by 30% before 2015. Looking from where we are now, this goal will be hard to achieve considering a small share of women in the military and police operational ranks

is necessary that all participants are fluent in English.<sup>20</sup> Accordingly, courses on foreign languages in the Military Academy intensified (with many inconsistencies in regard to the selection of candidates for further professional training), while the police have tried, during a short period, to deal with this issue through the support of the OSCE.<sup>21</sup>

## Personal motivation

Irrespective of the fact that professional military and police staff have an obligation to take part in missions, recruiting in these institutions is still made on a voluntary basis. Although no in-depth survey on women's motivation to take part in MNOs was conducted in the MoD, SAF, or Mol, some conclusion may be drawn from interviews with the participants of peacekeeping operations.

The first reason for participants' decision to (not) take part in MNOs is of a subjective character. It is believed that women and men may gain expertise and further professional education in the missions. Also, they are given the opportunity to perform a larger number of tasks they did not perform in their respective institutions. It is not rare, however, that returnees from missions are faced with their peers' comments "*...that they went to the mission only because of money*"<sup>22</sup>.

Reasons affecting the decision to participate in a mission also concern career promotion. The participants of military and police missions are not guaranteed a career promotion as a consequence of their further professional education in the missions. Quite the contrary, it happens that, whilst in the missions, they miss a promotion opportunity or an opportunity to be functionally assigned to a better position. The experience acquired in the mission is a resource that is not adequately used in the military and police, so the transfer of knowledge and experience to the subsequent rotation (or subsequent prospective candidates) and decision makers within the system is mostly a product of the mission participants' personal initiative, rather than a result of procedures in the military or police. In all probability, the defence and security system does not recognise, to a sufficient extent, the benefits that home institutions may have from participation in the missions; rather, things remain at a level of propaganda activities from which, in the long term, neither the state nor the society nor the employees can benefit to any great extent (Milošević 2009: 3-13).

In addition to the above, a key reason for women not deciding to go on a mission is separation from family and lack of institutional support to the family whose member is taking part in a MNO. Considering that missions last for six months to a year, women, who prevalingly care about family in our society, do not apply to go on missions. In addition, institutions have not developed a family support mechanism for their employees going on missions. Support mechanisms may include shortening of working hours or the other parent's leave of absence from work so as to take care of the family if the spouse is also employed in the same institution, or an agreement with the other employer to offer such an arrangements.

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20 As opposed to sending a larger contingent, such as a squad or a battalion, when it is not necessary for all participants to speak the foreign language. See more details in the example of Romania in Marko Milošević's text *Timid Steps towards the Big Scene: Challenges and Obstacles to Serbian Participation in Multinational Operations*, Year 5, No 16, Centre for Civil-Military Relations, Belgrade 2009, pp. 3-13.

21 Interview with an associate of the OSCE Mission in Serbia within the survey *Challenges of Serbian Increased Participation Multi-national Operations* conducted in 2009

22 Data from the Interview with mission participants, CCNR, September 2009



## Preconceptions and stereotypes about women

Preconceptions and stereotypes are a challenge for women who want to get involved in MNOs, primarily since the preconceptions and stereotypes concern the condescension or calling into question their professional competences.

Since women have been present in the police force longer than in the armed forces, the integration in the police force excels that of their first steps in a blue uniform. In the case of the military a kind of socialisation process is still under way. The first experience of women police officers was characterised by a paternalistic relationship in which their male counterparts 'looked after' them, gave them easier assignments, or, in the event of more dangerous actions, left them in the car. A negative consequence of such practice was the impression that women are incompetent and women officers who watched over the car were derogatively called "lion's paws", which is the name of the security lock for motor vehicles.<sup>23</sup> The attitude of their male peers (in the beginning of women's integration into the police) varied – some women officers try hard and others 'try to eschew', which adversely affects the perception of all women in the police force. *Some press women hard to be normal, while others spoil women and make them look daft. When women police officers do their job well – it is considered normal; when a woman police officer does not perform her task successfully, however – it is generalised to all women.*<sup>24</sup> Contrary to this, the gender perspective is completely excluded when the performance appraisal of male police officers is concerned.

In the military, the integration of women drew great media attention and was accompanied by a campaign promoting women's participation in the defence system.<sup>25</sup> In addition to video spots featuring both male and female candidates for professional soldiers, the SAF website also promoted success stories of women in the military.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, the attitudes of our interlocutors from SAF<sup>27</sup> reflect a very conservative set of values. One of the respondents expressed his resignation with not understanding the importance of taking part in peacekeeping missions with the following words: *"We need to wait a further couple of years for these older officers, now decision-makers, to retire, so that what are now the middle ranks – lieutenant generals or majors, who started this thing with mission participation, take their place. Then we will have an experienced person to decide about what the mission's priority is and what is to be done. Now they just reassign some colonel nearing his retirement age and he does not know a first thing about this."* When asked about the attitude towards women in the military, the same respondent said: *"And where am I supposed to put them up? Somewhere separate? Is it at all possible? Like when they bombed us in Kosovo, there I would not be able to give them shelter, let alone provide separate accommodation facilities for them. We were all at the same place then! They want to be decision makers but they do not want to be exposed to the elements. Well, that is not a way to go..."*<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, a member of the medical staff in the mission to Chad<sup>29</sup> did not have any objections to the work of his women peers in the mission. Quite the contrary, the Mission Commander praised the MEDEVAC team for contributing to the success of the mission. The fact that this was a medical team, and mixed-gender teams are not a novelty there, only confirms the thesis that "women are not a part of the mission so as to meet quota requirements but because they are good at what they do." Neither did the members of police in this survey have any objections in regard to their women peers.<sup>30</sup> It would be decent to assume that the passage of time will contribute to better socialisation and professional affirmation of women in (what are traditionally perceived as) men's jobs.

23 Stamenić S. et al, *Search me Tenderly*, Vreme 649, Belgrade 2003, available at <http://www.vreme.com/cms/view.php?id=342903>  
Date of access: 28.2.2012.

24 Ibid.

25 "Be a Professional" video spots at the Ministry of Defence website, available at <http://www.budiprofesionalac.rs/spotovi.html> Date of access: 5.3.2012.

26 The Serbian Armed Forces website, the page devoted to women in armed forces, [http://www.vs.rs/index.php?women\\_in\\_saf=true](http://www.vs.rs/index.php?women_in_saf=true)  
Date of access: 28.2.2012.

27 A larger number of interviewed respondents during the Project Challenges in Larger Serbian Participation in Multinational Operations, implemented in 2009, but also the respondents' statements in 2010 and 2011

28 From the interview with a participant of peacekeeping missions, December 2011

29 Interview with a respondent in the Project Challenges in Larger Serbian Participation in Multinational Operations implemented in mid 2009

30 It should be kept in mind that the focus of the survey was on the problems with the participation in missions, and that gender equality policy is only one of the aspects; the attitude about the absence of the criticism of women peers should therefore not be taken at its face value.

## New challenges and effects on the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325

The challenges of peacekeeping missions, from a military perspective, include the inclusion of civilians in the missions. Now seriously contemplated is the possibility of sending so-called functional specialists – civilians (engineers, agronomist, pedagogues, and similar) to peacekeeping missions, which opens up larger room for the inclusion of women who have acquired professional credibility in their jobs. In addition, by adopting NAP, Serbia prepares itself to implement some of the provisions therein - men or women gender advisors in peacekeeping missions being one of the most important among them. Men and women gender advisors in peacekeeping missions are still neither nominated nor seconded to a mission. For the time being, only women gender advisors to the Ministers of Defence and Interior are present in our system; their task is to promote greater involvement of women in the missions (Odanović, 2011: 20). NAP (2010: 38) did address this issue, however, mentioning, as a goal for the period 2010-2013, that women's participation in MNOs should be increased to a minimum of 30%. Taking into account statutory provisions about the criteria for participation in the missions, this goal is unachievable within the envisaged timeline.

How can the missions be affected and, more importantly, what will be the consequences regarding the implementation of UN SC R 1325? Primarily, the problem is that any clear strategy in regard to the purpose of missions is lacking, as long as the foreign policy strategy is absent. Public polls suggest that support for participation in peacekeeping missions is low, and another resolution is often mentioned in the parliamentary debates: UN SC R 1244 according to which Serbian forces should, under UN auspices, return to Kosovo.<sup>31</sup> The parliamentary opposition also resorts to this argument when voting against participation in missions. Moreover, the absence of any systemic attempts to draw together the experience gained in missions reveals how little importance institutions attach to the experience from missions, for which mission participants are the best witnesses.

## Conclusion

Considering the above listed systemic preconditions and taking into account the perception of women's role in the security sector, the participation of women in peacekeeping missions presents a specific challenge, since expectations for women are much greater than those for their male peers. Namely, it is feared that seconding women to missions may be seen as a PR activity of line ministries that would neither benefit the mission (not having enough experience to be sent to a mission), nor the inclusion of women (negative image in the event of some problems which would be generalised to women). This would in turn create additional expectations for women mission participants to prove themselves both as men soldiers and as women soldiers.<sup>32</sup> Finally, this was the attitude expressed by one woman mission participant about the mission's needs: *"I don't care about quotas, what is important to me is that a person knows how to do the job, regardless whether such person is a man or a woman."*<sup>33</sup> This is how mission functionality is achieved and how women's contributions within the mission are recognised. If an omission or error in the mission is made by a woman – it is explained based on gender, and if it is made by a man - gender-based explanation are omitted. Positive discrimination is also lacking in the event of success stories. When, in a group of several praiseworthy soldiers and policemen, Serbian President gave an award to Ms Biljana Lazarević, a police officer, her promotion was mainly the result of the NGOs' efforts whilst the relevant ministry equally praised all praiseworthy police officers. Taking into account that NAP needs to be implemented, as Serbia has committed itself to do, and considering all the possible contributions the inclusion of women can bring to Serbia, it is necessary to build and reinforce the promotion mechanisms

31 *Serbian Blue Helmets Awarded*, *Kurir*, 26.2.2012, available at <http://www.kurir-info.rs/vesti/nagradjeni-srpski-plavi-slemovi-186036.php> Date of access: 5 March 2012; take note of the readers' comments concerning Kosovo even though it is not mentioned in the text

32 Both that they draw level with their men peers professionally and that, as women, they are subject to more criticism and higher criteria than their men peers

33 The statement of a woman interviewee with regard to the participation in missions, BCSP 2012.

for the inclusion of women in missions. In order to enable them to gain professional affirmation (with relevant requirements being higher for women!), the selected women participants need to be provided with intensified training so they can 'catch up' to their male peers. In Serbia too, the same as anywhere else, women should get recognition for what they do, not because they are women but because of the high quality of their work. After all, the first steps made by the first generations of women police officers were burdened with even greater stereotypes and social expectations, while today women members of the police are no longer called 'lion's paws'.

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Editor: Maja Bjeloš

Translation: Vesna Podgorac

Design: Marko Marinković

ISBN 978-86-6237-029-7



This paper is a result of the project “Supporting The Implementation on NAP on 1325 in Serbia - Towards Gender Responsive Security Sector” supported by Un Women ([www.unwomen.org](http://www.unwomen.org)).