

Beyond Numbers

Women representation in the security sector in Albania

Megi Llubani

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Introduction

During 20 years of political, economic and social transformations, Albania has gone a long way from an isolated communist country to a member of NATO and EU candidate. Promoting gender equality in society, although not eye catching compared to challenges Albania is facing in its European integration path, is a priority towards building a sustainable democratic society. As a multi faceted process, gender equality means a great deal of efforts in different areas of intervention. One of the most notable, where little has been done, and more should, is the security sector.

Albania started to reform its security sector after the fall of communism, however, it wasn't until the 2000's that the security sector started normalizing and consolidating. Hence, the last decade has seen the majority of efforts to reform the security sector. Still, gender mainstreaming in this sector is in its infancy, and it is high time to tackle the issue and advocate better inclusion and promotion of women working in a male dominated sector.

Overall, promoting equal participation of women and men in the security sector as a strategy focuses on the recruitment and advancement of women in the field. It also includes the existence of gender friendly policies at the institutional level, which enables positive attitudes from women towards this profession.

The aim of this policy brief is to look at what has been done so far and to offer recommendations on improvements and future steps. As the title suggests, it will not only focus on numbers/quotas as a means to promote women participation in this sector. More importantly it will focus on offering policy recommendations that tackle deeper issues related to inclusion and promotion.



Women and security

There are currently 17 women Ministers of Defense around the world, of whom more than half are in the European continent. It is not an impressive number but consider that the first ever female Minister of Defense was elected in the late 60's of the last century, and since then astonishing personalities have taken on this position. However, only recently the number of women in this post has increased significantly. Currently, in the EU, women ministers of defense are elected in Sweden, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Norway, Germany and Italy, and in the Western Balkans in Montenegro and Albania.

Gender responsiveness in the security sector is closely related to human rights as it aims to “promote gender equality in society at large and ensure that all activities integrate the human rights of all persons.”¹ Furthermore, according to the OSCE, “upholding human rights and fundamental freedoms, on which democratic societies are based, makes for more effective, responsive, accountable and transparent security sector institutions,”² creating thus the possibility to codify the needs and perspectives of women in the policy process.

Gender and security has emerged as a sub-field of the Security Sector Reform. Although

there is no unique approach to the definition of SSR, it is generally accepted that it refers to “structures, institutions and personnel responsible for the management, provision and oversight of security in a country.”³ More importantly it aims to develop a secure environment based on development, rule of law, good governance and local ownership of security actors.

As a NATO member state, an aspiring EU candidate and a country that in general has transformed itself in fundamental ways in the past 20 years, Albania has undertaken important security sector reforms in the framework of the country's attempt to modernize and become fully democratic.

Despite visible achievements in this realm in general, the process of gender mainstreaming has lacked behind and only a few legislative and policy measures have been implemented to ensure the proper inclusion of gender responsive policies and promoting women in the security sector institutions specifically. However, the appointment of a woman as Minister of Defense sends a positive and symbolic signal regarding the promotion of women in this sector, largely and traditionally male dominated in the Albanian society.

1 Security Sector Reform Integrated Technical Guidance Notes. P. 38. Online: <http://unssr.unlb.org/Portals/UNSSR/Docs/Ch2-%20Gender-Responsive%20SSR.pdf>

2 Human Rights, Gender and the security Sector. OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Online: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/44713>.

3 United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DR Congo. What is security sector reform? Online: <http://monusco.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=10811&language=en-US>

Legal framework and obligations: what is missing?

Domestic legal framework

As an integral part of democratization and EU integration processes, throughout the years Albania has developed a comprehensive domestic legal framework to ensure a political system that at its core respects individual rights and freedoms. In addition, it has undertaken obligations to fulfill international standards as a NATO member, prospective EU member, and party and signatory to many international treaties and conventions.

At the most basic level, the Albanian Constitution stipulates that no one can be discriminated against on grounds of gender, religion, race etc⁴. Furthermore, two important documents in this regard are the Law “On protection from discrimination”, which aims to regulate the implementation of the principle of equality related to gender; and the Law on Gender Equality in Society, approved in 2008, which sanctions the principles of gender equality in Albanian society. An important dimension of the latter deals with equal participation of women in the decision making processes, by setting a 30% gender quota on public positions in the legislative, executive and judicial branches. However, this is not entirely enforced in all government institutions.

In the institutional setting the responsible body for ensuring the enforcement of the law on gender equality in society is the Council on Gen-

⁴ Kushtetuta e Republikës së Shqipërisë. (tetor 2003). Qendra e Publikimeve Zyrtare. Online: <http://kmd.al/skedar-et/1306485566-Kushtetuta.pdf>.

der Equality. The Council is headed by the Minister of Social Welfare and Youth⁵ and is comprised of nine ministers as well as three members of civil society. However, a deficiency of this advisory body is the lack of presence of the Ministry of Defense. This fact is also addressed in the Strategy 2011-2015 and actions could be undertaken to include the Ministry of Defense in the composition of the Council to make policies for promotion of women in the security sector even more efficient.

International obligations

Albania ratified the **Convention of Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** in 1993, as one of the main mechanisms ensuring elimination of gender based discrimination in all spheres from education to political participation. In a 2010 report on the implementation of CEDAW in Albania, employment remained one of the major concerns in terms of legislative and practical measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the workplace. A key recommendation of the report is the introduction of paternity leave in the Albanian legislation, which would greatly support women and ensure equal treatment in the workplace.

The **United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security**, is one of the most important documents related directly to the security sector and the in-

⁵ Previously known as the Ministry of Labor, Social Issues and Equal Opportunities, the title changed in 2013 with the new government that emerged from the 2013 general elections.



clusion and promotion of women. It affirms the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

UN Women office in Albania began working in 2011 towards mapping the National Action Plan (NAP) to implement UNSCR 1325 and in 2012 the Government of Albania committed itself to prepare the NAP in the future. The process is still ongoing. Thus, considering also the steps of the other countries in the region, Albania needs to prepare the NAP as soon as possible and work to implement UNSCR 1325, following also the lead of the EU institutions and countries, related to this Resolution.

European obligations

As a matter of fact, gender equality is one of the key principles in EU countries. In accordance with Albania's EU integration path it has considered gender discrimination a priority. "The Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) provide Albania's obligations with regard to ensuring equal employment opportunities, and especially the provision of adequate health and safety standards in the workplace."⁶ Furthermore, the majority of countries that have already prepared a National Action Plan to implement UNSCR 1325 are EU member states.

The resolution is dealt with at the national and EU level, with measures in the latter dimen-

6 Shadow Report on the Implementation of CEDAW Convention in Albania. June 2010. Online: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/GADC_Albania_46.pdf.

sions rather new, dating from 2008 when the Council of the European Union adopted two documents outlining the EU strategy to further the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and 1820. In this regard there are two documents, essential to the strategy of the European Union in dealing with gender and the security sector, from which Albania can benefit in terms of current and future steps. The two documents of the EU are referred to as the Comprehensive Approach⁷ and their role is setting out a common approach to implementation and complementing what already exists in the NAPs at the national level. Although Albania's path towards joining the EU is far from complete, it is important for the country to be updated with recent developments in the field, in order to ensure later on a swift transition and adaptation to the Union in general.

To assess the implementation of the Comprehensive Approach, in 2010 a set of indicators were designed by the EU, falling within the general thematic framework of: prevention, participation, protection, relief and recovery. Priority no. 4 is especially relevant for Albania as it measures the number of EU partner countries in which work on women, peace and security is coordinated between the EU and its partners, with the mediation of the EU Delegation in the case of Albania. Up to now, no coordination has been observed in this area between Albania and the European Union-Therefore the EU Delegation to Albania can integrate this coordination mechanism in its

7 For more information on the documents refer to: <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2015671%202008%20REV%201> and <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2015782%202008%20REV%203>

work with the Albanian government to transmit measures at the EU level to the country, in terms of enhancing women participation in the security sector institutions and implementing UNSCR1325.

Some of the priorities set by the EU and the measures undertaken are also helpful for the country. Those measures, divided in subgroups relate to political support, training, exchange of information, cooperation with international actors, as well as monitoring and evaluation.⁸ In preparing and implementing the NAP, Albania should be careful to include these dimensions in its NAP and implementation strategy.

Furthermore, in the 2014 Progress Report prepared by the European Commission the appointment of gender coordinators in each line ministry is praised.⁹ However, the overall representation of women in public office is considered low. The report could include more reference to women participation in security institutions and improving their employment opportunities, which lacks in the current report.

Past and current trends

Recruitment and promotion of women in the Armed Forces and the Albanian state police as part of the security sector institutions is an essential element in assessing the success of the policy of gender equality in society.

⁸ For more information on the priorities go to: <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2011948%202010%20INIT>
⁹ Albania 2014 Progress Report. P. 39. Chapter 23: Judiciary and fundamental rights. Online: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2014/20141008-albania-progress-report_en.pdf

Recruitment in the armed forces: what the numbers suggest

The Center for Personnel Recruitment (CPR) is the responsible body for recruitment of professional soldiers and officers. Since 2012, it is in the mission of the CPR to promote, among others, gender equality and equality of opportunities in the recruitment of women in the armed forces. According to the document on policies and standard procedures on the recruitment of professional soldiers in the armed forces, “women soldiers in the Armed Forces will make up 15% of the total number as well as within each structure taken individually, in function of missions and tasks according to operational levels required,”¹⁰ with no timeframe given for this decision.

However, in the last three years the requirement has not been fulfilled, as in 2011 the percentage of female military personnel in the Armed Forces was 12.3%¹¹; in 2012 13.42% and in 2013 the percentage decreased to 11.2%¹². This goes against the background of policies undertaken from 2012 to 2013, which aimed to promote women in the Armed Forces. If in 2011 there were no concrete policies in the Armed Forces to promote women, in 2012 the Sector of equal opportunities was established in the Center of Personnel/Recruitment and other measures were undertaken to promote

¹⁰ Politikat e rekrutimit te ushtareve profesioniste. Republic of Albania, Armed Forces. Online: <http://www.aaf.mil.al/index.php/politikat-e-rekrutimit/72-politikat-e-rekrutimit-te-ushtareve-profesioniste>

¹¹ Yearly Report 2011, Albanian Armed Forces. NATO Office on Gender Perspective. Online: http://www.mod.gov.al/images/PDF/raporti_vjetor.pdf

¹² National Report 2013. “Gender perspective in the Albanian Armed Forces”. Online: http://www.mod.gov.al/images/PDF/raport_vjetor_farsh_2013_shqip.pdf



women in the Albanian Armed Forces. Hence, these measures were not translated into numbers. However, as the title suggests, one should look beyond the numbers and focus on the qualitative aspects of the policies, such as education, gender friendly approaches in the armed forces, tools to promote women in high positions in the armed forces, etc.

Regarding the latter, a report of the Institute for Democracy and Mediation, on gender mainstreaming in the Armed Forces suggests, in addition to remaining a minority, the percentage of women in the higher officer and commissioned ranks, continues to be lower than the percentage of women in service.¹³ This percentage contrasts with the 29.8% of women in decision-making positions and 51.2% in specialist positions, who work in the Ministry of Defense as civil staff, which shows that women are more than capable and interested in participating in the security sector institutions.¹⁴

Recruitment in the state police: perceptions and realities

One of the first initiatives of the Ministry of Interior under the new government was to change the image of the state police in the mind of ordinary citizens. The first action in this regard was to enhance the visibility of women in the traffic police

13 Peco, E., Salihi, E. & Leka, E. Promoting women in the Albanian Armed Forces: From a visible to an operational gender balance. Online; http://idmalbania.org/sites/default/files/publications/gender_eng_pdf.pdf

14 Gender equality in the Albanian Armed Forces. Embassy of Sweden in Tirana. Online: <http://www.swedenabroad.com/Pages/StandardPage.aspx?id=59646&epslanguage=en-GB>

(chosen as being in direct contact to people). This move sparked an interest in the public spheres and not only contributed to a slightly changed image of the Albanian State Police, but also led to discussions about the positive impact of women in the security sector institutions. At this point the measure has been largely discussed in media outlets, through articles, opinions and TV shows. However, a study has yet to be conducted to measure the effect of this initiative in citizen's perceptions of the Albanian State Police.

In addition to what the contextual situation suggests, perceptions are also an important dimension, especially for the way ordinary people think about the topic and their attitudes related to the abilities of women to participate in security sector institutions. According to a 2010 survey conducted by the Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM), more than 85% of male respondents said yes when asked if women are equally capable to fulfill roles in the police and military. However, there is a paradox in their attitude towards the suitability of this profession for women. The majority of male respondents do not consider the police or military as a possible profession for female members of their family. In total, 67% responded No to the question, arguing mostly that it is a profession more appropriate for men.

As far as numbers go, in 2010 women comprised 9.07% of the State Police, with only one woman in high ranks, Deputy General Director of Police. Most of the women fall into the category of civil personnel and Inspector up to Lieutenant Commissar and only 10 out of the total number of women in the Police (877), were group leaders.



Conclusions and recommendations

Legislative measures

- Finalize the preparation of the National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.
- Introduce more family friendly policies, such as the introduction of paternity leave, which would supplement maternity leave in an appropriate way.
- Establish strategic targets and specific initiatives to increase the recruitment, retention and advancement of women, which would be translated into measures to be undertaken to achieve the 15% quota in the Albanian Armed Forces.
- Include specific gender training as part of the core-training curriculum of security sector personnel at all levels (one good start here was made in the curriculum of the Albanian State Police)
- In the yearly Progress Reports, the European Commission could pay more attention to the representation of women in public office and specifically in security sector institutions. Also, more attention

could be focused on employment rights and gender friendly policies in women employment.

Institutional measures

- Establish a Task Force to supervise the implementation of the Resolution and the NAP, which would ensure the effective design and implementation from the start.
- Establish formal or informal organizations/networks of women working in the security sector reform. These networks would serve to institutionalize women participation in the security sector as well as emphasize their rights and equal opportunities.
- Include the Ministry of Defense in the Council on Gender Equality. This measure is important at the institutional level in order to give a clear signal that the security sector institutions are taking a gender-aware? approach in their work.
- The European Union, through the Delegation in Tirana, could coordinate efforts with the Albanian government, in providing the EU experience in the area of gender mainstreaming in the security sector.

Measures related to civil society

Active involvement in the adoption and implementation of the NAP:

- Organize consultations, workshops and meetings with stakeholders in order to design an effective and feasible NAP.
- Identify and include experts from civil society in the working group for the design and implementation of the NAP.
- Set up a monitoring and evaluation group comprised of public officials and independent experts to closely assess the NAP from the start.
- Prepare clear indicators based on existing examples and the needs of the country.

Inclusion in the Accession Negotiations with the European Union:

- Follow closely the developments in the EU member states in order to benefit from successful experiences at the EU level.
- With the granting of candidate status, Albania could follow the Montenegrin example of involving Civil Society in the negotiations from the beginning, so that experts can be part of the working groups for each chapter. CSOs working on gender and security can be part of the working group for chapter XX.

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