



NAVIGATION TOOL 2026

on Gender-Related Guidance for Military Mandates

Foreword

For over a decade, the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations (NCGM) has worked across a wide range of efforts to advise, support and further the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security. NCGM focuses on the integration of a gender perspective in military contexts, including missions, operations, organisations and activities.

NCGM fulfils three key roles: it is an Expert Centre, a NATO-accredited education and training facility, and the NATO Department Head for NATO's Gender in Military Operations (GMO) discipline. Its main focus is primarily centred around education and training of leaders, gender advisors, and gender focal points. NCGM also conducts analysis, develops concepts, and cooperates with others to mainstream a gender perspective into military doctrine, policies, exercises, decision-making, and, military operations, missions and activities.

To support its work, NCGM continuously collaborates with gender advisors, Nations, and security organisations to share best practices, identify opportunities and address challenges. Based on this experience and expertise, NCGM and the NCGM Steering Committee identified the need to map out and analyse existing gender-related guidance relevant to military mandates from the United Nations (UN), North-Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), European Union (EU), and Organisation for Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). It was noted that such guidance, specifically targeting military actors and mandates was insufficient. This realisation led to the development of this publication titled "Navigation Tool on Gender Related Guidance for Military Mandates".

The tool is designed to serve as a navigation and information resource for Gender Advisors, Gender Focal Points, Subject Matter Experts on WPS and GMO, as well as gender-responsive leaders in national armed forces and other military or non-military organisations. More broadly, the tool aims to provide practical guidance on how to implement the WPS agenda effectively within the military and security organisations.

In developing the tool, NCGM had the privilege of collaborating with Subject Matter Experts from various organizations. Their expertise and experience greatly enriched and contributed to the tool. NCGM is truly grateful for the invaluable contributions and partnership that made this tool possible.

NCGM intends to regularly update this Navigation Tool on Gender-Related Guidance for Military Mandates to ensure a dynamic and up-to-date product that reflects the frameworks from the respective organisations. NCGM welcomes feedback and input on this tool.

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The Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations is an international military centre established in 2012 under the umbrella of the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEF). Later on, the Netherlands, Canada and Australia has joined this cooperation. NCGM's work and activities are structured around its three roles: Education and Training Facility, NATO Department Head for the Gender in Military Operations Discipline and Expert Centre.

More information about NCGM can be found on the website mil.se/ncgm and social media.

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TIMELINE

1945 – UN Charter
1948 – UDHR
1949 – Geneva Conventions
1966 – ICCPR, ICESCR
1976 – Additional Protocols to GC
1979 – CEDAW
1995 – Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
2000 – Brahimi Report
2000 – Millennium Development Goals
2000 – UNSCR 1325
2003 – **UN SEA Bulletin**
2004 – NATO Human Trafficking Policy
2004 – **OSCE Decision on Action Plan for Gender Equality**
2005 – **OSCE Decision on Women in Conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation**
2005 – **OSCE Decision on Violence Against Women**
2008 – UNSCR 1820
2008 – EU Approach to WPS (v1)
2008 – EU Implementation of WPS (v 1)
2009 – UNSCR 1888, 1889
2009 – **OSCE Decision on Women’s Participation**
2009 – AU Gender Policy
2010 – **UN DPKO Guidelines Integrating a Gender Perspective into the work of the United Nations Military in Peacekeeping Organisations**
2010 – UNSCR 1960
2012 – Annual Reports by the UNSG on CRSV
2012 – **EU Implementation of WPS in the context of CSDP missions and operations**
2013 – UNSCR 2106, 2122
2015 – UNSCR 2242
2015 – **EU Concept on Protection of Civilians**
2015 – UN HIPPO–report
2015 – NATO Military Guidelines on CR–SGBV
2015 – NATO ACO Gender Functional Planning Guide
2015 – Sustainable Development Goals
2016 – NATO SOP on GENAD’s Functions
2016 – DCAF Handbook on Teaching Gender in the Military
2016 – **NATO Policy for the Protection of Civilians**
2017 – UN Uniformed System Wide Strategy on Gender Parity

2017 – NATO Bi–SCD 40–1 (v 3)
2018 – **UN Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy**
2018 – NATO WPS Policy (v 4) and Action Plan (v 4)
2018 – AU SEA Policy
2018 – UN Action for Peacekeeping (A4P)
2018 – UN Policy on Gender Responsive PKO
2018 – **OSCE Gender in Military Operations Guidance**
2018 – **EU Upgraded Generic Standards of Behaviour for CSDP Missions and Operations (v2)**
2018 – EU Civilian Operations Guidelines on Gender Mainstreaming
2018 – **EU Strategic Approach to WPS (v 2)**
2018 – **OSCE Decision on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women**
2019 – DCAF, OSCE & UN Gender and Security Toolkits
2019 – **UN Policy on Protection of Civilians**
2019 – **EU WPS Action Plan**
2019 – UNSCR 2493, 2467
2020 – **UN Policy on Preventing and Responding to CRSV**
2020 – **NATO Policy on Preventing and Responding to SEA**
2020 – **EU Gender Equality Strategy**
2020 – **EU Gender Action Plan**
2020 – UN Handbook on CRSV
2021 – **NATO Policy on CRSV**
2021 – **NATO Bi–SCD 40–1 (v 4)**
2021 – **NATO WPS Action Plan (v 5)**
2021 – UN Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+)
2021 – UN Security Council Shared Commitments on WPS
2022 – **EU Operational Guidance on Gender Mainstreaming to the military CSDP**
2022 – NATO Human Security Approach and Guiding Principles
2022 – NATO Military Committee Military Guidelines on Prevention of, and Response to, CRSV
2023 – NATO Policy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings
2023 – NATO Policy on Children and Armed Conflict
2024 – **UN Policy on Gender Responsive United Nations Peacekeeping Operations**
2024 – **NATO Policy on Women Peace and Security (v 5)**
2024 – **NATO Military Guidance for the Integration of the NATO Policy on Women, Peace and Security in Military Missions, Operations and Activities**
2025 – OSCE-wide roadmap for the implementation of commitments on Women, Peace and Security
2026 – EU Gender Equality Strategy

CHART

The Chart illustrates the gender-related guidance of relevance for military mandates included in this Navigation Tool, categorised per organisation and topic. The documents included in the Navigation Tool have been selected to ensure that several WPS-related topics are covered. All of the documents included are WPS-related, but cover different focus areas.

Gender-related guidance				
	UN	NATO	EU	OSCE
External focus	Policy on Gender Responsive Peacekeeping Operations (2018); Action for Peacekeeping: Shared Commitments (2018); DPKO/DFS Guidelines on Integrating a Gender Perspective Into the Work of the UN (2010)	NATO BI-SC Directive 040-001 (2021)	Civilian Operations Commander Operational Guidelines for Mission Management and Staff on Gender Mainstreaming (2018); EU Strategic Compass for Security and Defence (2022)	Gender in Military Operations Guidance (2018)
Internal focus	Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy (2018)	NATO Military Guidance for the Integration of the NATO Policy on Women, Peace and Security in Military Missions, Operations and Activities (2024)		Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality (2004)
Broader WPS focus	UNSCRs on Women Peace and Security	NATO Policy on WPS (2018); NATO Action Plan on WPS (2021)	Strategic Approach to WPS (2018) Action Plan on WPS (2019); Implementation of WPS in CSDP missions (2012); Operational Guidance on Gender Mainstreaming to the military CSDP (2022)	Women in Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation (2005); Women's Participation in Political and Public Life (2009) OSCE-wide roadmap for the implementation of commitments on Women, Peace and Security
CRSV, SEA, GBV focus	UN Policy on CRSV (2018); UNSG Special Bulletin on SEA (2003)	NATO Policy on Preventing and Responding to CRSV (2021); NATO Policy on Preventing and Responding to SEA (2019)	EU Generic Standards of Behaviour for CSDP Missions and Operations (2017)	Preventing and Combating Violence against Women (2005); Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women (2018)
Protection of Civilians focus	UN Policy on Protection of Civilians in Peacekeeping Operations (2019)	NATO Policy on Protection of Civilians (2018)	EU Concept on Protection of Civilians in EU-led Military Operations (2015)	

1 Introduction to the Navigation Tool on Gender-Related Guidance for Military Mandates

1.1 Background

On 31 October 2000, the UN Security Council adopted its first Resolution on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), known as Resolution 1325. Since then, nine additional resolutions have been introduced, forming the WPS agenda.¹ With this agenda, the UN Security Council recognises the disproportionate impact of crises and conflict on women and girls. It emphasises the importance of women's full, equal, safe and meaningful participation and the integration of gender perspectives in peace and security efforts. Furthermore, it aims to address and prevent gender-based and sexual violence in armed conflict while promoting the protection of women and girls in particular. Several WPS resolutions also call for the designation of gender advisors and the mainstreaming of a gender perspective across missions, operations, policies, organisations, and training.

As international legal frameworks, the ten UN Security Council Resolutions that comprise the WPS agenda are mandatory for the international community to implement at both the national and interstate levels through states' participation in military and security organisations. The UN, NATO, EU and OSCE, albeit to various extents, are four major international and regional security organisations that adopt and apply different policy frameworks to advance the implementation of WPS and gender perspectives in military missions, operations, and activities. Since its establishment by the NORDEFCON nations in 2012, NCGM has focused on WPS and gender in military operations to provide guidance, analytical tools, cooperation forums, and education and training to partnering nations, military forces, and multilateral organisations. In line with this mission, NCGM and its Steering Committee have identified the need to outline and map an overview of the international gender-related guidelines relevant to military mandates.

1.2 Aim, Purpose and Target Audience

The Navigation Tool on Gender-Related Guidance for Military Mandates, henceforth the Navigation Tool, aims to support Gender Advisors, Gender Focal Points, Subject Matter Experts, and other practitioners in implementing the WPS agenda and integrating a gender perspective into military missions and operations. By compiling guiding documents on WPS and gender perspectives relevant to military mandates from the UN, NATO, EU and OSCE, the Navigation Tool serves as a comprehensive source of information, navigation and guidance. The purpose of this tool is to help users effectively navigate and extract knowledge from the selected organisational WPS frameworks, enhancing their ability to deliver on their tasks and objectives.

¹ UN Security Council, Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)

In addition to the WPS and GMO practitioners already mentioned, the tool can be useful for other staff members, including the leadership levels and members of civilian organisations or entities, as they navigate amongst gender-related guidance relevant to military mandates from UN, NATO, EU and OSCE.

The gender-related guidance included in the Navigation Tool is derived from the UN, NATO, EU, and OSCE, given these organisations' significant roles in supporting and informing the WPS agenda both internationally and within the regional context in which NCGM, its partners and member nations operate.

1.3 Structure

Part 1 of the Navigation Tool provides an Introduction that outlines:

- The aim, purpose and methodology of the *Navigation Tool*;
- A manual for how to use the *Navigation Tool*;
- A timeline of the guiding documents included in the tool, along with related key documents on the topics of gender, human rights, WPS and GMO; and
- A chart of the guiding documents included in the tool, categorised by topical focus and organisation.

Part 2 of the Navigation Tool is structured around the four organisations examined: the UN, NATO, EU and OSCE, with each organisation having its own chapter that contains:

- A brief Introduction to the organisation, providing relevant background and context.
- A list of gender-related definitions/terminology used by that organisation.
- A Mapping of gender-related guiding documents that includes:
 - An introduction
 - An executive summary that concisely summarises the content of the document in question
 - An extended summary that provides a more detailed overview of the document's content, and
 - A list of additional relevant gender-related documents from that organisation for further reading
- An Overview that offers a brief collective analysis of all gender-related guiding documents from that organisation examined in the *Navigation Tool*.

1.4 Developing the Navigation Tool

The Navigation Tool was developed between 2021 and 2025. During 2022 and 2023, NCGM conducted expert meetings and bilateral exchanges with Subject Matter Experts from the UN, NATO, EU and OSCE to review and refine the structure and content of this tool.

The *Navigation Tool* is not exhaustive in addressing every single gender-related guiding document. To mitigate potential gaps, each Mapping is complemented with a list of related guiding documents used within the respective organisation. The Navigation Tool focuses on key, unclassified gender-related² documents relevant to military operations from the four organisations. The selection of documents is based on their importance and relevance.³ It covers:

- internal and external gender-related guidance;
- guidance concerning gender-based violence, sexual exploitation or abuse and conflict-related sexual violence;
- implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda; and
- protection of civilians.

Treaties, conventions and other documents relating to the topics of gender, human rights, humanitarian law, WPS and gender perspective that may have influenced the organisational frameworks on WPS are not part of this tool, but outlined in a Timeline for context. It is, however, important to mention that the Timeline, though comprehensive, only includes a selection of related documents.

1.5 Using the Navigation Tool

The *Navigation Tool* can be tailored to meet the needs of the user. For example, the user can focus on a particular organisation, term, topic, definition, document, or any combination thereof.

The *Navigation Tool* contains guiding documents from the UN, NATO, EU, and OSCE, providing an overview of gender-related guidance pertinent to the military. It assumes that the reader is already familiar with basic knowledge of gender concepts, gender in military operations, gender equality and the WPS agenda. Additional information about the basic concepts and frameworks can be found in the included documents and also in:

- 'Whose Security? – Practical Examples of Gender Perspective in Military Operations', NCGM, (2015),
- 'A Military Guide to the UNSCRs on Women, Peace and Security', NCGM, (2020).

² This tool adopts a broad interpretation of what 'gender-related' entails.

³ The selection of topics and guiding documents included in the tool does not suggest that other topics or other guiding documents are not gender-related.

2 United Nations (UN)

The UN is an international organisation founded in 1945, currently comprising 193 Member States.⁴ Its primary purpose is to maintain international peace and security while promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.⁵ The foundational document of the UN is the UN Charter.

The UN addresses many topics, focusing primarily on peace and security, human rights, humanitarian aid, sustainable development, climate action, and global issues such as migration, health, poverty, food security, disarmament, democracy, and climate change.⁶

To promote peace the UN employs various strategies, including conflict prevention, peacebuilding efforts, reconstruction work, and diplomatic “good offices”, as well as through UN Peacekeeping missions. When authorised by the UN Security Council, the UN may also be mandated to use military force as part of its peacekeeping missions. Therefore, the Navigation Tool will mainly focus on the UN’s Peacekeeping framework rather than other peace and security mechanisms within the UN.

UN Peacekeeping aims to assist countries torn by conflict in creating conditions for lasting peace. UN Peacekeeping is built on three basic principles: the consent of the parties involved; impartiality; and the non-use of force except in self-defence or to defend the mandate. Modern peacekeeping operations aim to maintain peace and security while also supporting other efforts, such as facilitating political processes, protecting civilians, supporting the organization of elections, protecting and promoting human rights, and assist in restoring the rule of law. The UN employs military, civilian and police personnel for its peacekeeping missions.⁷

2.1 Definitions

The following definitions are extracted from the UN documents summarised in this chapter:

- Gender
- Gender equality
- Gender responsive
- Gender-responsive conflict analysis
- Mainstreaming gender perspectives
- Gender integration (or mainstreaming)
- Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV)
- Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)
- Sexual exploitation and abuse

⁴ UN, ‘About Us’, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us>, accessed 12 March 2026.

⁵ UN Charter, Article 1.

⁶ UN, ‘Our Work’, <https://www.un.org/en/our-work>, accessed 12 March 2026.

⁷ UN Peacekeeping ‘What is Peacekeeping’ <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/what-is-peacekeeping>, accessed 12 March 2026.

GENDER:

“Refers to socially constructed roles, responsibilities, and identities associated with being a man or a woman in a given society, culture or community. These attributes, roles, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed, and learned through socialization and conform to the value system of given societies. They are context/time-specific and changeable. Gender defines power relations in society and determines what is socially expected, allowed and valued in women, men, boys, girls and other identities.”⁸

GENDER EQUALITY:

“Refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a “women’s issue”, it concerns, and should fully engage, men and women.”

“gender equality (equality between women and men) refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same, but rather that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women’s issue; it should concern men as well. Equality between women and men is seen as both a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and an indicator of, sustainable people centred development.”¹⁰

GENDER RESPONSIVE:

“Refers to an approach that factors the different gender roles, power dynamics, needs and interests of women, men, girls, boys and other gender identities in analysis, planning, implementation, reporting and budgeting with a long-term objective Similar definition in: UN DPKO DFS Guidelines on Integrating a Gender Perspective into the work of the UN Military PKO (2010) p 43. of advancing gender equality by transforming structures, systems and addressing barriers to gender equality. For example, advancing women’s meaningful participation in peace and political processes and transitions, supporting gender legislation processes, achieving gender parity and eradicating gender-based discrimination.”¹¹

8 UN Policy on Gender Responsive UN Peacekeeping Operations (2024) p 12. Similar definition in: UN DPKO DFS Guidelines on Integrating a Gender Perspective into the work of the UN Military PKO (2010) p 43.
 9 UN Policy on Gender Responsive UN Peacekeeping Operations (2024) p 12.
 10 UN DPKO DFS Guidelines on Integrating a Gender Perspective into the work of the UN Military PKO (2010) p 43; UN Policy on Gender Responsive UN Peacekeeping Operations (2018) p 12.
 11 UN Policy on Gender Responsive UN Peacekeeping Operations (2024) p 12.

GENDER-RESPONSIVE CONFLICT ANALYSIS:

“Refers to a conflict analysis with a gender lens that looks at systems of power, institutions, stakeholders, root causes, triggers and drivers that fuel conflict and peace. The analysis recognizes that conflicts affect men, women, boys, girls and other gender identities differently and that gender power relations and the enforcement of power dynamics over gender identities is political.”¹²

MAINSTREAMING GENDER PERSPECTIVE:

“Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.”¹³

GENDER INTEGRATION (OR MAINSTREAMING):

Refers to a process of assessing the gendered implications of any planned action, e.g., the implementation of peacekeeping mandate. It ensures that gender perspectives are embedded in the analysis, planning, implementation, reporting, and in decision-making processes, including in policies, programming, and budgeting. Incorporating a gender lens into peacekeeping efforts (policies, strategies and activities) promotes gender equality, enhances the effectiveness these efforts, and contributes to building more inclusive and sustainable peace processes.¹⁴

12 UN Policy on Gender Responsive UN Peacekeeping Operations (2024) p 12.
 13 UN DPKO DFS Guidelines on Integrating a Gender Perspective into the work of the UN Military PKO (2010) p 43; UN Field Missions Policy on Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (2020) p 20.
 14 UN Policy on Gender Responsive UN Peacekeeping Operations (2024) p 12.

CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE (CRSV):

CRSV refers to “patterns of sexual violence that occur in conflict or post-conflict settings or other situations of concern (e.g., political strife). CRSV includes rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilisation, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity, against women, men, girls or boys. CRSV has a direct or indirect nexus with the conflict or political strife itself, i.e., temporal, geographical and/or causal link. [15] This link may be evident in the profile of the perpetrator (often affiliated with a State or non-State armed group, including a terrorist entity or network), the profile of the victim (who is frequently an actual or perceived member of a persecuted political, ethnic or religious minority, or is targeted on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity), the climate of impunity (which is generally associated with State collapse), cross-border consequences (such as displacement or trafficking in persons) and/or violations of the provisions of a ceasefire agreement. The term also encompasses trafficking in persons when committed in situations of conflict for the purpose of sexual violence/exploitation. The determination of whether sexual violence is conflict-related is made on a case-by-case basis and follows an established methodology detailed in the analytical and conceptual framing of CRSV. CRSV is a sub-set of sexual and gender-based violence”¹⁶

SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (SGBV):

SGBV is “an umbrella term for any harmful act that is committed against a person’s will and is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between women and men. The nature and extend of specific types of sexual and gender-based violence vary across cultures, countries and regions. Examples include sexual violence, such as sexual exploitation & abuse, forced prostitution, domestic violence, trafficking, forced/early marriage, harmful traditional practises such as female genital mutilation, honour killings, and the inheritance of widows”¹⁷

SGBV refers to “any type of violence directed against individuals or groups on the basis of their sex or gender. The reference includes any act that inflicts physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty in the public or private sphere. Women, men, girls and boys can all be victims of gender-based violence. SGBV is pervasive, far reaching and not necessarily conflict related. It includes, for example, domestic violence and harmful practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM and forced marriage).”¹⁸

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE:

“Sexual exploitation means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. Sexual abuse means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.”¹⁹

15 Similar wording as in: UN Policy on Gender Responsive UN Peacekeeping Operations (2024) p 13.
 16 UN Policy: the Protection of Civilians in UN Peacekeeping (2019) p 21; UN Field Missions Policy on Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (2020) p 19f.
 17 UN Policy: the Protection of Civilians in UN Peacekeeping (2019) p 21.
 18 UN Policy on Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (2020) p 20; UN Policy on Gender Responsive UN Peacekeeping (2024) p 13.
 19 UN Zero Tolerance Policy outlined in the Secretary-Generals bulletin on Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (2003), Section 1; UN Policy on Gender Responsive UN Peacekeeping (2024) p 13.

2.2 Mapping

- UN Policy on Gender Responsive United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (2024)
- UN DPKO/DFS Guidelines on Integrating a Gender Perspective into the Work of the UN Military in Peacekeeping Operations (2010)
- UN Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy (2018)
- UN Field Missions Policy on Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (2020)
- UN Secretary-General Bulletin on Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (2003)
- UN Policy: the Protection of Civilians in UN Peacekeeping (2019)

2.3 UN Policy on Gender Responsive United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (2024)

2.3.1 Introduction

The UN *Policy on Gender Responsive UN Peacekeeping Operations* (the Policy) was adopted in 2024 by the UN Department of Peace Operations (UN DPO). The purpose of this Policy is to provide a conceptual framework, guiding principles, and strategic requirements for the (DPO) and its field missions. It aims to implement “gender equality and Women, Peace and Security (WPS) mandates and commitments through a gender responsive approach in line with the United Nations Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 1325 (2000) and its subsequent nine resolutions”.²⁰

2.3.2 Executive summary

The Policy focuses on the DPO and its field missions, guided by the overarching goals of gender equality and the WPS agenda. It highlights the importance of implementing gender-responsive approaches across mandates, by all personnel, including military and civilian staff, as well as senior leaders. The Policy outlines key guiding principles for gender-responsive measures, approaches and processes in UN peacekeeping, which include accountability, equality and non-discrimination, diversity and inclusion, and meaningful participation of women both in the host countries and as peacekeepers.

Furthermore, the Policy defines the responsibilities of senior leaders, staff, and gender specialists, within the UN gender architecture, including military GENADs. The Policy also includes standalone or integrated objectives focused on gender equality and WPS, the necessity of considering gender-responsive conflict analysis, and the promotion of gender parity.

20 UN Policy on Gender Responsive UN Peacekeeping Operations (2024) para 1.

2.3.3 Extended summary

The Policy acknowledges that gender equality and WPS are fundamental human rights issues. It emphasises their significance as “strategic political imperative central to the operational effectiveness of peacekeeping and the overall fulfilment of mandates”.²¹ The Policy outlines that implementing a *gender-responsive approach* in peacekeeping processes and functions requires:

- “i) recognizing and analysing the gendered differences in status and power of women and men, girls and boys, and other gender identities;
- ii) ensuring mandate implementation at the strategic, operational and tactical level advance gender equality and reduce the harmful effects of patriarchy, gender norms and roles, and power relations”.²²

Subsequently, the policy mandates that leaders and all staff in the DPO and field missions treat gender equality and WPS as both standalone objectives and integrated components of strategies, plans and activities. It also calls for leaders and all staff to ensure that conflict analysis consider data disaggregated by sex, age and other relevant factors, ensuring that this information informs the implementation of mandates and promotes gender parity among civilian and uniformed personnel.²³

Gender equality and WPS are identified as the overarching goals of the Policy, which provides guidance on how to operationalise these perspectives through a gender-responsive approach throughout the entire mission cycle.²⁴ The Policy is grounded in the four principles of the WPS agenda: participation, protection, prevention and relief and recovery.²⁵ The Policy applies to all substantive areas of the DPO and field missions, including advancing gender parity²⁶, requiring mandatory compliance from “all civilian and uniformed personnel in DPO and field missions”.²⁷

The Policy identifies five guiding principles:

- Accountability: All senior leadership, management, civilian and uniformed personnel are accountable for advancing the principles of gender equality and WPS in peacekeeping operations priorities, functions and work
- Equality and non-discrimination
- Diversity and inclusion
- Full, equal and meaningful participation of women in host countries
- Gender parity and full, equal and meaningful participation of women peacekeepers²⁸

The Policy identifies a set of *strategic requirements to operationalise gender-responsive approaches* across all levels of peacekeeping- strategic, operational, and tactical. These requirements involve adapting to the specific conflict situation and peacekeeping dynamics, addressing the priorities of the host nation, and ensuring alignment with the mission mandate. Successful implementation of the Policy requires gender-responsive leadership, accountability, and engagement of gender expertise across all levels, as

21 Ibid para 2.

22 Ibid para 3.

23 Ibid para 4.

24 Ibid para 5.

25 Ibid para 6.

26 Ibid para 7-8, 12.

27 Ibid para 10.

28 Ibid para 13-17.

well as the use of data driven and evidence-based approaches. Additionally, the policy underscores the importance of enhancing the capacities and knowledge of all personnel concerning WPS and gender-responsive approaches. It also stresses the necessity for adequate resourcing²⁹, and the strengthening of collaboration, coherence, and coordination through the entire mission and the broader UN system.³⁰

The Policy states that “the overall responsibility, authority and accountability for implementing this policy lies with senior leadership in DPO and in field missions, guided by a gender task force consisting of senior managers”.

- *Senior Leadership of DPO and field missions.* The Policy highlights that senior leaders bear the ultimate responsibility for promoting gender equality and WPS. They are expected to institutionalize gender equality within the DPO and field missions by fostering a gender-responsive organizational culture, advocating for gender equality and WPS mandates at the highest levels with member states, host nations, and regional organisations. Senior leaders should also adopt formal and informal accountability mechanisms for implementing this Policy³¹; and take charge of “steering and monitoring institutional change towards gender responsiveness”.³²
- *All civilian and uniformed staff.* All civilian and uniformed personnel are expected to internalise and institutionalise transformative results concerning WPS and gender equality. “They shall first recognize their own gender biases and limitations in advancing gender equality and take necessary steps to improve their knowledge, understanding and action as relevant”.³³ The Policy also emphasises that “Gender responsiveness shall be pursued systematically in all processes.”³⁴

The Policy presents the *gender architecture*, which consists of the Gender Unit in DPO, Gender Affairs units in field missions, Military and Police GENADs, and civilian and uniformed Gender/WPS focal points. Together, these gender architecture actors provide strategic advice to senior leaders, technical assistance, and operational support for the implementation of gender equality and WPS in peacekeeping missions.³⁵ The Gender Unit within DPO and field missions are to coordinate with the Office for Coordination and Shared Services on gender parity matters, as well as with other UN bodies working on gender equality, WPS and related topics to ensure coherence in these efforts. The Policy states that the Gender Unit in field missions will be situated in the Office of the SRSG and Head of Mission, while the military shall be situated in the Office of the Force Commander.³⁶

The responsibilities of the Gender Units in the DPO and field missions include providing advice, guidance and support to senior leaders and all civilian and uniformed units, components, and sections on gender-responsive approach, gender equality, and WPS; operationalise the implementation of this Policy; strengthen the capacity of all DPO and field mission personnel on gender responsiveness, gender equality and WPS; conduct gender-responsive conflict analysis to inform mandate implementation; support the implementation of UN gender parity strategies in field missions; engage in strategic partnerships with relevant actors; and coordinate with military and police gender advisors on gender equality and WPS implementation.³⁷

29 Ibid para 18-23.

30 Ibid para 24.

31 Ibid para 25-28.

32 Ibid para 29.

33 Ibid para 31.

34 Ibid para 33.

35 Ibid para 34.

36 Ibid para 35-37.

37 Ibid para 38-43.

The Policy specifies that the primary *responsibilities of civilian gender/WPS focal points* include liaising and coordinating with the Gender Unit; identifying entry points for the integration of gender; bridging capacity and knowledge gaps regarding gender equality and WPS; and providing data and information on results, progress, and gaps on gender integration. The Policy further states that “All substantive sections and units in DPO and field missions shall appoint Gender/WPS Focal Points to support the implementation of this policy”.³⁸

The Policy notes that the main *responsibility of military GENADs* is to provide strategic advice on gender-responsive measures to the OMA in DPO and to Force Commanders in field missions. This includes integrating a gender perspective in doctrine, policies and strategies; ensuring the consideration and integration of gender analysis and gender data; advancing measures to increase the meaningful participation of military women in peacekeeping; consolidating good practices on gender-responsive measures; fostering partnerships and meaningful engagement with host communities and other stakeholders; strengthening civil–military relations; and conducting training for military personnel on gender-responsive measures.³⁹

The Policy also instructs DPO and field missions to advance gender equality and WPS by establishing strategic partnerships with member states, organisations, host country leaders, and troop and police-contributing nations.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the Policy states that DPO and field missions should ensure adequate resources and budgets for Gender Units, uniformed gender advisers, and WPS focal points.⁴¹

Lastly, the Policy introduces *reporting, monitoring, and evaluation measures* through existing accountability frameworks that provide information for performance monitoring, achievement measurement, and determining accountability to peacekeeping stakeholders under the responsibility of DPO and field missions. This includes various progress reviews by senior leaders in DPO, the development of plans and indicators, and reporting and briefs to bodies such as the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly.⁴²

The Policy contains an Annex 1 that focuses on the Functions of Components, Divisions, Sections and Units.⁴³

2.4 UN DPKO/DFS Guidelines on Integrating a Gender Perspective into the Work of the UN Military in Peacekeeping Operations (2010)

2.4.1 Introduction

The UN *DPKO/DFS Guidelines on Integrating a Gender Perspective into the Work of the UN Military in Peacekeeping Operations* (the Guidelines) were adopted in 2010 by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the UN Department of Field Support. The Guidelines serve as a practical tool to help implementing existing mandates on WPS in the performance of military tasks, aiming to enhance

38 Ibid para 45.

39 Ibid para 46-47.

40 Ibid para 50.

41 Ibid para 53.

42 Ibid para 54-55.

43 Ibid, see p I–VII.

the operational effectiveness of military peacekeeping.⁴⁴ The Guidelines are intended for all military personnel at every level involved in UN peacekeeping missions, including “heads of mission (HOM), heads of military components (HOMC), planners, information analysts, UN military observers, staff officers and contingent commanders” and “guide OMA in its planning and management functions at UN Headquarters”.

2.4.2 Executive summary

The Guidelines outline strategies for integrating a gender perspective into the work of the UN military in peacekeeping operations at the strategic⁴⁵, operational,⁴⁶ and tactical⁴⁷ levels. Throughout all levels, the Guidelines emphasises the value of having a diverse workforce, liaising with national counterparts, considering the perspectives of both men and women, and ensuring the protection of women and girls. They also highlight the significance of providing humanitarian assistance, utilising sex disaggregated data, and leading by example and act as role models and mentors for national counterparts on gender equality, human rights, and a zero-tolerance policy against sexual violence.

2.4.3 Extended Summary

Strategic-Level Military Guidance

The Guidelines outline six gender objectives at the strategic level, each containing key considerations regarding gender in strategic military activities, including:

1. *Strategic Military Guidance and Policy.* The Guidelines emphasises that strategic military guidance and policy should include the relevant principles and objectives of WPS mandates.⁴⁸ Operational plans and strategies for peacekeeping missions must be informed by an analysis of the differential impacts of conflict on women and men. Policy and guidelines development should stress the commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women.⁴⁹
2. *Military Operations Planning.* The Guidelines states that planning processes should provide an overview of the security environment and consult the perspectives of both women and men. Planning should avoid stereotyping and assess the contributions of women and men to peacebuilding efforts. “Military planning activities should also be mindful of the nature of gender relations in the area of operation”, and planners should ensure cooperation with gender specialists.⁵⁰
3. *Military Planning to Enhance Conditions of Service.* The Guidelines assert that when planning for personnel requirements, prioritising measures that foster gender-sensitive work environments is essential.⁵¹
4. *Force Generation.* The Guidelines identify that ensuring the inclusion of female military personnel for all categories of military tasks should be prioritised.⁵²

44 DPKO/DFS Guidelines Integrating a Gender Perspective into the Work of the UN Military in Peacekeeping Operations (2010) p 4.

45 See p 10-17.

46 See p 18-28.

47 See p 29-38.

48 Ibid p 10.

49 Ibid p 11.

50 Ibid p 11f.

51 Ibid p 12f.

52 Ibid p 13.

5. *Monitoring and Reporting.* The Guidelines affirm that monitoring and reporting on military activities in peacekeeping operations should underscore progress in implementing WPS and gender mainstreaming. “The use of sex-disaggregated data in reporting enhances planning processes for military and civilian operations”.⁵³
6. *Operational Advice and Support to Troop-Contributing Countries.* The Guidelines state that operational advice to member states should underline the importance of having a dedicated GFP who can advise contingent commanders on how a gender perspective can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the contingent’s operational tasks.⁵⁴

Operational Level Military Guidance

The Guidelines identify four gender objectives at the operational level. Each objective contains several considerations on gender in operational-level activities, including:

1. *Military Protection Activities.* The Guidelines affirm that operational-level planning for military activities should include guidance enabling tactical-level commanders to address the specific protection challenges faced by women and girls. This planning should involve consultation with gender units and other relevant mission components.⁵⁵ Additionally, the operational planning of humanitarian activities should ensure liaison between military GFPs and women’s organisations in the area of operation.⁵⁶ Peacekeepers should also be reminded of the importance of maintaining the highest standard of professional conduct.⁵⁷
2. *Military Support Activities.* The Guidelines outline that operational planning of military activities in support of DDR programs should involve collaboration with GENADs⁵⁸ and “need to take account of the increasing role played by women and girls as combatants and women associated with fighting forces”.⁵⁹ Additionally, the Guidelines state that “military peacekeepers are increasingly required to provide mentoring, advisory and training support to the military forces of the host country”, providing opportunities to underline principles of gender equality, human rights, international standards, and zero-tolerance to sexual violence.⁶⁰ The Guidelines also affirm that “equal consideration should be given to female and male military personnel with respect to the performance of mission support functions”.⁶¹
3. *Monitoring and Verification Activities.* The Guidelines state that consulting local women can facilitate situational awareness, thereby improving monitoring and verification tasks.⁶² The Guidelines also state that reporting activities should highlight differences in security threats faced by women and men, underline the use of sex-disaggregated data, and involve gender units.⁶³
4. *Military Liaison Activities.* The Guidelines highlight that “the impact of military activities to protect civilian populations can be reinforced and enhanced by liaison with other mission components, including the police, human rights and gender components. Operational planning for

53 Ibid p 13.
 54 Ibid p 14.
 55 Ibid p 18.
 56 Ibid p 19.
 57 Ibid p 20.
 58 Ibid p 20.
 59 Ibid p 20.
 60 Ibid p 21f.
 61 Ibid p 23.
 62 Ibid p 23.
 63 Ibid p 24.

liaison activities should promote coordinated implementation of mandates on WPS.” A military GENAD should be appointed at mission HQ to support mission-wide efforts to implement mandates on WPS.⁶⁴

Tactical Level Military Guidance

The Guidelines identifies six gender objectives for tactical-level tasks. Each objective contains several gender considerations in tactical-level tasks.

- *Patrol Duties.* The Guidelines affirm that patrolling duties provides opportunities for engaging with the local community, which can support information operations. Both women and men should be consulted to ensure a comprehensive understanding of local dynamics.⁶⁵ The local population should also be consulted in planning and identification of routes and schedules in order to improve women’s security. The deployment of mixed teams can foster better interaction between the UN military and the local community.⁶⁶
- *Checkpoints and Roadblock Duties.* The Guidelines emphasise the importance of recognising that women can be both victims and combatants in conflict situations. Interactions between military peacekeepers and the local population must adhere to established UN codes of conduct.⁶⁷
- *Protection Tasks.* The Guidelines state that in areas without police presence, the military is responsible for law enforcement and protection activities, which requires engagement with the local population, including women and girls. In areas with high rates of rape against women and girls, “it is necessary to ensure that the victims are able to approach and request support from their first point of contact in the peacekeeping mission, which may be military personnel”.⁶⁸
- *Security Support Tasks.* The Guidelines outlines that tactical-level commanders are to ensure that the discharge of support tasks includes the implementation of WPS and promotion of gender equality and non-discrimination, in DDR, in reform of national military forces and security services.⁶⁹
- *Monitoring and Verification Tasks.* The Guidelines identifies that monitoring and verification tasks at the tactical level provide an opportunity to consult with the local population to facilitate a comprehensive situational analysis. Furthermore, reporting, monitoring, and verification tasks should highlight the different security threats faced by women and men, and utilise sex disaggregated data to generate a more detailed understanding of the situational environment and appropriate responses and interventions.⁷⁰
- *Military Liaison Tasks.* The Guidelines affirms that liaison activities of military peacekeepers at tactical levels should reinforce operational-level standards for cooperation with mission components, humanitarian partners and local/regional organizations, including women’s organizations. It further stresses that military GFPs at the tactical level shall be appointed to support military GENADs at the operational level, ensure liaison with other focal points, outreach activities to promote women’s participation, and utilise mixed teams of military personnel to expand outreach to the local population.⁷¹

64 Ibid p 25.
 65 Ibid p 29.
 66 Ibid p 30.
 67 Ibid p 31.
 68 Ibid p 31.
 69 Ibid p 33.
 70 Ibid p 33.
 71 Ibid p 35.

In addition to the gender objectives identified at each level, the Guidelines includes checklists for strategic, operational and tactical-level military activities.⁷² The Guidelines contains an Annex (Annex 1) introducing “Sample Generic Terms of Reference for the Military Gender Adviser and Military Gender Focal Points in UN Peacekeeping Missions”⁷³ and Terms and Definitions.⁷⁴

2.5 UN Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy (2018)

2.5.1 Introduction

The UN Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy (the Strategy), adopted by the UN Department of Peace Operations in 2018, builds on the UN System-Wide Gender Parity Strategy, the UNSCRs of the WPS agenda, and UNSCR 2242, which called for an increase in the number of women in uniformed components.⁷⁵ The Strategy aims to ensure “that the uniformed component of United Nations peacekeeping is diverse and inclusive of women, reflecting the communities the United Nations serves”.⁷⁶

2.5.2 Executive summary

The Strategy (2018) addresses the significant gender imbalance in uniformed personnel, wherein only 5% of all Military, Police, and Justice and Corrections Service personnel are female. The Strategy identifies internal and external challenges contributing to this imbalance, as well as the current status and targets for women in peacekeeping. Further, it outlines the identified actions to achieve these targets: creating an enabling environment, targeted recruitment and training, improving communications and outreach, and fostering inclusive leadership and accountability.

2.5.3 Extended Summary

The Strategy applies to seconded uniformed personnel at HQ and in the field, as well as to seconded justice personnel who are civilian/non-uniformed but closely associated with uniformed personnel due to their legal status and similarities in the nomination, selection, deployment, and repatriation processes.⁷⁷

The Strategy identifies several *challenges* and notes that women comprise only 5% of all uniformed Military, Policy, and Justice and Corrections Service Personnel. It identifies both external and internal challenges within the control of the UN Secretariat that contributes to this imbalance.⁷⁸ The DPO has conducted consultations with Member States concerning the external challenges faced by female uniformed personnel in the field. Notable issues include implicit or explicit gender bias, a lack of training and self-development opportunities for women, gendered perceptions that exclude women from national selection processes for peacekeeping, and personal circumstances such as the length of deployment or age of dependents.⁷⁹ The Strategy further states that the DPO faces internal barriers and challenges that hinder the increase of uniformed women in peacekeeping operations. These include proposed funding reductions that disproportionately affect women needing secure accommodation

⁷² Ibid p 15-17, 26-28, 36-38.

⁷³ Ibid p 40.

⁷⁴ Ibid p 43-44.

⁷⁵ UN Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy (2018) para 2.

⁷⁶ Ibid para 1.

⁷⁷ Ibid para 3.

⁷⁸ Ibid para 5.

⁷⁹ Ibid para 6.

or additional protective equipment in the field, unconscious gender bias and unnecessary qualifications in UN prerequisites and job descriptions. Additionally concern about isolation, vulnerability to sexual harassment and exploitation, and inadequate security, accommodation, and facilities in field missions also pose significant challenges for women.⁸⁰

The Strategy outlines the *status and targets* for women in peacekeeping, stating that the organisation “seeks to increase representation of women in UN peacekeeping operations in a sustainable manner, taking into account the turnover of uniformed personnel and the UN’s dependency on member states to increase the number of women in their national military, police and justice and correction services”. It recognises that “the military, police, and justice and corrections components each have strategies and targets⁸¹ based on the size of their components, the nature of their mandate and their particular circumstances”, and that it might take longer for some categories to reach their targets.

Additionally, the Strategy outlines actions to reach targets. These actions include creating an enabling environment for uniformed women personnel in the field and HQ, enhancing recruitment and training efforts, and improving communications and outreach. These initiatives will be complemented by additional measures, specified in the missions’ strategy implementation plans, and promoted by senior leadership.

The Strategy outlines *actions for military components*⁸² across four tiers:

- **Tier I:** Actions currently being implemented-
- **Tier II:** Actions to be implemented by June 2020.
- **Tier III:** Actions that require additional resources to reach targets.
- **Tier IV:** Long-term actions.

Key Areas of Focus include:

- Creating an enabling environment for uniformed women personnel.
- **Tier I:** Updating mechanisms for reporting and addressing sexual harassment, and ensure the availability of women officers’ focal points.⁸³
- **Tier II:** Develop and implement strategies and actions to prevent sexual and other forms of harassment within components and facilitate uniformed women’s networks.⁸⁴
- **Tier III:** Improving camp accommodations and mandatory staff engagement surveys.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Ibid para 7.

⁸¹ The Strategy outlines the status and targets for military components, police components and justice and corrections components, Ibid para 11–15.

⁸² The Strategy also identifies actions for police component and justice and correction components. These are not part of the extended summary in favour of focusing on the military component.

⁸³ Ibid p 7.

⁸⁴ Ibid p 17.

⁸⁵ Ibid p 7.

Recruitment and training.

- **Tier I:** Fill or extend military positions with women if their qualifications are equal or superior to other candidates; ensure women staff officers and military observers with young families can serve for six months instead of twelve; facilitate attendance of women officers at UN and UN Women-funded MO and SO courses.⁸⁶
- **Tier II:** update OMA recruitment processes to be gender-sensitive, increase women’s access to UN-related training, and aligning contracts with the academic school year.
- **Tier III:** “Mobile Mentoring and Training Teams to accompany ETs during pre-deployment training”.
- **Tier IV:** Prioritise, where appropriate, TCCs who demonstrate improvements in female inclusion within their peacekeeping forces.⁸⁷

Communications and outreach.

- **Tier I:** Engage with member states to advocate for the establishment of GENADs and GFPs in TCCs and PCCs.⁸⁸
- **Tier II:** OMA coordinating with military components in missions on gender strategy and action plans, and provide training on overt and unconscious gender bias to staff involved in recruiting.⁸⁹
- **Tier III:** Increase outreach to military women worldwide.⁹⁰

Leadership and Accountability. The Strategy affirms that “the Military Adviser, Police Adviser and the Chief of the Justice and Corrections Service will be held accountable by the USG of DPO through their chains of command”. The corresponding senior management in UNHQ and field missions will have gender-related goals and actions related to their component included in their performance compacts, and “all components’ leadership will report twice a year to the USG DPO on progress towards the target”.⁹¹ Furthermore, the Strategy confirms that “if T/PCCs do not meet the gender targets and cannot demonstrate actions made to reach the military and police targets, the UN will where possible reallocate posts to T/PCCs willing and able to deploy more qualified female officers and who are meeting their individual targets.”⁹²

Lastly, the Strategy introduces implementation plans “for the military, police and justice and corrections will be drawn up. A mechanism within each component will be established to regularly review progress and suggest amendments. The strategy and implementation plans are living documents and will continue to be refined going forward.”⁹³

⁸⁶ Ibid p 8.

⁸⁷ Ibid p 8.

⁸⁸ Ibid p 10f.

⁸⁹ Ibid p 11.

⁹⁰ Ibid p 11.

⁹¹ Ibid para 18.

⁹² Ibid para 20.

⁹³ Ibid para 21.

2.6 UN Field Missions Policy on Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (2020)

2.6.1 Introduction

The UN Field Missions Policy on Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (the Policy) was approved in 2020 by the UN DPO, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. The purpose of this Policy is to institutionalise the approach and roles of UN field missions in preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). It includes principles and guidelines that all UN personnel must abide by throughout their work. The Policy is complemented by the Handbook for UN Field Missions on Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (2020).

2.6.2 Executive summary

The Policy endorses six guiding principles for efforts to prevent and respond to CRSV: do no harm, confidentiality, informed consent, gender sensitivity, a victim/survivor-centred approach, and the best interest of the child. The Policy also outlines five key objectives:

- Prevention and protection of individuals at risk of CRSV
- Ending impunity for CRSV
- Raising awareness and condemnation of CRSV
- Enhancing the capacity of national actors to address CRSV
- Empowering survivors and victims through political processes and other forms of support.

Furthermore, the Policy specifies the roles and responsibilities of various components and units within field missions.

2.6.3 Extended Summary

The Policy draws upon the overarching frameworks of peace and security, the WPS agenda, and other relevant UNSC resolutions, as well as IHL, ICL and IHRL.⁹⁴ It aims to institutionalise the approach and role of the UN in preventing and responding to CRSV at HQ and field levels across all military levels: strategic, operational and tactical. Thus, the Policy within the UN applies “to all personnel, from Senior Mission Leadership to Senior Mission Management and everyone under their authority, whether uniformed or civilian, at a strategic, planning, policy or operational level.”⁹⁵ The Policy also emphasises the responsibility of Member States to integrate the Policy into pre-deployment training and ensure its implementation in missions.⁹⁶

The Policy underscores that *CRSV is a serious violation of IHL, ICL, IHRL and refugee law*. “In addition to invoking States’ human rights obligations to prevent CRSV and prosecute its perpetrators,

⁹⁴ UN Policy Field Missions Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (2020) para 1-2.

⁹⁵ Ibid para 3.

⁹⁶ Ibid para 4-5.

field missions should consistently frame, sexual violence committed by parties to an armed conflict as a breach of IHL and a war crime. If committed as part of a systematic or widespread attack, it also amounts to a crime against humanity; and it may be a constituent element of genocide”.⁹⁷

Furthermore, the Policy highlights that women and girls are predominantly affected by CRSV, which is connected to patterns of gender inequality and discrimination predating the conflict. However, men and boys can also be victims and survivors of CRSV, facing victimisation and stigmatisation due to “gendered stereotypes linked to masculinity, homophobia, social taboos and biased legal frameworks”.⁹⁸ CRSV is recognised as a form of SGBV and is a component of the WPS agenda, constituting “one of the most widespread and deep-rooted barriers to achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment”. Consequently, field missions must accelerate their efforts towards gender equality and women empowerment.⁹⁹ The UNSC has mandated UN field missions to always prevent and respond to CRSV and to establish monitoring, analysis, and reporting arrangements (MARA).¹⁰⁰ The Policy recognises that CRSV can be a tactic of war or terrorism, necessitating that UN field missions incorporate CRSV considerations into their relevant activities and collaborate with host governments.¹⁰¹

The Policy recognises “CRSV as a women, peace and security issue that also raises serious concerns from human rights, gender equality, child protection and protection of civilians’ perspectives as well as from the standpoint of political and mediation engagements by the UN.”¹⁰² Broadly, the Policy relies on *six guiding principles*:¹⁰³

1. *Do no harm.* UN personnel should exercise good judgment, caution, and sensitivity in all circumstances and at all times. When interacting with survivors, families, and witnesses affected by CRSV, UN personnel are obliged to avoid putting their lives, physical and psychological safety, freedom, and well-being at further risk.¹⁰⁴
2. *Confidentiality.* Personally identifiable information related to incidents of CRSV should be treated as confidential, with safe recording, storage, and handling of information to protect survivors, families, and communities affected by CRSV.¹⁰⁵
3. *Informed consent.* Interviewed survivors, witnesses, or others must give informed consent for the UN to use and/or share their information. Survivors should be fully informed of all steps of the process and the possible outcomes.¹⁰⁶
4. *Gender sensitivity.* All personnel should use respectful and non-discriminatory language, considering the different experiences of women, men, girls, and boys in all their interactions.¹⁰⁷
5. *Victim/survivor-centred approach.* The self-identified needs, rights, and wishes of survivors should be respected and prioritised in all efforts related to preventing and responding to CRSV.¹⁰⁸
6. *Best interest of the child.* In all actions and decisions concerning children, the best interest of the child shall be the primary consideration.¹⁰⁹

97 Ibid para 7.
 98 Ibid para 12.
 99 Ibid para 13.
 100 Ibid para 10.
 101 Ibid para 14.
 102 Ibid para 16.
 103 Ibid.
 104 Ibid para 16(i).
 105 Ibid para 16(ii).
 106 Ibid para 16(iii).
 107 Ibid para 16(iv).
 108 Ibid para 16(v).
 109 Ibid para 16(vi).

The Policy identifies five priority objectives for field missions (PEACE) regarding CRSV.

1. *Prevention and protection* of persons facing the risk of CRSV. Field missions should work with local communities, including women’s groups and conflict parties, to identify risks of CRSV, establish early warning indicators, and prioritise preventive actions. Early warning indicators should be adjusted to local contexts and considered in planning and response.¹¹⁰
2. *Ending impunity* for CRSV. Field missions should advocate for and support safe and effective remedies, credible investigations and prosecutions of CRSV cases. They must also ensure reparations for survivors, taking into consideration a victim and survivor-centred approach.¹¹¹
3. *Awareness and condemnation* of CRSV. Field missions should raise society’s awareness of CRSV and actively condemn its perpetration. They must work to cease stigmatisation of survivors and victims, as well as cease any culture of CRSV acceptance. In missions where CRSV is a concern, MARA should be established.¹¹²
4. *Capacity of national actors* to effectively address CRSV. Under international law, states hold the primary responsibility to prevent and respond to CRSV, protect individuals, and ensure accountability and effective remedies. Within mandates, UN missions should work closely with national justice, law enforcement and military authorities. Their goal should be to support national strategies and frameworks on CRSV prevention and response, ensuring that the implementation of such mechanisms is gender-sensitive and includes provisions for supporting survivors and offering legal aid to the accused. Additionally, field missions should support conflict parties in preventing and responding to CRSV.¹¹³
5. *Empowerment of survivors and victims’* through political processes and referral for support. Field missions should seek to ensure that CRSV is addressed at all stages of peace processes. They must also facilitate referrals for victims and survivors to relevant actors who can provide support and protection, including medical, psychosocial, legal, and economic assistance.¹¹⁴

The Policy details various *roles and responsibilities in preventing and responding to CRSV*, including the following:

- The Head of mission holds the overall responsibility for preventing and responding to CRSV, ensuring that Mission’s strategies, planning, and operations incorporate CRSV prevention and response at every stage, along with appropriate reporting.¹¹⁵
- The DSRSG/P and DSRSG/RC/HC shall cooperate closely to strengthen collaboration and coordination between the mission pillars to prevent and respond to CRSV effectively.¹¹⁶
- Women’s Protection Advisers are responsible for implementing the mandate for CRSV protection. This includes advising on incorporating and mainstreaming CRSV mandates, providing overall guidance across all relevant mission components regarding CRSV prevention and response, fulfilling report obligations, and engaging in dialogue with conflict parties concerning their commitments to prevent and respond to CRSV.¹¹⁷
- Human rights components lead the mission investigations, monitoring, and reporting on CRSV. They are also responsible for mainstreaming CRSV into other fields of work, such as

110 Ibid para 17(i).
 111 Ibid para 17(ii).
 112 Ibid para 17(iii).
 113 Ibid para 17(iv-v).
 114 Ibid para 17(vi).
 115 Ibid para 20.
 116 Ibid para 21.
 117 Ibid para 22(i, ii, iv, v).

advocacy aimed at States, conflict parties, and civil society to ensure access to justice, effective criminal investigations, effective remedies or reparations for survivors.¹¹⁸

- Missions are expected to produce activity-based reports that include information on mission's efforts to prevent and respond to CRSV, as well as trends and patterns identified through MARA. Components should streamline data collection related to CRSV.¹¹⁹
- The Political and Civil Affairs Unit should inform local, national, and regional stakeholders about the CRSV framework, ensuring that CRSV considerations are included in all mission efforts.¹²⁰
- Gender units should provide support to WPAs in strengthening women's participation, representation, and empowerment.¹²¹
- The justice and correction components should seek to promote, support, and facilitate criminal accountability for CRSV. They must support national criminal justice authorities, ensure the protection of survivors and witnesses, support the enactment of laws to prevent and address CRSV, "and coordinate international support and assistance to ensure criminal accountability for CRSV."¹²²
- Public information components should develop easily understandable and accessible messages and outreach targeting local communities, leaders, women's groups, youth, and religious communities. This information should include condemnation of CRSV, details about accessible assistance and remedies, recognition of efforts by government and non-state actors on CRSV issues, and the role of the community and society in combating CRSV.¹²³
- The Protection of Civilian Advisers "should ensure that missions integrate CRSV concerns into the broader mission efforts to protect civilians from violations of international human rights and humanitarian law".¹²⁴
- Child Protection Advisers "should cooperate closely with SWPAs to address CRSV".¹²⁵
- Joint Cooperation Centres shall ensure that issues of rape and sexual violence are included and addressed at the operational level. They should review reports and conduct analyses and reports on sexual violence and CRSV.¹²⁶
- Joint Mission Analysis Centres should provide situational analyses and threat assessments, integrating "emerging patterns of attacks and early warning indicators regarding the use of sexual violence in conflict as well as information regarding parties to armed conflict that are credibly suspected of committing CRSV". This information should "inform action by the military and police components and civilian protection actors to inter alia prevent and respond to CRSV".¹²⁷
- The Head of office should engage in dialogue with local authorities, community leaders, civil society actors, women's groups, parties to the conflict, and UN agencies to prevent and respond to CRSV.¹²⁸

118 Ibid para 23.

119 Ibid para 24.

120 Ibid para 26.

121 Ibid para 27.

122 Ibid para 28.

123 Ibid para 31.

124 Ibid para 32.

125 Ibid para 33.

126 Ibid para 34.

127 Ibid para 35.

128 Ibid para 37.

- Uniformed components should collaborate with national counterparts to protect civilians, conduct investigations, gather information relevant to CRSV, and assist in creating safe environments based on the mission's mandate and the needs of the host state. This can be achieved through "effective patrols, community-oriented policing, intelligence-led policing, peer-to-peer advocacy on documented concerns, and support to effective national security sector reform, including with regard to internal oversight and accountability mechanisms".¹²⁹ The deployment of female military and police personnel across all work categories throughout the mission should be prioritised. All planning processes should mainstream CRSV concerns and adopt a gender-sensitive approach that enables the meaningful participation of women and girls.¹³⁰ Police and military personnel should be trained on CRSV.¹³¹
- Military components should liaise with the SWPA, HRC, and/or external actors to integrate a focus on CRSV into the analysis, planning, and conduct of operations, as well as actions to prevent and respond to CRSV.¹³² Military components should advocate with State and non-State actors to prevent and end the use of CRSV and engage with other mission entities to share information.¹³³ They should prioritise support to entities addressing CRSV issues¹³⁴ and provide assistance and support to CRSV survivors/victims in areas lacking humanitarian aid. Military components should acquire information and training on CRSV,¹³⁵ and uniformed personnel should liaise with national and international military forces to support the prevention, response, and accountability of CRSV.¹³⁶

The Policy highlights that partnerships can be sought with humanitarian country teams¹³⁷, Security Council mandated infrastructure on CRSV (such as the SRSG-SVC, WPAs)¹³⁸, regional¹³⁹ or international organisations, non-governmental organisations or independent state bodies.¹⁴⁰ The Policy affirms that UN HQ shall provide leadership for the implementation of the Policy, while the HOM shall maintain overall management and oversight, ensuring that preventing and responding to CRSV remains a priority across the mission's work.¹⁴¹

2.7 UN Secretary-General Bulletin on Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (2003)

2.7.1 Introduction

The UN Secretary-General Bulletin on Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (the Bulletin) was adopted in 2003. Its purpose is to prevent and address cases of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (SEA). The Bulletin outlines the expected standards of conduct for UN

129 Ibid para 38.

130 Ibid para 40.

131 Ibid para 41.

132 Ibid para 45.

133 Ibid para 46.

134 Ibid para 47.

135 Ibid para 48.

136 Ibid para 49.

137 Ibid para 53.

138 Ibid para 54.

139 Ibid para 56.

140 Ibid para 57.

141 Ibid para 58-59.

personnel and emphasises a zero-tolerance policy against SEA.¹⁴² While the Bulletin applies to UN staff members,¹⁴³ the definitions of SEA are also included in the framework that applies to other UN personnel who are not UN staff members.

2.7.2 Executive summary

The UN Bulletin contains standards for preventing and addressing SEA. It primarily provides definitions of SEA, prohibitions of SEA, and outlines responsibilities of heads of departments, offices, and missions.

2.7.3 Extended Summary

The Bulletin states that forces conducting operations under UN command and control are prohibited from committing sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). It emphasises a specific duty owed towards women and children,¹⁴⁴ underlining that SEA has always been unacceptable and prohibited conduct within the UN.¹⁴⁵ The Bulletin defines sexual exploitation and sexual abuse,¹⁴⁶ clarifying that SEA is universally recognised as a violation of international law.¹⁴⁷

The Bulletin outlines several *standards to protect* vulnerable populations, “especially women and children”, including:

- SEA are acts of serious misconduct and are grounds for disciplinary measures, including summary dismissal.
- Sexual activity with children (individuals under the age of 18) is strictly prohibited, regardless of local age of majority or consent. A mistaken belief regarding a child’s age is not a valid defence.
- The “exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour, is prohibited”.
- “Sexual relationships between UN staff and beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics, undermine the credibility and integrity of the work of the UN and are strongly discouraged”.
- “Where a UN staff member develops concerns or suspicions regarding SEA by a fellow worker, he or she must report such concerns via established reporting mechanisms”.
- “UN staff are obliged to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and sexual abuse”.¹⁴⁸

The Bulletin highlights that the outlined standards are not exhaustive, and other forms of SEA “may be grounds for administrative action or disciplinary measures, including summary dismissal, pursuant to the UN Staff Regulations and Rules”.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴² UN Zero Tolerance Policy outlined in the Secretary-Generals bulletin on Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (2003), p 1.

¹⁴³ Ibid section 2.1.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid section 2.2.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid section 2.1.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid Section 1.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid section 3.1.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid section 3.2.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid section 3.3.

Additionally, the Bulletin describes the responsibilities of Heads of Departments, Offices and Missions,¹⁵⁰ including:

- Creating and maintaining an environment that prevents SEA and informing staff about the content of the Zero Tolerance Policy;
- Taking the appropriate action in cases where there is reason to believe that the above-promulgated standards of conduct have been violated.
- Appointing an official to serve as a focal point for receiving reports on cases of SEA. In missions, both staff and the local population shall be informed of the existence of the focal point, which must handle reports of SEA in a confidential manner.¹⁵¹

The Bulletin recognises that “if, after proper investigation, there is evidence to support allegations of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse, these cases may, upon consultation with the Office of Legal Affairs, be referred to national authorities for criminal prosecution.”¹⁵² The Bulletin also affirms that in cooperative arrangements with non-UN entities or individuals, UN officials shall inform those entities of the standards of conduct and receive a written undertaking that the standards are accepted.¹⁵³

2.8 UN Policy: the Protection of Civilians in UN Peacekeeping (2019)

2.8.1 Introduction

The UN *Policy on the Protection of Civilians in UN Peacekeeping Operations* (the Policy) was adopted in 2019 by the UN Department of Peace Operations. The Policy aims to provide a conceptual framework, guiding principles, and key considerations for the implementation of the protection of civilians (PoC) mandate. It seeks to clarify and operationalise the PoC, as mandated by the UNSC, by promoting a comprehensive and integrated approach. The Policy defines the roles and expectations of relevant mission components to ensure the full integration of PoC in mission planning and activities.¹⁵⁴ This Policy supersedes previous UN steering documents on PoC¹⁵⁵ and is complemented by the “Protection of Civilians in UN Peacekeeping Handbook” (2020).

2.8.2 Executive summary

The Policy outlines guiding principles and considerations for implementing PoC mandates. It emphasises the connection between PoC and other fields of UN peacekeeping work, including CRSV, CAAC, and the protection and promotion of human rights and the rule of law. The Policy also acknowledges that while PoC mandates are often mission-specific, three tiers of PoC action are implemented across four phases of PoC throughout mission cycles. Significantly, the Policy highlights the importance of integrating a gender perspective in PoC activities and the interlinkages between PoC, WPS, and gender.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid section 4.

¹⁵¹ Ibid section 4.1-4.3.

¹⁵² Ibid section 5.

¹⁵³ Ibid section 6.

¹⁵⁴ Protection of Civilians in UN Peacekeeping Operations Policy (2019) para 1, 7, 9.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid para 10.

2.8.3 Extended Summary

The Policy applies to all UN personnel, both civilian and military, working in UN peacekeeping operations with the mandate to protect civilians.¹⁵⁶ It recognises that the PoC mandate in these operations often intersects with other mandated tasks, including preventing CRSV, promoting and protecting human rights, and upholding the rule of law.¹⁵⁷

The Policy advocates for consistency with UNSCRs on PoC¹⁵⁸ and recommends implementing the following:

- A *comprehensive approach* to PoC, that “takes into account and addresses the range of factors which influence and underpin threats to civilians in both the short-and long-term, including political, security and economic factors”, and
- An *integrated approach* to PoC, which requires integrated planning and analysis, as well as “combined efforts of all mission components: civilian, police and military, and where relevant and appropriate, coordination with other UN actors.”¹⁵⁹

The Policy highlights that civilians represent the vast majority of casualties during armed conflict and that protecting those most vulnerable in conflict-affected situations is a priority task of peacekeeping operations.¹⁶⁰ The Policy notes that peacekeeping mandates and PoC efforts occur alongside other UN efforts, including mandates to protect and promote respect for human rights, addressing issues related to children and armed conflict (CAAC), preventing CRSV, and the WPS agenda.¹⁶¹

The Policy highlights that there is no UN-wide definition of PoC. Since PoC mandates are mission-specific, the language, specific tasks, and approaches may vary between missions.¹⁶² However, within UN peacekeeping, the PoC mandate is defined “without prejudice to the primary responsibility of the host state, integrated and coordinated activities by all civilian and uniformed mission components to prevent, deter or respond to threats of physical violence against civilians within the mission’s capabilities and areas of deployment through the use of all necessary means, up to and including deadly force.”¹⁶³ The Policy provides definitions of ‘civilian’¹⁶⁴, ‘threats of physical violence against civilians’¹⁶⁵, ‘within capabilities’¹⁶⁶ and ‘within areas of deployment’.¹⁶⁷

Furthermore, the Policy highlights that UN forces must comply with applicable IHL, including the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution. The obligations under IHL are independent of the PoC mandate.¹⁶⁸ Additionally, the Policy reiterates that UNSCRs on PoC have stressed the need to address root causes of conflict, including gender inequality, to foster long-term protection of civilians.¹⁶⁹

156 Ibid para 2.
 157 Ibid para 4.
 158 Ibid para 7.
 159 Ibid para 8.
 160 Ibid para 12. See para 12-15.
 161 Ibid para 15.
 162 Ibid para 16f.
 163 Ibid para 18.
 164 Ibid para 21.
 165 Ibid para 23.
 166 Ibid para 24.
 167 Ibid para 25.
 168 Ibid para 22.
 169 Ibid para 13f.

The Policy outlines a set of *guiding principles*, emphasising that the PoC mandate is guided by legal and practical principles rooted in international law and the UN Charter.¹⁷⁰ These principles include:

- *Grounded in international law.* PoC mandates must be implemented in accordance with the principles of IHL, IHRL, international refugee law, and related standards.¹⁷¹
- *Priority mandate.* The PoC must be prioritised in decisions regarding the allocation and use of available resources and capabilities.¹⁷²
- *Host state has primary responsibility.* The host state holds the primary responsibility for protect civilians within its territory. The PoC mandates of missions do not replace, affect, or limit this responsibility.¹⁷³
- *Under effective leadership, command and control.* “Senior leaders in missions and UN HQs are ultimately accountable for the implementation of the PoC mandate and must set the strategic direction and ensure accountability for its effective delivery.”¹⁷⁴
- *Active duty to protect.* “All mission components must work to prevent, pre-empt and respond to threats to civilians, not just react to attacks.”¹⁷⁵
- *Whole-of-mission activity.* All mission components must mainstream and prioritise protection activities in their work plans, activities, training, and monitoring and evaluation processes.¹⁷⁶
- *Coordinated approach.* Given the variety of actors involved in PoC, “peacekeeping operations must take into account the comparative advantage, optimal positioning and appropriate modes of engagement vis-à-vis local, national, regional and international protection actors, and systematically share information with such actors as appropriate.”¹⁷⁷
- *Do no harm.* “All mission components must be mindful in their activities and engagement with individuals and communities not to expose civilians to risk or to cause harm”. SEA is strictly prohibited.¹⁷⁸
- *In cooperation with humanitarian and development actors and in respect of humanitarian principles.* The Policy recognises the importance of close and systematic coordination and information sharing with NGOs and humanitarian and development agencies.¹⁷⁹
- *Tailored, community-based approach.* “Actions, plans and programs to protect civilians must always be informed by consultation with the local community.”¹⁸⁰
- *Meaningful integration of WPS priorities.* “PoC and the WPS agenda are mutually reinforcing. PoC must be undertaken with a gender perspective, which reflects the intersectionality between gender and protection, and which considers gender-based differences in status and power and how they shape both the immediate protection needs and long-term interests of women and men, girls and boys. This includes how gender inequality and discrimination impact threats to civilians and how participation and empowerment can address those threats. Gender analysis

170 Ibid para 26.
 171 Ibid para 27.
 172 Ibid para 28.
 173 Ibid para 29.
 174 Ibid para 31.
 175 Ibid para 32.
 176 Ibid para 33.
 177 Ibid para 34.
 178 Ibid para 35.
 179 Ibid para 36.
 180 Ibid para 37.

and considerations must be included across all three tiers of the mission's PoC initiatives and in the mission PoC strategy.¹⁸¹

- Undertaken with mainstreamed child protection concerns.¹⁸² Child protection considerations must be embedded within all PoC efforts.

The Policy introduces the operational concept of PoC within Peacekeeping operations. These operations, which have PoC mandate, have a range of instruments and approaches at their disposal, categorised in three tiers:

- **Tier I:** Protection through dialogue and engagement.
- **Tier II:** Provision of physical protection.
- **Tier III:** Establishment of a protective environment.

The implementation of the PoC mandate occurs at strategic, operational and tactical levels, with all levels involved in each tier.¹⁸³ PoC efforts require actions that consider both short- and long-term perspectives based on an analysis of the environment, conflict phases, the mission's lifecycle, and the nature of the threat. The Policy states that the strategic approach to PoC and the three tiers are implemented along four phases: prevention (longer term), pre-emption (short term), response (short term), and consolidation (longer term).¹⁸⁴ The Policy specifies that:

- **Tier I:** Involves active, structured, and regular dialogue with perpetrators or potential perpetrators of violence against civilians. These include mediation, advocacy, strategic communication, and reporting on human rights.¹⁸⁵
- **Tier II:** “encompasses activities by all mission components to physically protect civilians, whether through protective presence, interposition, the threat or use of force, or facilitating safe passage or refuge.”¹⁸⁶
- **Tier III:** Focuses on activities “designed with committed resources for peacebuilding and conflict prevention/resolution objectives and help create a protective environment for civilians, prevent the (re-)emergence of threats of physical violence, support the legitimacy of the host state and its capacity to protect civilians and support the (re-)establishment of the rule of law and criminal justice chain.”¹⁸⁷ Many Tier III activities are conducted in support of host state authorities, emphasising their responsibility to protect civilians, including security sector reform and capacity building in areas such as legal and policy frameworks, human rights, accountability mechanisms, democratic governance, engagement with stakeholders and the maintenance of public order and safety, in line with the rule of law and international human rights law.¹⁸⁸

181 Ibid para 38.

182 Ibid para 39.

183 Ibid para 40.

184 Ibid para 41.

185 Ibid para 43.

186 Ibid para 54.

187 Ibid para 71.

188 Ibid para 74.

Regarding the implementation of PoC mandates, the Policy identifies that the “PoC analysis and planning is a shared responsibility within the mission under the authority and guidance of mission leadership. It requires structured and regular information sharing and joint assessment and planning of activities and actions among civilian and uniformed components.”¹⁸⁹

The Policy details several mission requirements for implementing the PoC mandate, including establishing structured and regular information-sharing and early warning mechanisms at tactical levels. It emphasises the importance of involving community members, including women¹⁹⁰ and incorporating gender and age-specific considerations in PoC plans, policies, analyses, and reports, as well as ensuring women's full participation in decision-making processes¹⁹¹.

Annex A of the Policy fully describes the roles and responsibilities of all personnel involved in a PoC mandate.¹⁹²

The Policy outlines that the responsibility and accountability for the effective implementation of mandates extends throughout the Organisation, from the Secretariat and Secretary General to Heads of Mission and Senior Leaders, who can further delegate these responsibilities.¹⁹³ The Policy highlights that “the strategic and operational plans of peacekeeping missions with a PoC mandate shall reflect clear objectives, expected accomplishments, performance indicators and actions with defined responsibilities, towards its implementation.”¹⁹⁴ It also affirms that “there should be continuous learning on PoC, including through regular after-action reviews, lessons learnt assessments and end of assignment reports of senior management.”¹⁹⁵

The Policy also includes subchapters on Terms and Definitions¹⁹⁶ and references to other documents.¹⁹⁷

189 Ibid para 78.

190 Ibid para 81.

191 Ibid para 82.

192 Ibid para 87; Ibid Annex, p 25-35.

193 Ibid para 90.

194 Ibid para 89.

195 Ibid para 95.

196 Ibid p 21, Chapter F.

197 Ibid p 21, Chapter F.

2.9 Overview Development of the WPS Agenda within the UN

The UN is an international organisation whose primary purpose includes maintaining international peace and security, and achieving international cooperation in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms, without any distinction, such as race, sex, language, religion or other factors of diversity.

The adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 was ground-breaking in recognising women's participation and gender equality as key for the maintenance of international peace and security. UNSCR 1325 initiated the WPS agenda, which currently consists of ten Security Council resolutions. The WPS agenda is widely recognised for its focus on four pillars:

1. The participation of women in decision-making, conflict resolution, and peace negotiations.
2. The protection of women and girls from gender-based violence.
3. The prevention of conflict and violence against women.
4. The advancement of gender-equal relief and recovery measures.

The WPS agenda has significantly influenced nations and organisations by shaping frameworks and approaches to peace and security.¹⁹⁸

Multiple bodies and departments within the UN work to implement gender-related guidance for military mandates, with the primary responsibility resting with the UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO). Documents produced by the UN DPO include policies on gender-responsive peacekeeping, protection of civilians, and preventing and responding to CRSV. They also include guidelines for integrating a gender perspective into the work of the UN military in peacekeeping operations, a strategy for achieving gender parity, and a bulletin on measures to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse. The scope of these documents varies based on their character and intended purpose.

For instance, the UN DPKO/DFS¹⁹⁹ Guidelines (2010), directed towards the UN military in peacekeeping operations, outline roles and responsibilities at strategic, operational, and tactical levels. In contrast, the UN Policy on Gender Responsive UN Peacekeeping Operations, the UN Field Missions Policy on Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, and the UN Policy on the Protection of Civilians in UN Peacekeeping apply to military, police, and civilian peacekeeping personnel alike. The goal of the UN Policy on Gender-Responsive UN Peacekeeping Operations is to ensure that all work conducted by the DPKO and DFS is gender-responsive, requiring all staff to integrate gender perspectives in their daily work in line with gender equality and WPS principles. This Policy aims to enhance the operational effectiveness and efficiency of peacekeeping operations by responding to the different needs, concerns, and contributions of both women and men.

Throughout the guiding documents outlined in this Overview, several common themes emerge. The significance of education and training is broadly emphasised. Most documents refer to the WPS agenda and international law, stressing the importance of compliance with IHL and IHRL. Moreover, gender inequality is recognised as a root cause or contributing factor to instability and conflict, with a survivor- and victim-centred approach frequently highlighted. The consideration of intersectionality and other diversity factors is acknowledged in the UN Policy on Gender Responsive UN Peacekeeping Operations (2018) and the UN Policy on the Protection of Civilians in UN Peacekeeping Operations (2019). Another recurring theme is the emphasis on considering gender biases and stereotypes, along with the need to clarify how policies apply to all personnel while outlining specific responsibilities for certain roles and leadership levels.

¹⁹⁸ The UNSCRs of the WPS agenda are not included in this tool. For more information on the military's role in implementing the UNSCRs of the WPS agenda, see NCGM 'A Military Guide to the UNSCRs on Women Peace and Security' (2020).

¹⁹⁹ DPKO is the Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DFS is the Department of Field Support.

2.10 Related documents

As mentioned in the introduction to this publication, the organisational frameworks concerning the WPS agenda and gender-related topics extend beyond what is covered in this tool. Below is a non-exhaustive list of additional UN resources to support users of this tool.

The Women, Peace and Security Agenda:

- UNSCR 1325 (2000)
- UNSCR 1820 (2008)
- UNSCR 1888 (2009)
- UNSCR 1889 (2009)
- UNSCR 1960 (2010)
- UNSCR 2106 (2013)
- UNSCR 2122 (2013)
- UNSCR 2242 (2015)
- UNSCR 2467 (2019)
- UNSCR 2493 (2019)
- UNSCR 1894 on Protection of Civilians (2009)
- UNSCR 2272 on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (2016)
- UN DPPA Women, Peace and Security Policy (2019)
- This Policy is complementary to the UN Policy on Gender Responsive Peacekeeping in UN Peacekeeping Operations.
- UN Gender Equality and Women, Peace and Security Resource Package (2020)
- Report of the Independent High-Level Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO-report) (2015)
- UN Report 'Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers: We need to change the way we are doing business' (The Cruz-report) (2017)
- UN Handbook on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (2020)
- UN Handbook on Protection of Civilians (2020)
- DPKO/DFS/DPA Policy on Child Protection in UN Peace Operations (2017)
- DPKO/OHCHR Policy on Human Rights in UN Peace Operations and Political Mission (2011)
- UN Action for Peacekeeping (A4P): Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping Operations (2018)
- UN Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+) (2021)
- UN Security Council Shared Commitments on WPS (2021)

3 North-Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)

NATO, established in 1949 through the Washington Treaty, is a military and political alliance currently comprising 32 allied nations.²⁰⁰ The authority of the Washington Treaty is rooted in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, which reaffirms the inherent right of independent states to engage in individual or collective defence.²⁰¹

NATO is built on the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law, focusing on three core tasks: deterrence and defence, crisis management, and cooperative security.²⁰² The primary purpose of NATO is to ensure the freedom and security of its member nations through both political and military means.²⁰³

In 2007, NATO developed its first WPS Policy, with the latest update in 2024. The 2024 WPS Policy sets out four strategic objectives in the Alliance's work on WPS: gender-responsive leadership and accountability; participation; prevention; and protection. Since 2022, NATO's commitment to the WPS Agenda is emphasised in the Alliance's Strategic Concept.²⁰⁴

3.1 Definitions

The following definitions are outlined in the respective guiding documents and are not necessarily officially adopted by the organisation or applicable department. When a definition is declared in the NATO Terminology Database, it serves as the standardised NATO definition.

- Gender
- Gender equality
- Gender analysis
- Gender perspective
- Gender mainstreaming
- Conflict-related sexual violence
- Sexual exploitation and abuse
- Sexual Harassment

²⁰⁰ NATO, 'What is NATO?', <https://www.nato.int/en/what-is-nato>, accessed 12 March 2026.

²⁰¹ NATO, 'Founding treaty', <https://www.nato.int/en/about-us/organization/founding-treaty> accessed 12 March 2026.

²⁰² NATO, 'The North Atlantic Treaty', <https://www.nato.int/en/about-us/official-texts-and-resources/official-texts/1949/04/04/the-north-atlantic-treaty> accessed 12 March 2026.

²⁰³ Ibid. 200

²⁰⁴ NATO 'Women, Peace and Security', <https://www.nato.int/en/what-we-do/wider-activities/women-peace-and-security>, accessed 12 March 2026.

GENDER:

“refers to the social attributes associated with being male and female learned through socialisation and determines a person’s position and value in a given context, including in the relationships between men, women, boys and girls, as well as the relations between women and those between men.”²⁰⁵

“gender refers to the social differences and relations between women and men, which are learned through socialization and determine a person’s position and value in a given context”²⁰⁶

GENDER EQUALITY:

“the state in which there are equal rights, responsibilities, opportunities and access for men, women, boys and girls”²⁰⁷

GENDER ANALYSIS:

“the systematic gathering and examination of information on gender differences and on social relations between men and women in order to identify and understand inequities based on gender”²⁰⁸

GENDER PERSPECTIVE:

“The ability to detect if and when men, women, boys and girls are being affected differently by a situation due to their gender.”²⁰⁹

Refers to “the consideration of gender-based differences between women and men as reflected in their social roles and interactions, in the distribution of power and the access to resources”²¹⁰

205 NATO Bi-SC Directive 40-1 (rev 2) (2017) p 5; NATOTerm Database, record accessed 15 August 2023
 206 NATO Bi-SC Directive 40-1 (rev 3) (2021) p 5.
 207 NATO Bi-SC Directive 40-1 (rev 3) (2021) p 5f; NATOTerm Database accessed 15 August 2023 https://www.act.nato.int/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Bi-SCD_040-001.pdf
 208 NATO Bi-SC Directive 40-1 (rev 3) (2021) p 5; NATOTerm Database accessed 27 January 2023.
 209 NATOTerm Database accessed 15 August 2023.
 210 NATO Bi-SC Directive 40-1 (rev 3) (2021) p 5.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING:

“a strategy used to achieve gender equality by assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, in all areas and at all levels, in order to assure that the concerns and experiences of both sexes are taken into account”²¹¹

CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE:

“CRSV relates to sexual violence committed by personnel (armed forces or civilians) other than NATO forces, against civilians or military forces. It is often used as a strategy of warfare.”²¹² In addition, the NATO Policy on Preventing and Responding to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse states that: “rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, forced sterilization, forced marriage and any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, girls or boys that is directly or indirectly linked to a conflict”.²¹³

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE:

“SEA relates to sexual exploitation and abuse committed by NATO personnel against local population”²¹⁴, in addition, the NATO Policy on Preventing and Responding to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse states that: “Sexual exploitation is any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. Acts that constitute sexual exploitation include, but are not limited to, the exchange of money, goods or other commodities and or services, employment or any exchange of assistance that is due to the local population in exchange for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour. All such transactional sex, including the exploitation of the prostitution of others, is a form of sexual exploitation. Sexual relationships based on inherently unequal power dynamics are a form of sexual exploitation. Sexual abuse is any actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. Acts that constitute sexual abuse include, but are not limited to, any action or behaviour of a sexual nature that coerces, threatens or forces a person to engage in a sexual activity, or any unlawful sexual activity with a person under the age of 18.”²¹⁵

SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

“Sexual violence committed between two (or more) NATO personnel is sexual harassment, and is covered by NATO policy on harassment, bullying and discrimination in the workplace, which has a broader scope.”²¹⁶

211 NATO Bi-SC Directive 40-1 (rev 3) (2021) p 5; NATOTerm Database accessed 15 August 2023.
 212 NATO Bi-SC Directive 40-1 (rev 3) (2021) p 20, para 5-2f.
 213 NATO Policy on Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, para 13.
 214 NATO Bi-SC Directive 40-1 (rev 3) (2021) p 20, para 5-2f.
 215 NATO Policy on Preventing and Responding to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse para 5-8.
 216 NATO Bi-SC Directive 40-1 (rev 3) (2021) p 20, para 5-2f.

3.2 Mapping

- NATO Military Guidance for the Integration of the NATO Policy on Women, Peace and Security in Military Missions, Operations and Activities (2024)
- NATO Bi-SC Directive 040-001 (rev3) (2021)
- NATO Policy on Women Peace and Security (2024)
- NATO/EAPC Action Plan for the Implementation of the NATO/EAPC Policy on Women, Peace and Security 2020-2025 (2021)
- NATO Policy on Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (2021)
- NATO Policy on Preventing and Responding to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (2019)
- NATO Policy for the Protection of Civilians (2016)

3.3 NATO Military Guidance for the Integration of the NATO Policy on Women, Peace and Security in Military Missions, Operations and Activities (2024)

3.3.1 Introduction

The NATO Military Guidance for the Integration of the NATO Policy on Women, Peace and Security in Military Missions, Operations and Activities (2024) is NATO's capstone policy document addressing the NATO Policy on WPS as well as the integration of gender perspectives in NATO. The Document provides guidance on the military implementation of the political guidance stated in the NATO 2022 Strategic Concept and the 2024 update to the NATO WPS policy.²¹⁷ The Document also provides concrete tasking for SCs.²¹⁸

3.3.2 Executive Summary

The NATO Military Guidance for the Integration of the NATO Policy on Women, Peace and Security in Military Missions, Operations and Activities (2024) addresses the following key areas:

- Integration of Gender Perspectives in Missions, Operations and Activities
- Role of the Gender Advisory, Support and Analysis Function
- Education, Training, Exercise and Evaluation, focused on GMO
- Promotion of Gender Equality in NATO Command and Force Structures

The Document also establishes tasks for the SCs, aimed at improving standardization and measurability of efforts focused on the integration of NATO WPS Policy and gender perspectives. Additionally, the Document provides military guidance on the integration of gender perspectives, and outlines how this should be achieved through gender awareness and responsiveness.²¹⁹

²¹⁷ NATO Military Guidance for the Integration of the NATO Policy on Women, Peace and Security in Military Missions, Operations and Activities (2024), para 1-2, p 1.

²¹⁸ Ibid para 31, p 10.

²¹⁹ Ibid, para 6–8, p 2.

3.3.3 Extended Summary

The Document highlights the complexity of the current security landscape, mentioning CRSV, TFGVB and Gender Disinformation. Against this background, it is asserted that implementation of the WPS Agenda and the integration of gender perspectives is a strategic necessity.

Furthermore, the Document emphasises the Alliance's commitment to the WPS Agenda and NATO's WPS Policy across all of the three core tasks. It is established that the promotion and integration of gender equality and perspectives into all NATO missions enhances NATO's fighting power, operational effectiveness and long-term stability.²²⁰

The Document also "supports the strengthening of national Professional Military Education (PME) programmes, Training, Exercises and Evaluation (ETEE) and enhances the Gender in Military Operations (GMO) discipline". It also emphasises the importance of the continued promotion of gender equality at all levels, reflecting NATO's core values.²²¹

2. Integration of Gender Perspectives in Missions, Operations and Activities

The Document recommends that the integration of gender perspectives is captured in a conceptual framework, consisting of the following steps:

Gender Awareness

- Promoted through the systematic collection, analysis and sharing of Sex and Age Disaggregated Data (SADD).
- Knowledge derived from this process is to be integrated across all military functions, levels, domains and environments.
- Identification of cases, as a result of the analysis, is to be incorporated into relevant staff collaborations and planning processes.²²²

Gender Responsiveness

- Addressing the different needs, challenges and perceptions of men, women, girls and boys.
- Advice that is derived from gender awareness is implemented in practice.
- Synchronization of actions focused on organizing gender-related responses within military missions, operations, and activities is emphasised.
- The final step, evaluation and reporting, is linked to Lessons Learned, which contributes to the effectiveness and success of future missions, tasks and activities.²²³

By following the above, the full integration of gender perspectives can be realized, which is considered fundamental to the achievement of military strategic gender-related objectives. Successful integration of the NATO WPS Policy leads to realization of the end state: increased operational effectiveness and improved security for all elements of the population.²²⁴

²²⁰ Ibid para 1–2, p 1.

²²¹ Ibid para 4, p 2.

²²² Ibid para 9b, p 3.

²²³ Ibid para 9c, p 3.

²²⁴ Ibid para 9d, p 3–4.

Role of the Military Leadership. Finally, in order to successfully realize the steps outlined above, gender-responsive leadership and accountability is needed. This includes active and visible engagement and commitment from the commander. Moreover, it is stated that integration of priorities and targets identified by the GENAD need to be assigned sufficient resources for implementation.²²⁵

3. Role of the Gender Advisory

The Document states that Allies and Partners are highly encouraged to adopt the Gender Advisory, Support and Analysis Function outlined in the below paragraphs. Successful adoption will have a positive effect on interoperability, standardization, and contribute to the institutionalization of the GENAD role.²²⁶

Furthermore, the Document states that the GENAD post should be a dedicated post in the Command Group, and that the merit of the GENAD is to be recognised at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. Within the Office of the GENAD the following roles should be fulfilled: “GENAD, Deputy GENADs, Staff Officer and/or Assistant GENAD, Gender Analyst/Specialist, with all roles being supported by its Gender Focal Points (GFPs) network”.²²⁷ The quantities of each of the aforementioned roles should be tailored to the scope and workload of the gender advisory, support and analysis function.²²⁸ The below summary captures the roles and responsibilities of GENADs and GFPs:

Gender Advisor (GENAD)

- Full-time function that should not be combined with other functions or roles.
- The primary responsibility of the GENAD is to advise on implementation of WPS and integration of gender perspectives. Providing direct advice to the command group, staff and personnel are highlighted as a means to ensure unity and synchronicity of effort.
- In addition, the GENAD should liaise with stakeholders outside of NATO when appropriate.
- GENADs are required to participate in specific NATO-approved courses.

Moreover, GENADs must also support in-house education and training, as well as integration of gender perspectives in NATO policies, doctrines and standards as part of gender mainstreaming efforts.²²⁹

Gender Focal Point (GFP)

- GFPs should be established across all staff functions, and contribute to implementation of WPS and integration of gender perspectives in their respective functional areas.
- Posts with the most relevance regarding achievement of gender-related military strategic objectives should be prioritized when appointing GFPs.
- GFPs can be appointed instead of GENADs in smaller missions constrained by limited personnel.

²²⁵ Ibid para 10, p 4-5.

²²⁶ Ibid para 14, p 7.

²²⁷ Ibid para 12, p 5.

²²⁸ Ibid para 11-12, p 5.

²²⁹ Ibid para 13a, p 5-6.

- The GFP function is considered an additional function to a primary role. Therefore, the GFP set of skills is to be identified as the secondary professional skill set in the job description.
- GFPs are required to complete relevant NATO-approved training.

The GFP network is to be comprised of a diverse representation of the respective HQ (such as men, women, civilians, officers etc.). Each HQ and Command should establish directives to outline the roles and responsibilities of the GFPs. GFPs are to report within their chain of command and must maintain dialogue and provide support to the GENAD.²³⁰

4. Education, Training, Exercise and Evaluation

The Document recognizes the ETEE as a central enabler for the implementation of NATO WPS Policy and integration of gender perspectives. Furthermore, the Document states that ETEE, within the NATO military organization, significantly impacts the foundation of NATO disciplines.²³¹

Job descriptions for relevant posts, especially for leadership positions, should mandate training on GMO, reflecting ETEE requirements developed in the GMO discipline. Interoperability between national and NATO ETEE efforts professionalise the gender advisory structure, as well as the implementation of WPS and integration of gender perspectives.

The Document recommends that a training standard on Gender Perspectives in military missions, operations and activities should be developed to enhance standardization. The integration of gender perspectives should be identified as a training requirement across other disciplines. National mainstreaming is encouraged.²³²

5. Promotion of Gender Equality in NATO Command and Force Structures

The Document states that the promotion of gender equality reflects the core values of NATO. In addition to advancing inclusivity and participation, it underpins the legitimacy and success of NATO missions, operations and activities. NATO recognises that gender balance at all levels of the workforce will benefit the Alliance by providing access to a broader skillset and perspectives.

The MC underlines that the Document supports gender mainstreaming efforts across all of the missions, operations and activities the Alliance partakes in. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that the Office of the GENAD is central in these efforts, as well as its coordination with HR, diversion and inclusion strategies and NATO workforce policies.²³³

Standards of Behaviour and CoC must support prevention and response to SH and SEA. This encourages recruitment and enables prevention and response to GBV.²³⁴ The Document welcomes, in accordance with NATO WPS Policy, that troop-contributing nations increase the participation and representation of women in NATO-led forces at all levels though their national force generation process.²³⁵

²³⁰ Ibid para 13b, p 6-7.

²³¹ Ibid para 4, p 2.

²³² Ibid para 15-18, p 7.

²³³ Ibid para 19-20, p 7.

²³⁴ Ibid para 21-23, p 8.

²³⁵ Ibid para 23, p 8.

5.1 Relationships and Linkages

The Document recognizes the cross cutting nature of gender perspectives across Alliance internal and external activities in all domains. The Document states that further research should be conducted on how gender perspectives intersect with cross cutting topics, and provides the following examples:

- **Human Security.** The Document aligns with the distinction between the WPS Agenda and HS topics made in the NATO WPS Policy. Human Security considers the safety and security of all people while the WPS Agenda focuses on the distinct and disproportionate impact that instability, crisis, conflict and post-conflict have on women and girls.
- **CIMIC.** Both GENAD and CIMIC functions focus on the human environment and should therefore work in close collaboration. Here, integration of gender perspectives can serve to enhance civil-military cooperation and operational effectiveness by including women's civil society organizations, strengthening community engagement and trust.
- **Intelligence.** The Document states that the accuracy of intelligence assessments is strengthened when collection of intelligence considers the full spectrum of societal dynamics. Failure to integrate gender perspectives may create blind spots in the understanding of the operational environment, which could be exploited by adversaries.
- **Operations and Planning.** The Document states that gender considerations should be embedded in the mission design, operations planning process and execution of plans, in order to ensure increased effectiveness of military operations.
- **Partners and NNEs.** Cooperative security is named as a central enabler for the integration of gender perspectives. It is stated that NATO should continue to facilitate partner access to training on GMO in order to strengthen interoperability, and the development of institutions that are accessible and responsive to the needs of both women and men.²³⁶

6. Recommendations

The Document concludes with the following recommendations: “The MC recommends Allies to develop their own adapted WPS and gender-related ETEE capacity and implement WPS and the integration of gender perspectives in their national institutions and curricula, based on the GMO discipline. Existing efforts under the NATO Defence Education Enhancement Programme (DEEP) could be leveraged to advance the integration of WPS in Partner Nations’ PME.”²³⁷

3.4 Annexes

Annex A includes references.

²³⁶ Ibid para 24a-e, p 8-9.

²³⁷ Ibid para 32, p 11.

3.5 NATO Bi-SC Directive 040-001 (rev3) (2021)

3.5.1 Introduction

The third revision of the NATO Bi-SC Directive 040-001 (the Directive) was adopted in 2021 by ACT and ACO. This Directive provides direction and guidance for implementing UNSCR 1325 and related Resolutions on WPS in accordance with NATO's political and military direction through the integration of gender perspective.²³⁸ The Directive aims to translate political direction and guidance into actionable steps, ensuring that the NATO Command Structure (NCS) operationalises the UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions. Additionally, it seeks to effectively implement the NATO/EAPC Policy (2018) and Action Plan (2021) on WPS. Furthermore, the Directive aims to ensure that the NCS complies with NATO guidelines and policies regarding the prevention and response to CRSV and SEA.²³⁹

3.5.2 Executive summary

The NATO *Bi-SC Directive 040-001* (2021) addresses the following key areas:

- The Gender Advisory Structure;
- Integration of Gender perspective in Warfare Development;
- Consideration of Gender Perspective in Military Operations;
- Response to and Prevention of Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse; and
- Education, Training, and Exercises.

The Directive also outlines the roles and training for GENAD and GFP, provides guidelines on the OPLAN Gender perspective Annex and Appendices (non-releasable to the public), details staff implementation responsibilities, and International legal aspects concerning Gender Perspective in Military Operations.²⁴⁰

3.5.3 Extended Summary

The Directive emphasises that women, men, girls and boys affect and are affected differently by armed conflict due to their gender. Often, women and girls are disproportionately affected. Ignoring gender-based similarities and differences can undermine efforts in conflict prevention, resolution, post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding.

Furthermore, the Directive highlights that integrating a gender perspective and the WPS mandate is closely linked to the core values and principles of NATO. The Directive also states that NATO and its partners are committed to integrating gender perspective throughout its core tasks. The Directive commits to collective efforts to gender mainstreaming and systematically integrate gender perspective across the full spectrum of military activities within the NCS during peacetime, crisis, and armed conflict. This approach aims to enhance the Alliance's effectiveness through all three components of NATO's fighting power: moral, conceptual and physical.²⁴¹

²³⁸ NATO Bi-SCD 40-1 (2021) para 2, p 1.

²³⁹ Ibid para 1-2, p 4.

²⁴⁰ Ibid para 1-2, p 4.

²⁴¹ Ibid para 1-3, p 4f.

The Directive recognises the need to eliminate barriers to women’s active and meaningful participation both within the Alliance and in NATO operations and missions.²⁴² In line with this, the Directive also “recognises that the integration of gender perspective and the participation of women in all aspects of NATO’s work is an essential factor in the success of peace and security”.²⁴³

Additionally, the Directive stresses the importance of using gender-inclusive language²⁴⁴, which can “challenge unconscious bias and assumptions about gender roles in society; lay the foundation for greater gender equality; and raise awareness of how language affects our behaviours and attitudes.”²⁴⁵

1. Gender Advisory Structure

The integration of a gender perspective within military operations is a shared responsibility that involves three key roles:

- Commanders: bear overall responsibility for implementing this Directive within their authority.
- Leadership: Integrating a gender perspective is a leadership responsibility and requires an organisation-wide effort. Since “Gender in Military Operations (GMO) is a cross-functional topic, it requires that all staff have a basic understanding of it.”
- NATO’s Gender Advisory Structure: “NATO’s military structure has an embedded Gender Advisory Structure (GENADs and GFPs) across all levels that supports gender mainstreaming and the integration of gender perspective, in all lines of effort.”²⁴⁶

The Directive clarifies that “the GENAD advises the command group on operationalising NATO WPS agenda and supports comprehensive integration of gender perspective and gender mainstreaming. These activities include peacetime, operations/missions, crisis/conflict analysis, policy, capability, concept, doctrine, procedure, exercises and education and training. The GENAD reports to the Commander.”²⁴⁷

The Directive also explains that “GFPs are nominated personnel with dual-hatted roles in HQs, Divisions/Directorates, Branches and Offices. GFPs are to support integration of gender perspective and facilitate gender mainstreaming in their functional area. They report through the chain of command and maintain a functional dialogue with GENAD in order to ensure the coherent and consistent integration of gender perspective throughout the NCS and its activities.”²⁴⁸

2. Implementation in Warfare Development

The Directive states that “while the fundamental nature of war endures, the increasing complexity of the operating environment and its inter-relation with the human dimension requires an in-depth understanding of the strategic paths of relevant actors and the trends that influence the dynamic character of warfare. This is critical in understanding how new and more advanced patterns of warfare

²⁴² Ibid para 1-5a, p 5.

²⁴³ Ibid para 1-5b, p 6.

²⁴⁴ Gender-inclusive language is, according to the Directive, speaking and writing in a way that does not discriminate against a particular sex and does not perpetuate gender stereotypes’

²⁴⁵ Ibid para 1-5d, p 6f.

²⁴⁶ Ibid para 2-1, p 8.

²⁴⁷ Ibid para 2-2, p 8.

²⁴⁸ Ibid para 2-3, p 8.

affect whole populations as well as how women, men, girls and boys can differently impact and be impacted by future operations.”²⁴⁹

The Directive further highlights that “applying a gender perspective and ensuring gender mainstreaming will be critical to both delivering today’s MIOp and sustain the vision of the 2040 MIOp. A gender lens should always be applied in the cognitive, virtual and physical dimensions of the NATO frameworks, recognising the impact across the human, physical and information environments”.²⁵⁰

3. Gender Perspective in Military Operations

General

The Directive highlights that “the impact of conflict and war is often different for men, women, girls and boys. Prevention and recognition of root causes of violence including gender inequalities are integral to establishing stability and security. The inclusion of gender perspectives and gender analysis into conflict analysis and military planning secures the ability to respond to these differences in a more nuanced and effective way and provides an increased understanding of conflict factors, actors and dynamics. Consequently, in order to achieve mission success and to reach the desired effects and end state, NATO must develop a comprehensive understanding of its operating environment by integrating gender perspectives.”²⁵¹

Aim

The Directive affirms that “the three core tasks of the Alliance (collective defence, cooperative security and crisis management) are to be analysed, planned, executed and assessed with an integrated gender perspective. This is a responsibility across all levels and phases and requires a comprehensive approach. The linkage between external and internal integration of gender perspectives must be emphasised and recognised.”²⁵²

Cross-functional staff cooperation on gender perspective integration

“Within NATO, all personnel have responsibility to integrate gender perspective. Although the overall responsibility rests with respective commanders, the effective integration is only possible when GENAD, GFPs and all staff work together.”

Gender Perspectives and the NATO Crisis Response Process

The Directive explains that “gender perspective needs to be considered throughout all six phases of the NATO Crisis Response Process. To that end, GENADs and GFPs at strategic, operational and tactical level, need to be involved in all the phases of the Operations Planning Process”.

- Indications and Warning. Early identification of a crisis that is or may become relevant to NATO is key to success. By integrating a gender perspective at this phase, staff will be able to recognise trends and issues that may indicate a deteriorating security situation, reflected through the different behaviours of men and women. As such, a gender perspective contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the environment.

²⁴⁹ Ibid para 3-1, p 11.

²⁵⁰ Ibid para 3-3, p 11.

²⁵¹ Ibid para 4-1, p 13.

²⁵² Ibid para 4-2, p 13.

- Assessment. During the Assessment phase, NATO aims “to develop a fundamental understanding of the nature of the crisis and the engagement space, including its key PMESII²⁵³ aspects. This PMESII assessment needs to be complemented by a gender analysis.” The collection of SADD is critical in this regard.
- Development of Response Options. Based on efforts during phases 1-2, GENADs and GFPs will contribute to the cross-functional planning effort during phase 3 by providing gender recommendations and advice on the different potential Response Options.
- Planning. “GENAD, iccw GFPs, will develop the Gender perspective Annex RR (and relevant appendices¹²) to the OPLAN in line with the Commanders’ intent. In addition, staff and GFPs iccw GENAD, will ensure that the gender perspective is integrated, as applicable, in all functional domains.”
- Execution. “The operations’ GENAD will advise the Commander on the actions that can/need to be undertaken to support the execution of the Gender perspective Annex to the OPLAN. The operations’ GENAD will continuously monitor and assess gender relevant aspects of the execution of the operation, and report through the chain of command.”
- Transition. “The purpose of this phase is the coordination of the transition and termination of the military operation; this involves the handover of responsibility for gender actions or projects to the appropriate authorities or organisations.”²⁵⁴

Gender Perspective in Operations Planning

The Directive notes that “integration of gender perspective enables operations planning at all levels to better understand the political, societal, cultural and structural processes, context and expected effects which impact how military operations and missions are conducted. By looking at the different security needs, risks and experiences of the entire population (women, men, girls and boys), the understanding of the operating environment is enhanced. Integration of gender perspective into the Operations Planning Process is conducted at all levels and in close coordination across the chain of command”. The ACO Gender Functional Planning Guide is the main working tool for integrating gender perspective in the OPP.²⁵⁵

The Directive explains that “gender perspective should be integrated in the planning, implementation, monitoring, assessment and evaluation of all NATO-led operations.” Some of the focus areas include

- ”Analysing dynamics in gender relations and roles including the changes caused by the conflict and/or military operations”
- ”Considering how NATO can contribute to gender equality and women’s empowerment in the affected nations before, during and after the conflict”
- “Considering how NATO can support the delivery of equal and appropriate security for women, men, girls and boys. This assessment should also include populations in vulnerable situations during conflict, which includes the elderly, statelessness, pregnant women and the disabled.”
- “Analysing the different roles that women, men, girls and boys serve in all parties to the conflict, including as supporters, facilitators, enablers or perpetrators of acts of violence or terrorism”

²⁵³ Political, Military, Economic, Security, Information, Infrastructure.

²⁵⁴ Ibid para 4-4, p 13ff.

²⁵⁵ Ibid para 4-5, p 15.

- “Ensuring gender perspective is addressed in NATO’s support to the peace process including conflict resolution, ceasefire agreements and women’s participation is actively supported and facilitated”
- Incorporating gender considerations in internal planning, including force composition, communications, Standards of Behaviour, and the Code of Conduct.²⁵⁶

Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting

Monitoring, assessment, and reporting are key processes for ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in operations. These processes should be guided by an iterative gender analysis.

Monitoring is a continuous process that, when incorporating a gender perspective, creates a more comprehensive understanding of the environment and its changing dynamics.

Integrated and functional reporting on gender-based information should be integrated into standard reporting procedures and systems. This reporting should include information on the impact of NATO interventions on the entire population using SADD. It is mandatory to report on CRSV and SEA incidents.

Assessment involves evaluating the overall impact and effect of the operation, and making necessary changes required to their courses of action. Integrating gender perspectives enables commanders to make more informed decisions.²⁵⁷

Monitoring, Reporting and Assessing Considerations

- *Utilize SADD*: “Use of SADD in all reporting requirements. SADD enables greater situational awareness by acquiring information about the entire civilian population and not failing to consider women, men, girls and boys being different parts of the population.”
- *Create Relevant Reports*: “Ensure, where possible, that the reporting layout and content result in data that would be relevant to and receivable in a judicial process”
- *Consult with Local Women and Organisations*: “Consultation with local women, women’s organisations and other civil society actors as part of information-gathering activities to construct a comprehensive overview of the security situation”
- *Apply a Gender Perspective*: “Use a gender perspective when assessing monitoring and verification activities, as well as interaction with the local population”
- *Deploy a Gender-Balanced Force*: “Consider deploying a gender balanced force composition to have access to men and women of the local population in order to support collection and dissemination of non-sensitive information”
- *Geo-Reference Gender-Related Incidents*: “Have the ability to geo-reference and/or create mapping for specific gender-related incidents” for example CRSV,SEA or events and incidents that have a disproportionate or different effect on women, men, girls and boys²⁵⁸

²⁵⁶ Ibid para 4-5, p 15f.

²⁵⁷ Ibid para 4-6, p 16f.

²⁵⁸ Ibid para 4-7, p 17f.

4. Responding to and Preventing Gender-Based Violence, Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

The Directive informs that the NATO Military Guidelines on the Prevention of, and Response to, Conflict-Related Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (CR-SGBV) will be updated given the new NATO policies on CRSV (2021) and SEA (2019). Further, the Directive affirms that “NATO aims to support the UN’s leading role in its efforts to prevent and respond to conflict-related gender-based violence (including sexual violence)”.

The Directive includes a section on Terminology Differences and explains that “CRSV relates to sexual violence committed by personnel (armed forces or civilians) other than NATO forces, against civilians or military forces. It is often used as a strategy of warfare. SEA relates to sexual exploitation and abuse that is committed by NATO personnel against local population. Sexual violence committed between two (or more) NATO personnel is sexual harassment, and is covered by NATO Policy on Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination in the Workplace, which has a broader scope”.²⁵⁹

The Directive states that “the conduct of military operations is, especially in armed conflict situations, regulated by international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international criminal law”. Violations of the obligations of the Geneva Conventions and Rome Statute may be components of war crimes and thus subject to criminal and disciplinary proceedings. “While not all NATO member nations have ratified the aforementioned conventions and treaties, efforts are made to ensure, consistent with the obligations assumed by those who have not ratified, that a common approach is adopted by Member Nations for the purposes of NATO missions, operations and Council- mandated activities”.²⁶⁰

The Directive notes that the NATO Code of Conduct (2020) should be applied in line with the Standards of Behaviour, as listed in Chapter 5-4 of the Directive.²⁶¹ The Directive provides further details on NATO policies, definitions, prevention, reporting, response and training on CRSV and SEA.²⁶²

5. Education, Training and Exercises

General

The Directive highlights that “gender training is a national responsibility of NATO nations assigning military staff to the NATO Command Structure (NCS) and Nations contributing to missions, operations and Council- mandated activities. Training prior to assignment, pre-deployment training, in-theatre training and individual subject-matter training shall include activities to ensure that this topic is addressed for militaries and civilians. The greatest effect is gained if gender perspective is included in the earliest forms of training and education and mainstreamed throughout courses at different levels to achieve lifelong and transformative learning.”²⁶³

Gender Education and Training Policy and Framework

²⁵⁹ Ibid para 5-2, p 19f.

²⁶⁰ Ibid para 5-3, p 20f.

²⁶¹ Ibid para 5-4, p 21.

²⁶² Ibid para 5-5 & 5-6, p 21-25. See also the NATO Policy on Preventing and Responding to CRSV (2021) and NATO Policy on Preventing and Responding to SEA (2019).

²⁶³ Ibid para 6-1 (a).

NATO personnel must be trained on UNSCR 1325 and related Resolutions. Furthermore, the gender perspective, as well as NATO WPS Policy, including CRSV and SEA policies, must be implemented into ETEE programmes. The Directive outlines stakeholders and processes within the education and training programme framework and specifies the following forms of training:²⁶⁴

Leadership training: “specific training and education programs targeting institutional leaders and those at command or branch head level to increase individual gender related competencies”.²⁶⁵

Educational and individual training: All NCS staff, regardless of their position, must have a basic knowledge of gender perspectives to support NATO’s commitment to UNSCR 1325 and its related Resolutions and achieve the minimum gender competencies required. This knowledge is obtained through a mandatory online course. Furthermore, all personnel shall “receive mandatory training on preventing and responding to CRSV and SEA”.²⁶⁶

Exercises and collective training: “NATO forces, irrespective of position, must understand the WPS agenda, implementing UNSCR 1325 and related Resolutions, and prior to deployment, be trained on integrating gender perspectives.” Minimum responsibilities of compliance include:

- Operationalising the WPS Agenda and integrating gender perspectives, gender mainstreaming and understanding how these relate to operational effectiveness, are highly encouraged during all NATO collective training and exercises, at all levels, following the appropriate exercise phases.
- “The strategic levels are to ensure that gender aspects are embedded into relevant strategic guidance and directives”
- When incorporating gender perspective in NATO exercises, “ensure that specifications, setting, scenario development, and objectives for NATO exercises and training include gender perspective based on UNSCR 1325 and related Resolutions, including CRSV and SEA”
- “In order to achieve optimal integration of gender perspective in the exercise and collective training process, the inclusion of gender SMEs (GENAD and GFPs) is required in all the stages of exercise planning”.²⁶⁷

“When invited and duly authorised to train local security forces, NATO should, as appropriate, and in accordance with its mandate and the SFA concept, include awareness on UNSCR 1325 and related Resolutions for local security forces (i.e. by providing expertise or conducting respective trainings).”

Annex A – Glossary²⁶⁸

Annex B – Gender Advisory and Gender Focal Point Functions and Training

GENAD

GENADs at the strategic, operational, or tactical level may include, but are not limited to, the following responsibilities:

²⁶⁴ Ibid para 6-2.

²⁶⁵ Ibid para 6-3.

²⁶⁶ Ibid para 6-4.

²⁶⁷ Ibid para 6-5.

²⁶⁸ Ibid p A-1, A-2.

- ”Providing functional and technical guidance on UNSCR 1325, related Resolutions and integrates gender perspective in different lines of effort”
- ”Establishing and maintaining cross-functional coordination with HQ staff and personnel”
- ”Providing reach-back expertise on gender perspective in military operations in support of operational HQs (as applicable)”
- ”Disseminating a gender analysis ensuring that gendered experiences of women and men are considered as part of the on-going work to gain situational awareness and support the operations planning process with relevant conclusions”
- ”Regularly contributing to mainstreaming efforts through integrating gender perspective in NATO doctrines and standards (development and review), concept development and experimentation, food for thought papers and other documents as appropriate”
- ”Raising awareness and enhances knowledge on gender perspective in military operations”²⁶⁹

GFP

Each HQ/Directorate is required to nominate at least one GFP on a permanent basis to support the integration of gender perspective within their functional areas. This includes the following tasks:

- “Advanc[ing] gender perspective integration through contributing to the implementation of the NATO WPS Agenda”
- “Integrat[ing] gender perspective into their daily business in accordance with this Directive”
- “Support[ing] the Commands gender mainstreaming efforts”
- “Maintain[ing] functional dialogue with the GENAD”

“All GFPs are required to be familiar with NATO’s institutional frameworks and guidance on implementing the UNSCR 1325 and related Bi-SCD 040-001 Resolutions.”²⁷⁰

Annex C²⁷¹

Non-releasable to the public.

Annex D – Staff Implementation Responsibilities

Annex D outlines responsibilities for each J-branch including special staff, such as LEGAD, StratCom, Capability Development, Joint Force Development and Strategic Plans and Policy.²⁷²

²⁶⁹ Ibid p B-1, B-2.

²⁷⁰ Ibid p B-2, B-3.

²⁷¹ Ibid p C-1.

²⁷² Ibid p D-1, D-2.

Annex E – International Law Aspects of Gender Perspective in Military Operations

UN Security Council Resolutions – Annex E summaries UNSCR 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2242, 2467, 2493 and 2538.²⁷³

International Humanitarian Law – The Directive emphasizes that “the importance of gender mainstreaming is recognised in IHL as a matter of ensuring fundamental protection and treatment”. It outlines specific Articles where the Geneva Conventions (1949) and the Additional Protocols (1977) use gender as a criterion for protection by referring to sex, women and “any other criteria”.²⁷⁴

International Tribunals and the International Criminal Court – The Directive affirms that “while rape and other sexual violence were not expressly designated as a grave breach, several international criminal tribunals recognized that sexual violence could amount to grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions and their Protocols”. Furthermore, it explains that the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court states that rape and other forms of sexual violence can amount to genocide and crimes against humanity.²⁷⁵

International Human Rights Law – The Directive states that “human rights treaties, universal and regional, appear to be less explicit, specific, and precise than IHL treaties with regards to a gendered approach and protections particularly during armed conflict.” It highlights the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) as notable exceptions. The Directive also asserts that “the non-derogable prohibition of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment contained in human rights treaties provides a strong basis to prohibit virtually all forms of discrimination, gender-based, and sexual violence at all times”. Additionally, it states that “some specific gender-based and sexual violence can be encompassed into other human rights violations”.²⁷⁶

3.6 NATO Policy on Women Peace and Security (2024)

3.6.1 Introduction

The 2024 NATO Policy on Women, Peace, and Security is the most recent update of the original NATO WPS Policy and Action Plan from 2007. This Policy was adopted by NAC during the Washington Summit. The current NATO WPS Action Plan was developed based on the 2018 WPS Policy, and a new Action Plan is expected to be adopted in 2025.

3.6.2 Executive summary

The NATO Policy on WPS from 2024 focuses on the implementation of WPS and the integration of gender perspective across NATO’s core tasks of deterrence and defence, crisis management and prevention, and cooperative security, in line with the 2022 Strategic Concept. The Policy introduces four strategic objectives to guide this implementation: gender-responsive leadership and accountability; participation; prevention; and protection. Additionally, the Policy defines WPS as an institutional

²⁷³ Ibid p E-1, E-2.

²⁷⁴ Ibid p E-2, E-3, E-4, E-5.

²⁷⁵ Ibid p E-5.

²⁷⁶ Ibid p E-6.

framework and outlines specifies measures for implementation, monitoring and reporting. The aim is to advance the implementation of WPS at political and military levels across the NATO enterprise and its Allies.

3.6.3 Extended Summary

The 2024 NATO Policy on WPS supports the objectives outlined in the 2022 Strategic Concept. It aims “to provide a political framework for NATO’s contribution to international peace and security through the integration of WPS across the three core tasks of deterrence and defence, crisis prevention and management, and cooperative security”.²⁷⁷ By implementing this Policy within all military and civilian structures, NATO aims contribute to the advancement of the global WPS agenda.²⁷⁸

The Policy begins by affirming that gender equality and WPS reflect NATO’s core values and priorities, as well as being vital components of international peace. It states that “NATO has a unique and important role to play in advancing WPS as both a strategic and a value-based imperative”.²⁷⁹ Recognising that the primary responsibility for implementing the WPS agenda lies with individual nations²⁸⁰, the Policy emphasises that NATO Allies “remain steadfast in their commitment to contribute to advancing the global WPS Agenda, as set out by UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on WPS (2000), and all related resolutions adopted thereafter”.²⁸¹

Importantly, the Policy acknowledge the distinct and disproportionate impact that crisis and conflict have on women and girls²⁸², as well as the critical role women play in peace and security efforts.²⁸³ Given the increased attention to NATO’s human security approach within the Alliance, the Policy states that “NATO’s Human Security and WPS Agendas reflect a people-centred and human rights-based approach, and complement and reinforce one another while remaining separate”.²⁸⁴

The relevance and significance of WPS in today’s evolving security environment is highlighted, particularly in light of the disruption of peace in the Euro-Atlantic area following Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine and the gendered aspects of this conflict. Additional factors include terrorism, challenges in NATO’s southern neighbourhood, climate change, technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), and challenges posed by strategic competitors and potential adversaries.²⁸⁵

To guide both internal and external political and military efforts, the Policy identifies four strategic objectives tailored to NATO’s mission and mandate,

1. Gender-responsive leadership and accountability: “To ensure NATO leaders strengthen their gender expertise, work towards gender equality and are accountable for the implementation of the WPS Agenda”.
2. Participation: “To strive for a gender-balanced workforce at all levels, including in decision-making and leadership roles, benefitting from a broader skillset and new perspectives across the NATO Enterprise. To promote the full, equal, safe and meaningful participation of women in

²⁷⁷ NATO Policy on Women Peace and Security (2024) para 16.

²⁷⁸ Ibid para 5.

²⁷⁹ Ibid para 1.

²⁸⁰ Ibid para 5.

²⁸¹ Ibid para 2.

²⁸² Ibid para 3.

²⁸³ Ibid para 4.

²⁸⁴ Ibid para 6.

²⁸⁵ Ibid para 8-15.

peace and security at local, national, regional, and global levels, recognising the mutually reinforcing relationship between Participation, Prevention and Protection”.

3. Prevention: “To advance NATO’s role in preventing and countering threats that disproportionately impact women and girls, and promoting the active role of women in crisis prevention and management at all levels, as well as in relief and recovery”.
4. Protection: “To actively promote the protection and safeguarding of women and girls from all forms of gender-based violence”.²⁸⁶

The Policy focuses on the integration of WPS across the three core tasks.²⁸⁷

Deterrence and Defence

The Policy identifies that the integration of gender perspectives into both military and non-military instruments of power enhances the understanding of conflict factors and operating environments. This integration aids in identifying security risks and vulnerabilities and helps with the development of more tailored, gender-responsive interventions and effective solutions.²⁸⁸ To improve deterrence, defence, contestation, and denial across all domains, NATO will strengthen efforts to integrate gender perspectives into all aspects of its work, providing granularity in support of the Alliance’s 360-degree approach and Multi-Domain Operations.²⁸⁹ “This approach will enhance political decision-making and operational effectiveness in achieving peace and stability by advancing activities in all areas (...)”.²⁹⁰ Furthermore, the Policy highlights the need to consider WPS and gender perspectives in efforts to strengthen resilience, which is both a national responsibility and a collective commitment.²⁹¹ Additionally, the Policy addresses the weaponisation of gender narratives, the use of gendered disinformation, and prevalence of TFGBV, which can harm peace and security. It notes the necessity of integrating WPS in efforts to detect, prevent, and respond to such actions.²⁹²

Crisis Prevention and Management

The Policy outlines that “Integrating gender perspectives throughout all aspects of crisis response, preparedness and management, operations planning and execution, significantly increases NATO’s understanding of the operating environment”.²⁹³ It further addresses that all NATO personnel involved in planning and execution of operations, especially Allied Military Planners and intelligence communities, must integrate gender perspectives and work with Gender Advisors and Gender Focal Points. The Policy recognises that “This will support improved intelligence, conduct of operations, and decision-making in both NATO military and political structures.”²⁹⁴ Additionally, the Policy identifies the need to engage with local women’s and civil society networks as well as activities to “ensure women’s perspectives and needs are considered in institutional transformation of security and defence sector and recovery efforts, as appropriate.”²⁹⁵

²⁸⁶ Ibid para 17.

²⁸⁷ Ibid para 16.

²⁸⁸ Ibid para 18.

²⁸⁹ Ibid para 20.

²⁹⁰ Ibid para 19.

²⁹¹ Ibid para 21.

²⁹² Ibid para 23-24.

²⁹³ Ibid para 25.

²⁹⁴ Ibid para 26.

²⁹⁵ Ibid para 27-28.

Cooperative Security

Within NATO, cooperative security and the extensive network between NATO, NATO partners, and other global organisations provide significant support for the WPS Agenda. NATO's efforts to enhance cooperative security and WPS will include capacity-building efforts, dialogue, joint political messaging, information sharing, good practices, expertise exchange, and engagement on the nexus of gender and emerging security challenges through exercises and training activities.²⁹⁶ Furthermore, the Policy outlines that NATO will facilitate partner's access to WPS and GMO training and encourage the development of national education and training programs.²⁹⁷ Additionally, the Policy specifies the need for engagement with the UN, EU, OSCE and AU on WPS, as well as collaboration with civil society at local, national, regional and global levels, and with private actors.²⁹⁸

The Policy outlines the development of WPS as an *institutional framework* within NATO. It emphasises the requirement for active commitment and accountability from Allies, leadership, and staff throughout the entire organisation, both politically and militarily, to advance NATO's implementation of WPS.²⁹⁹ The Policy highlights the need to integrate a gender perspective in education, training, exercises, evaluation curricula, doctrine, conflict analysis, mission planning and execution, operations, and other activities.³⁰⁰

Moreover, the Policy states that leaders must ensure that all personnel receive education and training to integrate gender perspective into their work systematically. It also emphasises the involvement of trained GENADs in decision-making processes within NATO's Command Structure, Force Structure, and International Military Staff. Additionally, the Policy states that "NATO Allies and troop contributing partners are committed to the provision of personnel at all levels, trained in WPS and GMO, to all NATO headquarters, missions, operations and council mandated activities."³⁰¹ The Policy further specifies that all decisions including those relating to policies, programmes, plans, and operations should be informed by gender analyses supported by data disaggregated by sex, age and other factors appropriate to the context.

The Policy also emphasises the necessity of creating a gender-inclusive environment and achieving better gender balance across the organisation. It reaffirms the commitment to ensuring a respectful and safe working environment by combatting harassment, discrimination, and bullying and endorses a zero-tolerance approach towards all acts of sexual exploitation and abuse.³⁰²

The Policy also presents the NATO WPS Leadership Task Force and the NATO WPS Technical Task Force of Focal Points. Additionally, it includes regular political and military engagements conducted under the stewardship of the NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for WPS. These initiatives aim to facilitate and strengthen the implementation of the Policy and Action Plan.³⁰³

Finally, the Policy outlines measures for *Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting*. An Action Plan will support the Policy³⁰⁴, and importantly, it states that "the Alliance will ensure adequate person-

296 Ibid para 30-31.

297 Ibid para 32-33.

298 Ibid para 34-36.

299 Ibid para 37.

300 Ibid para 38.

301 Ibid para 38.

302 Ibid para 42-44.

303 Ibid para 45-46.

304 Ibid para 48.

nel and financial resources are allocated to implement this Policy and the Action Plan".³⁰⁵ The Policy invites partners to associate with the Policy objectives, stipulates that nations will receive an annual progress report, and mandates a review of the Policy at least every five years. Furthermore, NATO Allies are encouraged to report on progress and share best practices regarding the national advancement of the WPS Agenda.³⁰⁶

3.7 NATO/EAPC Action Plan for the Implementation of the NATO/EAPC Policy on Women, Peace and Security 2020–2025 (2021)

3.7.1 Introduction

The NATO Action Plan for the Implementation of the NATO/EAPC Policy on Women, Peace, and Security 2021-2025 (the Action Plan) was adopted by NAC in 2021.³⁰⁷ It aims to guide the advancement of NATO's WPS agenda and will be updated, as needed, during future policy reviews.³⁰⁸

3.7.2 Executive summary

The Action Plan supports the implementation of the NATO WPS Policy by focusing on the guiding principles of integration, inclusiveness, and integrity. It also emphasises the importance of a robust international framework, partnerships, external engagement, education, training, exercises, and communications.

3.7.3 Extended Summary

The Action Plan recognises "the critical importance of women's full, equal and meaningful participation in all aspects of peace and stability, as well as the disproportionate impact that conflict has on women and girls". It further states that "NATO is committed to fully implementing the WPS agenda set out by the UNSC".³⁰⁹ "Working together with Partners, International Organisations, and civil society, NATO will consistently continue to implement the NATO/EAPC Policy on WPS, and, in this context, advance gender equality, integrate gender perspectives and foster the principles of the WPS agenda in all that the Alliance does".³¹⁰

305 Ibid para 49.

306 Ibid para 50-52, 54.

307 The current NATO WPS Action Plan was developed based on the 2018 WPS Policy, and a new Action Plan is expected to be adopted in 2025 following the 2024 update of the NATO WPS Policy.

308 NATO Action Plan for the Implementation of the NATO/EAPC Policy on Women, Peace and Security 2020-2025 (2021), para 5.

309 Ibid, para 1.

310 Ibid, para 6.

1. Robust International Framework

Outcome: “NATO has a robust institutional framework that supports continued, sustainable progress to advance gender equality through the implementation of the WPS policy.”³¹¹

Outputs, including

- GENADs, WPS Advisors and GFPs within Military authorities, as well as WPS focal points in civilian entities, are actively supported and equipped with the tools and resources needed to accomplish their aims³¹²
- “NATO has the people and resources needed to support and advise on gender mainstreaming efforts conducted throughout its civilian and military structures”
- “The accountability and ownership of the WPS agenda is shared among all personnel across the NATO enterprise”

2. Integration of Gender Perspectives

Outcome: “In the context of the WPS Policy, gender perspectives are consistently integrated throughout NATO’s work, from planning through to execution”.³¹³

Outputs, including

- “Gender perspectives are identified as part of all current and ongoing work, as well as work in new and emerging areas, and are appropriately integrated into related policies, programmes and activities”
- Gender perspectives also inform “NATO’s defence policy, planning, capability development, exercises, resilience and broader deterrence and defence efforts”
- Gender perspectives are reflected in “NATO operations, missions, and Council-approved activities”
- “Data that is disaggregated by sex is regularly gathered, used as the basis for planning and decision-making, and included in relevant reporting”

3. Partnerships

Outcome: “Cooperation among NATO and Partners contributes to the implementation of the WPS agenda”.

Outputs, including

- “Continued cooperation with Partners, as appropriate, in order to strengthen our shared understanding and implementation of the WPS agenda”

³¹¹ Ibid section 1.

³¹² Ibid, section 1-2, 1-4.

³¹³ Ibid section 2.

4. External Engagement

Outcome: “NATO’s work on WPS contributes to and is informed by the efforts of external actors to advance the aims of the WPS agenda.”

Outputs, including

- “Enhanced collaboration and coordination on WPS with relevant International Organisations including the UN, EU, OSCE, and AU, among others”
- “Strengthened Engagement with relevant civil society organisation... to enhance NATO understanding of how women perceive and are affected by various security challenges and how NATO’s work can contribute to greater gender equality”

5. Education, Training and Exercises

Outcome: “People serving across the NATO enterprise understand and are capable of integrating gender perspectives across all that NATO does.”

Outputs, including

- “Strengthened tools and mechanisms for NATO staff, including senior leadership, to enhance knowledge and understanding of the importance of WPS for NATO’s work”
- “Gender perspectives are integrated, as appropriate, into exercises, education and training, beyond WPS/gender-specific courses and awareness-raising activities”

6. Communications

Outcome: “People serving across the NATO enterprise understand and are capable of integrating gender perspectives across all that NATO does.”

Outputs, including

- “The principles of NATO’s WPS agenda are consistently and appropriately reflected in its communications products and activities.”
- “NATO’s work on WPS is actively promoted.”

7. Inclusiveness

Outcome: “Women are visibly playing active and meaningful roles across the civilian and military structures of the Alliance and there is a more balanced representation of women and men in all levels and functions across NATO.”

Outputs, including

- “Human Resource-related policies and guidelines contributing to gender equality and women’s inclusion and integration within NATO are developed, implemented and monitored.”
- “Active promotion of gender balance and the meaningful participation and contributions of women in various NATO work areas.”

8. Integrity

Outcome: “NATO has policies and response measures in place to ensure that the Alliance upholds the highest standards of behaviour.”

Outputs, including

- “Fully implement NATO policies aimed at protection, including NATO Human Security agenda”
- “Promote/raise awareness of NATO policies that contribute to the protection of all women, men, girls, and boys”

3.8 NATO Policy on Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (2021)

3.8.1 Introduction

The NATO Policy on Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (the Policy) was adopted by NAC in 2021. It aims to provide a coherent, consistent, and integrated political framework for NATO’s role in preventing and responding to CRSV.

3.8.2 Executive summary

The Policy connects the issue of CRSV to persisting gender inequality and the WPS agenda. The Policy primarily focuses on the definition, prevention, and response to CRSV. It highlights the importance of education and training, gender analysis, sex-disaggregated data, a survivor-centred approach, and engagement with relevant organisations, local population and civil society. Additionally, it advocates for effective reporting and information sharing.

3.8.3 Extended Summary

The Policy specifies that its purpose is “to ensure effective prevention and protection in all NATO missions, operations and Council-mandated activities within its remit, mandates and competency, consistent with International Law”.³¹⁴ The Policy applies to all personnel deployed by NATO³¹⁵ and to all phases of NATO missions, operations and activities.³¹⁶

The Policy highlights that NATO condemns all acts of CRSV committed by state and non-state actors,³¹⁷ affirming that CRSV constitutes a violation of human rights. It emphasises that CRSV is rooted in gender inequality and discrimination, often disproportionately affecting women and girls.³¹⁸ It reaffirms NATO’s commitment to combating sexual violence in conflict and defending the principles of individual liberty, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.³¹⁹ Moreover, the Policy high-

314 Ibid para 9.
315 Ibid para 10.
316 Ibid para 11.
317 Ibid para 7.
318 Ibid para 6.
319 Ibid para 1.

lights that its objectives should be understood within the broader framework of NATO policies and guidelines, including the WPS Agenda, the Human Security Agenda and relevant international law.³²⁰

The Policy outlines measures to *prevent CRSV*, stating that NATO will identify potential “risks of CRSV in relation to NATO missions, operations and Council-mandated activities.”³²¹ It will also “identify objectives, tasks and related assessment tools to prevent and respond to CRSV, informed by a gender analysis that includes the use of sex-disaggregated data”.³²² The Policy further details that NATO will engage with relevant stakeholders - including international organisations, non-governmental organisations and civil society - to analyse threats faced by civilians.³²³

The Policy notes the importance of *education and training* and affirms that nations are responsible for pre-deployment training in accordance with NATO standards. It also highlights that all personnel involved in NATO missions, operations and Council-mandated activities will receive mandatory training on how to identify, prevent and respond to CRSV.³²⁴

The Policy also outlines measures to respond to CRSV, asserting that “as part of NATO missions, operations and Council-mandated activities,” NATO will “respond to incidences of CRSV, consistent with International Law, as mandated by the Council, and within the approved rules of engagement up to and including the use of force.”³²⁵ The Policy outlines *five guiding principles*:

- Respect victims and survivors as individuals, honouring their informed choices in accordance with a survivor-centred approach.
- Treat victims and survivors fairly, respectfully, equally, with dignity, and without discrimination.
- Do no harm. Ensure that the implementation of the Policy causes no harm.
- Do not interrogate or interview victims and survivors.
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of victims and survivors.³²⁶

Additionally, the Policy states that NATO will coordinate its responses with other stakeholders regarding issues such as referral of victims/survivors for support and assistance, as well as the provision of temporary physical protection.³²⁷

The Policy emphasises the importance of reporting and sharing information, expressing NATO’s support for international efforts to end impunity for CRSV.³²⁸ It specifies that “information and material obtained by military forces on NATO operations, missions and Council-mandated activities, including related to CRSV, may be used to support law enforcement outcomes”.³²⁹ Furthermore, it confirms that all personnel in NATO missions, operations, and Council-mandated activities are required to report any incidents of CRSV.³³⁰

320 Ibid para 11.
321 Ibid para 15.
322 Ibid para 16.
323 Ibid para 17.
324 Ibid, para 18-19.
325 Ibid para 22.
326 Ibid para 23.
327 Ibid para 24.
328 Ibid para 28. See also Handbook for UN Field Missions on Preventing and Responding to CRSV, Chapter 10.
329 Ibid para 28.
330 Ibid para 27.

3.9 NATO Policy on Preventing and Responding to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (2019)

3.9.1 Introduction

The NATO Policy on Preventing and Responding to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (the Policy) was adopted in 2019 by the NAC and endorsed by NATO Ministers of Foreign Affairs. It “aims to instil a coherent, consistent and integrated approach and a strategic level framework to preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse across NATO”.³³¹

3.9.2 Executive summary

The Policy refers to NATO’s Code of Conduct and NATO WPS Policy and the corresponding Action Plan. These documents outline the guiding principles for all NATO personnel. The Policy highlights a zero-tolerance approach against SEA and focuses on preventative measures and response actions to address SEA. It also clarifies the roles and responsibilities of personnel, national entities, and NATO as a whole in combating SEA.

3.9.3 Extended Summary

The Policy reaffirms NATO’s zero-tolerance approach to all acts of SEA. It emphasises that SEA contradicts NATO’s core values and principles, undermines NATO’s effectiveness and credibility, and jeopardises mission success. The Policy identifies its close connections to UN policies on SEA, the NATO Code of Conduct and the NATO/EAPC Women Peace and Security Policy and Action Plan.³³²

The Policy outlines measures to prevent SEA and states that all personnel are strictly prohibited from engaging in or facilitating any form of SEA. All personnel must strive to prevent and respond to SEA within their sanctioned power and authority³³³, and are required to undergo mandatory training on how to prevent and respond to SEA.³³⁴ Nations are responsible for providing mandatory pre-deployment training for their personnel in accordance with NATO agreed standards.³³⁵ “Additionally, the Heads of NATO Bodies are responsible for providing training to their personnel”³³⁶ and “Commanders and Heads of NATO Bodies will be responsible for creating an environment conducive to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse”.³³⁷

Furthermore, the Policy stipulates that “risk factors and possible mitigation strategies will be considered in the planning and conduct of NATO and NATO-led operations, missions and other Council approved activities”.³³⁸

The Policy also outlines the response to SEA, stating that NATO will ensure the existence of complaint mechanisms that enable individuals to submit alleged cases of SEA to competent authorities

³³¹ NATO Policy on Preventing and Responding to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (2019) para 1.

³³² Ibid, para 1, 3.

³³³ Ibid para 9.

³³⁴ Ibid para 11.

³³⁵ Ibid para 11.

³³⁶ Ibid para 11.

³³⁷ Ibid para 12.

³³⁸ Ibid para 13.

appropriately.³³⁹ However, nations are responsible for investigating these allegations and pursuing the necessary administrative, disciplinary or criminal proceedings concerning their personnel.³⁴⁰ For personnel who do not fall under national responsibility, appropriate NATO authorities are responsible for conducting preliminary investigations and pursuing any appropriate administrative and disciplinary proceedings related to allegations of SEA.³⁴¹

The Policy further notes that all personnel have a duty to report any instances or allegations of SEA in accordance with established reporting mechanisms. All personnel are expected to report misconduct in good faith and to cooperate with any investigations.³⁴² The Policy stresses that all complainants, victims, survivors, and individuals accused of SEA will be treated fairly, with dignity and respect.³⁴³ Additionally, it affirms that NATO commits to a principle of ‘do no harm’.³⁴⁴

3.10 NATO Policy for the Protection of Civilians (2016)

3.10.1 Introduction

The NATO *Policy for the Protection of Civilians* (the Policy) was adopted by NAC in 2016. Its objective is to establish a coherent, consistent, and integrated approach to Protection of Civilians (PoC) in NATO and NATO-led operations, missions, and other activities mandated by the Council.³⁴⁵

3.10.2 Executive summary

The Policy complements existing policies and guidelines related to Children and Armed Conflict, WPS and CR-SGBV. This Policy aims to create a unified approach to PoC in NATO and NATO-led operations, missions and other Council-mandated activities. The Policy outlines the integration of PoC in both internal and external actions and supports humanitarian efforts. Additionally, the Policy addresses lessons learned, strategic communications, exercises and training, defence and related security capacity-building and partnership programmes.

3.10.3 Extended Summary

The Policy recognises that PoC is a cross-cutting topic relevant to all three core tasks of NATO: cooperative security, crisis management, and collective defence³⁴⁶. It also emphasises that PoC is closely linked to other thematic areas and policies within NATO, including Children and Armed Conflict, WPS and CR-SGBV. Ultimately, the Policy asserts that a robust approach to PoC is essential for maintaining NATO’s credibility and legitimacy.³⁴⁷

The Policy is *guided by a set of principles*. The Policy identifies that NATO’s approach to PoC, and the conduct of all NATO and NATO-led operations, must align with applicable legal frameworks and

³³⁹ Ibid para 15.

³⁴⁰ Ibid para 16.

³⁴¹ Ibid para 17.

³⁴² Ibid para 19.

³⁴³ Ibid para 21.

³⁴⁴ Ibid para 22.

³⁴⁵ NATO Policy for the Protection of Civilians (2016) para 8.

³⁴⁶ Ibid para 1-3.

³⁴⁷ Ibid para 1, 3.

international law³⁴⁸. The Policy clarifies that “NATO’s fulfilment of its responsibilities under this policy is subject to the legal basis for the specific NATO operation, mission or activity and to the specific Council-approved mandate”.³⁴⁹ Furthermore, it affirms that NATO recognises that all “measures must be taken to avoid, minimise and mitigate harm to civilians”. When planning and implementing such measures, NATO should consider vulnerable groups, particularly children and women, who NATO recognises as being disproportionately affected by violence.³⁵⁰

PoC includes all efforts to prevent, minimise, and mitigate the negative impacts that may arise from NATO and NATO-led military operations on civilian population. PoC may also involve, preventing, deterring, pre-empting, and responding to conflict-related violence or threats of violence against civilians when applicable.³⁵¹ The Policy recognises that avoiding, minimising, and mitigating harm to civilians is essential for fostering long-term and self-sustained peace, security, and stability, which is best achieved in cooperation with local authorities, population and civil society.³⁵²

The Policy states that, as appropriate, NATO and partner nations should integrate PoC “from the outset of NATO and NATO-led operations, missions and other Council-mandated activities.” A PoC perspective “should be implemented in the planning and conduct of operations and missions, training, education and exercises, lessons learned, as well as defence and security-related capacity building activities”.³⁵³ This includes:

- *Civilian harm mitigation from own actions*: “In the planning and conduct of military operations and missions, NATO will continue to take measures, including institutionalizing civilian harm mitigation measures”.³⁵⁴
- *Protection of civilians from others’ actions*: “By identifying the threats, including type of perpetrators, their motivation, strategies and tactics, capabilities, and the expected outcome for civilians, including through a gender-sensitive approach, NATO planners at all levels would recommend military response options for NATO and NATO-led operations, missions and other Council-mandated activities”.³⁵⁵
- *Support to humanitarian action*: In accordance with its mandate, NATO or NATO-led forces may contribute to the provision of a safe and secure environment for humanitarian workers.³⁵⁶
- *Lessons Learned on PoC*: “NATO shall identify and implement lessons learned on PoC, including through a gender-sensitive approach, in all relevant areas of operations and missions, including in training and education.”³⁵⁷
- *Strategic Communications*: Establish a clear communications and public information strategy to address PoC to enhance the credibility of operations or missions.³⁵⁸

348 Ibid para 4-5.

349 Ibid para 6.

350 Ibid para 7.

351 Ibid para 9, 11.

352 Ibid para 10.

353 Ibid para 14.

354 Ibid para 15.

355 Ibid para 16.

356 Ibid para 17.

357 Ibid para 18.

358 Ibid para 19.

- *NATO HQ-level and joint exercises*: NATO Allies and Military Authorities are encouraged to include, as appropriate, PoC elements as part of the greater exercise scenario during NATO HQ-level and joint exercises.³⁵⁹
- *Training of forces participating in NATO and NATO-led Operations and Missions*: “NATO Education and Training Facilities should continue to develop specific PoC-related modules in strategic and operational-level curricula that will take into account the differential impact of conflict on women, men, girls and boys”.³⁶⁰
- *Training of local forces*: NATO should share best practices and experiences on PoC, including civilian harm mitigation, in line with existing NATO policies and guidelines on WPS, CAC and CR-SGBV and applicable international humanitarian and international human rights law.³⁶¹
- *Defence and Related Security Capacity Building*: In line with the needs of the requesting nation, assistance may include PoC elements as part of a capacity-building package related to, in particular, NATO policies on WPS, CAC and CR-SGBV.³⁶²

“Nations with an interest in developing interoperability on PoC with NATO are encouraged to make use of partner programmes, tools and mechanisms and include PoC-related objectives as part of their partnership goals and objectives”.³⁶³

359 Ibid para 20.

360 Ibid para 21.

361 Ibid para 22.

362 Ibid para 23.

363 Ibid para 24.

3.11 Overview development of the WPS agenda within NATO

NATO is a political and military organisation that has endorsed both political and military gender-related steering documents. Notably, the 2022 Strategic Concept emphasises the need to integrate the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda across NATO's core tasks. On the political side, policies and action plans have been adopted to implement WPS, address conflict-related sexual violence, prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, and protect civilians. On the military side, directives and guidelines have been established for integrating gender perspective in military operations and addressing conflict-related sexual violence.

The applicability and scope of NATO's policies, guidelines, and directives depend on whether they are endorsed by both the political and military side. Each document's applicability and scope are delimited by its implementation responsibilities and to whom it applies, as well as the roles and responsibilities it outlines. There is a broad focus on the responsibilities of NATO, member nations, individual personnel, and leadership levels within NATO.

The NATO/EAPC Women, Peace, and Security Policy details the organisation's implementation of the UNSC's WPS agenda. This Policy underlines that "The primary responsibility for the implementation of the WPS agenda rests with nations. However, NATO as a political and military alliance contributes to the implementation by systematically integrating gender perspectives into planning and execution of operations, training, exercises, and policies, as well as dialogue and partnerships."

Moving from the political side to the military side, the NATO Bi-SC Directive 040-001 serves as the primary document providing "direction and guidance on the operationalisation of UNSR 1325 and related resolutions on WPS (...) through the integration of gender perspective". The Directive outlines how gender perspective is part of the implementation of the WPS agenda and contributes to operational effectiveness. This Directive applies to all headquarters and units within the two bi-strategic commands (NATO Allied Command Operations and NATO Allied Command Transformation) and is strongly encouraged for NATO Force Structure Commands and NATO Allies and Partners.

Coherent terminology and references are a part of NATO standardisation, with the NATOTerm Database serving as a source of information detailing NATO-agreed definitions. However, NATOTerm definitions do not automatically correspond to definitions used in policy, directives, and guidelines.

Across all documents, there is a consistent emphasis on the prevention of and response to CRSV and SEA, as well as the integration of gender perspective and WPS across:

- All NATO core tasks: cooperative security, collective defence, and crisis management.
- All phases and stages of operations and missions.
- Individual and collective education and training.

Other recurring themes in NATO documents, both the political and military, include the integration of gender perspective and gender analysis across all levels and phases, alongside the prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence, particularly SEA and CRSV. Individual education and training, collective training, raising awareness, and gender mainstreaming are frequently addressed as key methods to ensure the broader implementation of gender perspective and the WPS agenda.

3.12 Related documents

- NATO Strategic Concept (2022)
 - The Strategic Concept outlines NATO's purpose and principles, the strategic environment, and NATO's core tasks. The Strategic Concept emphasises that the WPS agenda will be integrated across NATO core tasks and is a key part of enhancing cooperation between EU and NATO regarding the WPS agenda.
- Allied Joint Publication-01 'Allied Joint Doctrine' (2022)³⁶⁴
 - Specifically Annex B on Gender and Women, Peace, and Security. This Annex outlines NATO's commitment to integrating a gender perspective into military operations and emphasises the importance of considering WPS in these contexts.
- NATO Military Committee Military Guidelines on Prevention of, and Response to, Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (2022)³⁶⁵
- NATO Policy on the Prevention, Management and Combating of Harassment Bullying and Discrimination in the Workplace
- NATO Human Security Approach and Guiding Principles (2022)
- ACO Gender Functional Planning Guide (2015)
- SOP 106 'Gender Advisors Function in JTF and JFC Headquarters' (2016)
- ACO Directive 040-016 (2023)

³⁶⁴ In addition to AJP-01, NATO efforts to gender mainstream across its doctrinal publications.

³⁶⁵ Guidelines are currently not releasable to the public.

4 European Union (EU)

The EU is a political and economic union comprising 27 Member States. It traces its origins to the European Coal and Steel Community, established in 1951, and the European Economic Community, founded in 1957. The formal establishment of the European Union took place in 1993.

The EU aims to promote peace and provide freedom, security, and justice within its borders. It seeks to establish an internal market, achieve sustainable development, and enhance economic, social, and territorial cohesion and solidarity among its Member States. Furthermore, the EU aspires to establish an economic and monetary union.

Externally, the EU strives to uphold and promote its values and interests, contribute to peace and security, and protect human rights while observing international law.³⁶⁶ The European External Action Service (EEAS) coordinates EU's external action, while the EU Military Staff (EUMS) offers military expertise, strategic planning, and early warning capabilities, among other functions.³⁶⁷

Additionally, the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) enables the EU to engage in peace-keeping operations, conflict prevention, and the enhancement of international security. The CSDP is part of EU's comprehensive approach to crisis management, utilising both civilian and military resources. EU has identified that “The scale and complexity of the inter-linked security threats and challenges that the EU is facing are beyond the capacity of a single Member State. That is why Member States decided to work closer together on the EU level to build a strong Common Security and Defence Policy”.³⁶⁸

4.1 Definitions

The following definitions are outlined in the respective guiding documents and may not be officially adopted by the organisation or applicable department.

- Gender
- Gender equality
- Gender analysis
- Gender perspective
- Gender mainstreaming
- Sexual and gender-based violence
- Sex-disaggregated data (SADD) collection
- Sexual Exploitation and Abuse:

³⁶⁶ EU, 'Aims and values', https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/principles-and-values/aims-and-values_en accessed 12 March 2026.

³⁶⁷ European Union External Action Service (2022) The European Union Military Staff (EUMS) The European Union Military Staff (EUMS) | EEAS Website (europa.eu)

³⁶⁸ European External Action Service (2021) The shaping of a Common Security and Defence Policy. The shaping of a Common Security and Defence Policy | EEAS Website (europa.eu)

GENDER:

Gender refers to “the social construction of women/female and men/male, through cultural and social attitudes and behaviours towards men, women, boys and girls. Gender norms change over time and as such they are context-specific and dynamic. Gender interacts with other social factors such as ethnicity, age, professional and economic status, sexual orientation and identity, etc.” 369

Gender constitutes “the social differences and social relations between women and men. It goes beyond the sex of the individual to include the way relationships are socially constructed. A person’s gender is learned through socialization and is heavily influenced by the culture of the society concerned. The gender of a person may result in different roles, responsibilities, opportunities, needs and constraints for women, men, girls and boys. Gender norms change over time and are context-specific and dynamic. Gender interacts with other social factors such as ethnicity, age, professional and economic status, sexual orientation and identity. There is a need for an intersectional approach that takes into account the diversity of identities and situations” 370

GENDER EQUALITY:

Gender equality refers to “the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women’s issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people centred development.” 371

GENDER ANALYSIS:

Gender analysis is “a tool to understand the social and power dynamics between women, men, girls and boys within a given context, and to identify gender inequality. The analysis can detect different needs and opportunities as well as inequalities.” 372

“An analysis from a gender perspective helps to see whether the needs of women and men are equally taken into account and served by a proposal. It enables policymakers to develop policies with an understanding of the socio-economic reality of women and men and allows for policies to take (gender) differences into account.” 373

GENDER PERSPECTIVE:

“A gender perspective is an instrument for approaching reality by questioning the power relationships established between men and women, and social relationships in general. It is a conceptual framework, an interpretation methodology and critical analysis instrument that guides decisions, broadens and alters views, and that enables us to reconstruct concepts, scrutinise attitudes and identify gender biases and conditionings, for subsequently considering and modification through dialogue their revision” 374

“Gender perspective helps to see whether the policies and activities take equally into account the needs of both women and men. It aims to a better understanding of the socio- economic reality of women and men and encourages the policies to integrate these gender differences into action. A gender perspective is an instrument for approaching reality by questioning the power relationships between men and women, and social relationships in general”. 375

As such, gender perspective is “a method of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action including legislation policies or programs in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women and men an integral dimension of design implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes. Its aims is to ensure that women and men benefit equally and that inequality is not perpetuated.” 376

369 EU Civilian Operations Commander Operational Guidelines for Mission Management and Staff on Gender Mainstreaming (2018) p 7f.

370 EU Operational Guidance on Gender Mainstreaming to the Military Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) (2022) p 5.

371 EU Civilian Operations Commander Operational Guidelines for Mission Management and Staff on Gender Mainstreaming (2018) p 8; EU Operational Guidance on Gender Mainstreaming to the Military Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) (2022) p 5.

372 EU Civilian Operations Commander Operational Guidelines for Mission Management and Staff on Gender Mainstreaming (2018) p 11. See also p 9 in EU Operational Guidance on Gender Mainstreaming to the Military Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) (2022).

373 EU Civilian Operations Commander Operational Guidelines for Mission Management and Staff on Gender Mainstreaming (2018) p 8.

374 EU Civilian Operations Commander Operational Guidelines for Mission Management and Staff on Gender Mainstreaming (2018) p 8.

375 EU Operational Guidance on Gender Mainstreaming to the Military Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) (2022) p 5.

376 EU Operational Guidance on Gender Mainstreaming to the Military Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) (2022) p 5.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING:

Gender mainstreaming refers to “the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making. In other words, it involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures and spending programmes, with a view to promoting equality between women and men, and combating discrimination.” 377

Gender mainstreaming “aims is to ensure that women and men benefit equally and that inequality is not perpetuated. It is important to note that gender mainstreaming does not focus solely on women, although women are usually the targets and beneficiaries of mainstreaming practices due to their disadvantaged position in many communities. Gender mainstreaming and integrating a gender perspective are methods of achieving gender equality”. 378

SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE:

Sexual and gender-based violence is “an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will, and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females. Acts of SGBV violate a number of universal human rights protected by international instruments and conventions. Many – but not all – forms of SGBV are illegal and criminal acts in national laws and policies. Around the world, SGBV has a greater impact on women and girls than on men and boys. It is important to note, however, that men and boys may also be victims of gender-based violence, especially sexual violence”. 379

SEX-DISAGGREGATED DATA (SADD) COLLECTION:

SADD collection is “part of the successful integration of a gender perspective in planning, implementation, reporting, monitoring and evaluation. Sex-disaggregated data offers specific details about women and men together as well as other social factors such as age, geographical area, ethnicity and religion”. 380

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE:

“Sexual exploitation means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, power differential, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation on another; while sexual abuse means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions”. 381

4.2 Mapping

- EU Operational Guidance on Gender Mainstreaming to the Military Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) (2022)
- EU Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security (2018)
- EU Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2019-2024)
- EU Implementation of UNSCRs on Women, Peace and Security in the Context of CSDP Missions and Operations (2012)
- EU Upgraded Generic Standards of Behaviour for CSDP Missions and Operations (2017)
- EU Concept on Protection of Civilians in EU-led Military Operations (2015)

377 EU Civilian Operations Commander Operational Guidelines for Mission Management and Staff on Gender Mainstreaming (2018) p 8.

378 EU Operational Guidance on Gender Mainstreaming to the Military Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) (2022) p 5.

379 EU Civilian Operations Commander Operational Guidelines for Mission Management and Staff on Gender Mainstreaming (2018) p 8; EU Operational Guidance on Gender Mainstreaming to the Military Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) (2022) p 5.

380 EU Operational Guidance on Gender Mainstreaming to the Military Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) (2022) p 5.

381 EU Upgraded Generic Standards of Behaviour for CSDP missions and Operations (2017) para 30.

4.3 EU Operational Guidance on Gender Mainstreaming to the Military Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) (2022)

4.3.1 Introduction

The EU *Operational Guidance on Gender Mainstreaming to the Military Common Security and Defence Policy* (the Guidance) is a working document produced by the European External Action Service (EEAS) in 2022.³⁸² It is designed to support Management and Staff of CSDP Military Missions and Operations at the operational and tactical levels in effectively and systematically mainstreaming a gender perspective.³⁸³ This integration should occur both externally throughout the delivery of the Mission and Operation mandate and internally within the functions of the Mission and Operation. The Guidance addresses all phases of the CSDP Missions and Operations cycle and focuses on the internal procedures of the Mission/Operation. Additionally it emphasises the importance of partnerships and effective communications in promoting the implementation of the WPS agenda.³⁸⁴

4.3.2 Executive summary

The Guidance aims to support the Management and Staff of Military CSDP Missions and Operations in systematically and effectively mainstreaming gender perspective. It emphasises both the external integration of a gender perspective throughout the delivery of the Mission and Operation mandate and the internal integration of a gender perspective within the functions of the Mission/Operation. The Guidance includes an introduction to the EU framework on WPS and gender mainstreaming, as well as insights into why, what, and how to integrate a gender perspective in Military CSDP missions and operations. Key considerations include the collection of sex-disaggregated data, gender perspective in external operations, gender analysis, the roles of gender advisers and focal points, and gender-responsive leadership. The Guidance further explains that integrating a gender perspective is “both a goal (the right thing to do) based on the EU policy framework [...] and a means to achieve operational effectiveness (doing things right) notably through improved situational awareness.”³⁸⁵

4.3.3 Extended Summary

The Guidance states that the immediate purpose of gender mainstreaming “is to ensure that boys and men, girls and women do not face discrimination and benefit equally from policies and actions. It is important to ensure that those policies and actions do not exacerbate or perpetuate gender inequalities. The long-term objective for gender mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.”³⁸⁶

The Guidance reaffirms that the promotion and protection of human rights and gender equality are fundamental values, norms, and principles of the EU, as well key objectives for the EU’s external action, including its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Additionally, all CSDP Missions and Operations have a general duty to adhere to and implement the UNSCR 1325 and WPS framework.³⁸⁷

³⁸² EU Operational Guidance on Gender Mainstreaming to the Military Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) (2022) p 1.

³⁸³ Ibid p 3.

³⁸⁴ Ibid p 3.

³⁸⁵ Ibid p 6.

³⁸⁶ Ibid p 3.

³⁸⁷ Ibid p 3.

In this regard, the EU framework on implementation of WPS is referenced, along with the EU Gender Action Plan, which provides the overall strategic framework for integrating gender considerations into EU external actions.³⁸⁸ The Guidance specifies that EU action should contribute to:

- “Supporting and conducting capacity-building and mentoring on women’s leadership”;
- “Establishing and institutionalising consultative mechanisms on all conflict-related issues with grassroots women activists and civil society organisations in conflict-related settings”;
- “Rolling out mandatory training on mainstreaming gender perspectives for all staff”;
- “Promoting and supporting inclusive policies/activities across the whole WPS agenda with full and equitable participation by women, men, boys and girls”;
- “Promoting and strengthening of the rule of law, the criminal justice systems through transitional and restorative justice, and Security Sector Reform (SSR), and to end impunity for perpetrators of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) crimes”;
- “Promoting the provision of support to all victims/survivors of SGBV”.

On this note, the Guidance outlines *three minimum standards*:

1. “conduct and use updated gender analysis to inform decision-making on future action and integrating these into all relevant dialogues, policies, strategies, programmes and operations”
2. “apply gender-sensitive and sex-disaggregated indicators and statistics to monitoring and evaluation”
3. “based on the gender analysis, identify actions that may contribute to gender equality”.³⁸⁹

The Guidance also references the Strategic Compass on Security and Defence (2022), which reaffirms the impact of gender inequality on European Defence and Security. The Guidance further affirms that European Military Staff (EUMS) “aims to implement the gender dimension in the Strategic Compass, and integrating a gender perspective internally and externally into the Military CSDP”.³⁹⁰

The Guidance elaborates on the rationale for integrating gender into military CSDP, noting that “striving for gender equality and incorporating gender perspectives are both a goal (the right thing to do) based on the EU policy framework mentioned above and a means to achieve operational effectiveness (doing things right) notably through improved situational awareness.”³⁹¹ The following reasons for integrating gender into the military CSDP are particularly highlighted:

- The changing nature of conflicts and the need to protect civilians
- Human Security and Situational Awareness
- The legitimacy of local security institutions
- The credibility and sustainability of the EU’s contribution to peace and security
- Leading by example³⁹²

³⁸⁸ Ibid p 3-4.

³⁸⁹ Ibid p 4-5.

³⁹⁰ Ibid p 6.

³⁹¹ Ibid p 6.

³⁹² Ibid p 6.

The Guidance outlines the necessary steps to integrate gender perspective into the Military CSDP across all military levels.

- At the *strategic level*, ensure that gender perspective and the UNSCR 1325 are incorporated into the Military CSDP Mission and Operation mandate, along with clear strategic aims related to both.
- At the *operational level*, “The strategic political aims are to be translated into military tasks at the core of Military CSDP Missions’ activities. The planning process should incorporate a gender-specific analysis of the mandate, operational environment, and internal structures.”³⁹³
- At the *tactical level*, “Gender perspective is to be integrated in everyday operations. To understand the security needs of the civilian population, it is important to understand the different conditions and contexts that men, women, girls and boys are subjected to in the operational area.” “It is essential to be aware of the risk of misleading gender stereotypes, such as considering women only as victims instead of also possible perpetrators of violence, in the interest of force protection in the area of operations”.³⁹⁴
- The Guidance identifies several *key areas of importance* to the Military CSDP Missions and Operations within the WPS Framework. These include:
 - Strengthening the *participation* of women in all efforts related to peace and security at all levels (internal and external participation).
 - Promoting the *protection* of women and developing the capacity to address gender-based violence in conflict situations (internal and external dimensions).
 - *Integrating gender perspective* into the operational and organisational structures (internal and external dimension).³⁹⁵

The Guidance outlines how to integrate a gender perspective into military CSDP. It highlights the importance of collecting sex-disaggregated data, noting that “relevant and sufficient data needs to be available in order to provide the senior management and the operational staff an accurate picture of the context”. This requires the gathering of sex-disaggregated data, broken down by sex and other social factors such as age, geographical area, ethnicity or religion. Such data is indispensable for the successful integration of a gender perspective in planning and implementation of activities, both for external engagement and internal functioning.³⁹⁶

The Guidance also underlines the importance of integrating a gender perspective in external operations and recommends developing a Gender Action Plan (GAP) for each mission and operation. These GAPs should be adapted to the context and framework of the mandate and should reflect how the mission and operation aspire to contribute to EU policies on gender equality, women’s empowerment, and the WPS agenda.

The Guidance highlights that “Gender mainstreaming aims to support achieving the Mission’s and Operation’s mandate”. “All staff members should integrate gender perspective in their work at all times.” “Gender mainstreaming should be included in all of the phases of the cycle of the operations,

³⁹³ Ibid p 7.

³⁹⁴ Ibid p 7.

³⁹⁵ Ibid p 7-8.

³⁹⁶ Ibid p 8.

including analysis, planning, implementation, reporting, monitoring and evaluation, and strategic review. Effective gender mainstreaming begins with a gender analysis.”³⁹⁷

The Guidance defines gender analysis as “a process of collecting and analysing sex-disaggregated information in order to understand gender differences.” A gender analysis “recognises that women and men’s lives as well as experiences, needs, issues and priorities are different. A gender analysis looks at the different roles and activities that women and men, girls and boys may have in a particular society and the social relationships between them.” “The analysis starts with integrating a gender perspective by collecting information, facts and sex-disaggregated data. The composition of the team and the target audience should be gender balanced.”³⁹⁸

In relation to the planning activities and identification of Quick Impact Projects, operational planning teams must consider gender aspects within the Operational Headquarters (OHQs) and Force Headquarters (FHQs) of Military CSDP Missions and Operations. “The planning stage allows identifying key entry points for gender mainstreaming, targeted actions and a gender related dialogue with international and local partners.”³⁹⁹

For effective mandate implementation, the Guidance emphasises that “the Gender Adviser, together Gender Focal Points, should regularly monitor how well gender is mainstreamed in the internal and external activities, while also implementing the specific gender-related activities in line with the Mission and Operation Gender Action Plan”.⁴⁰⁰

Furthermore, the Guidance stresses the importance of integrating a gender perspective in planning, implementing, and evaluating training activities.⁴⁰¹ It also underscores the need to incorporate gender-related activities and considerations into reporting⁴⁰², monitoring, evaluation⁴⁰³, and review processes.⁴⁰⁴

The Guidance states that the EU should lead by example and integrate gender perspectives internally. The promotion of gender and the WPS Agenda by the Military CSDP Missions and Operations in host countries can only be credible if a gender perspective is integrated into their internal procedures and activities. The Guidance elaborates on the significance of gender-responsive leadership and emphasises the commitment of senior management to human rights and gender mainstreaming within military CSDP Missions and Operations. The Gender Adviser is responsible for advising senior management on “the best ways to integrate a gender perspective into the analysis, planning, implementation and reporting”.⁴⁰⁵

Moreover, the Guidance highlights that “internal integration of a gender perspective includes the working environment and human resources as well as internal staff trainings and codes of conduct”. In this context, the Guidance provides a template for an organisational self-assessment report to help identify key priorities for promoting the internal integration of gender perspectives.⁴⁰⁶

³⁹⁷ Ibid p 9.

³⁹⁸ Ibid p 9.

³⁹⁹ Ibid p 11.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid p 12.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid p 12.

⁴⁰² Ibid p 13.

⁴⁰³ Ibid p 14.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid p 14.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid p 15.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid p 15-16.

Regarding human resources, the Guidance confirms that while EU Member States hold the primary responsibility, “the EU is committed to making special efforts to increase the number of women in the Military CSDP Missions and Operations”.

Regarding internal gender training, the Guidance notes that all military CSDP missions and operations should deliver training for new personnel on the EU framework on WPS and gender mainstreaming. This training should also include information on Codes of Conduct and Standards of Behaviour. Additionally, specific gender training should be provided for all staff members to “increase awareness and improve gender mainstreaming, and to ensure that the integration of a gender perspective at a practical level on a daily basis, both internally and externally”.⁴⁰⁷

In terms of gender expertise and structures for gender mainstreaming, the Guidance affirms that while senior management is ultimately responsible for integrating a gender perspective, each mission and operation should have a dedicated Gender Adviser. The Gender Adviser is expected to provide advice to senior management, possess “some background or interest in the gender mainstreaming and the WPS agenda”, and “focus both on gender policy and external coordination”, as well as “internal processes in line with the Gender Action Plan”. The Gender Adviser will also coordinate a network of Gender Focal Points, who are to identify specific gender-related opportunities within various operational departments of the mission and operation. GFPs are appointed voluntarily, serving in their respective operational departments and may receive special gender training as preparation for their task.⁴⁰⁸ The Guidance provides a list of non-exhaustive lists of tasks and responsibilities for both Gender Adviser and GFPs.⁴⁰⁹

For gender coordination in military CSDP, the Missions and Operations Gender Monitoring Team (MOGMT) serves as the main forum for regular discussions on gender and WPS-related cooperation at the operational level. The Guidance outlines the key tasks and responsibilities of the MOGMT, which include promoting WPS partnerships with NATO, the United Nations, and other international organisations. Furthermore, the Guidance states that the Gender Advisers of the missions are integral members of the MOGMT and are regularly invited to report on their gender-related activities and share best practices and lessons learned.⁴¹⁰

Effective integration of a gender perspective requires effective strategic communication, which fosters transparency, raises awareness, and strengthens organisational commitment. “Internally, the communication strategy aims to ensure transparency, and to explain clearly the concept and strategy of gender mainstreaming.” “Externally, a communication strategy helps to make gender equality a visible part of an organisations external self-portrayal and identity”.⁴¹¹

The Guidance highlights the importance of seeking coordination, synergies, and complementarity in partnerships with IOs, NGOs, and local partners to promote gender equality and the WPS agenda.⁴¹² Key actors to consider include the EU Integrated Approach, which involves cooperation with all EU entities, international organisations such as the UN and NATO, NGOs, think tanks, national administrations in host countries, and local civil society.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid p 17.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid p 17-18.

⁴⁰⁹ For Gender Adviser see p 17-18, for GFP see p 18.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid p 19.

⁴¹¹ Ibid p 19.

⁴¹² Ibid p 21.

Additionally, the Guidance provides further readings, including core texts⁴¹³, EU documents⁴¹⁴ and sources⁴¹⁵, materials from other organisations working on WPS⁴¹⁶, and various training courses⁴¹⁷ and materials⁴¹⁸.

The Guidance also includes annexes in the form of a Template Gender Action Plan⁴¹⁹ and a Template for the CSDP Missions’ and Operations’ Annual Report regarding the Implementation of the Gender Action Plan (GAP III).⁴²⁰

4.4 EU Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security (2018)

4.4.1 Introduction

The EU *Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security* (the Strategic Approach), established in 2018, was developed at the request of the EU Member States. It was coordinated by the EEAS in consultation with all relevant stakeholders at the EU institutional level. The Strategic Approach received endorsement from the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, which included it in the WPS Council Conclusions of the same year.

The Strategic Approach aims to “ensure that women and girls from diverse and variable backgrounds are entitled to participate equitably and substantially in preventing and resolving conflicts, and in preventing CRSV, including all forms of SGBV”.⁴²¹ The EU Strategic Approach to WPS is further supported by an accompanying Action Plan.⁴²²

4.4.2 Executive summary

The Strategic Approach builds upon and replaces the 2008 document titled ‘Comprehensive Approach to the EU implementation of the UNSCRs 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security’. It aims to reaffirm the holistic implementation of the WPS agenda and recognises gender equality and women’s empowerment as a prerequisite for preventing, managing, and resolving conflicts.

“The EU Strategic Approach to WPS emphasizes the need for concrete commitments and actions as well as the need to engage, empower, protect, and support women and girls in order to achieve sustainable and lasting peace and security as intrinsic components of human rights and sustainable development”.⁴²³

The Strategic Approach is accompanied by the EU Action Plan on WPS, which replaces the previous document, ‘Implementation of the UNSCRs on Women, Peace and Security in the context of

⁴¹³ Ibid p 22.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid p 22-23.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid p 23.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid p 23-24.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid p 24.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid p 25.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid p 27.

⁴²⁰ Ibid p 28.

⁴²¹ EU Council Conclusions on Women, Peace and Security p 7.

⁴²² Ibid para 9 p 5.

⁴²³ Ibid para 2, p 2.

CSDP Missions and operations'. The EU Strategic Approach to WPS and the EU Action Plan on WPS should be read in conjunction.

4.4.3 Extended Summary

The Strategic Approach begins by stating the Council Conclusions on WPS, which emphasises that “the WPS Agenda is to be given effect in all EU external action and reiterates EU’s commitment to use gender analysis, collect disaggregated data and mainstream gender perspective”.⁴²⁴ Additionally, the Council Conclusions states that “the WPS agenda aims to ensure that rights, agency and protection of women are always observed and upheld before, during and after conflict. The WPS agenda should be implemented internally and externally by integrating a gender perspective and women’s participation in all contexts, from conflict analysis to subsequent actions, including dialogue facilitation, mediation, peace negotiations and other.”⁴²⁵

Regarding the interlinkages between the Strategic Approach and the EU Gender Action Plan, the Council Conclusions confirm that “The Council welcomes the complementarity and synergies between the EU Gender Action Plan (GAP II)⁴²⁶ and the EU Strategic Approach to WPS.”⁴²⁷ The Council underlines that both the Strategic Approach and GAP II serves as “relevant policy frameworks for eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence that women and girls suffer from.”⁴²⁸

*EU Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security*⁴²⁹

The Strategic Approach reiterates that equality between men and women is a foundational value enriched in the EU Charter. It affirms that the EU’s policy for implementing the WPS agenda aligns with the principles and commitments established in the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and CEDAW.⁴³⁰ The Strategic Approach highlights that the EU and its Member States (MS) recognise women and girls as key agents of development and change, particularly in peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and humanitarian response.⁴³¹

The Strategic Approach outlines the basic principles and priorities of the EU’s WPS policy, its overall objectives, standard definitions, and the EU’s common approach for its implementation. It provides guidance to ensure that the EU’s external actions fully respect its comprehensive policy framework on gender equality, women’s empowerment, and WPS.⁴³² The Strategic Approach highlights the necessity of addressing the gender-related root causes of violence as critical to conflict prevention.⁴³³

The Strategic Approach emphasises that the WPS agenda aims to address all aspects of conflict and gender before, during, and after conflict while recognising women’s protection and participation as essential components.⁴³⁴ The Strategic Approach highlights that the WPS agenda is universally appli-

⁴²⁴ Ibid para 3 p 3.

⁴²⁵ Ibid para 6 p 4.

⁴²⁶ Since the EU Strategic Approach to Women Peace and Security from 2018, EU Gender Action Plan III (2020) has been adopted and replaced EU Gender Action Plan II.

⁴²⁷ Ibid para 8 p 4.

⁴²⁸ Ibid para 8 p 4.

⁴²⁹ The Strategic Approach commences with an executive summary of the document, see p 6-9.

⁴³⁰ Ibid para 1, p 10.

⁴³¹ Ibid para 3 p 12.

⁴³² Ibid para 4, p 13.

⁴³³ Ibid para 5 p 14.

⁴³⁴ Ibid para 6, p 14.

able and must be endorsed internally and externally. It further identifies that the WPS agenda calls for a systematic incorporation of gender considerations in peace and security matters.⁴³⁵

The Strategic Approach notes that while ensuring women’s security and safety remain key objectives and the disproportionate violence women suffer in conflict must be recognised, it is imperative to recognise and support women as active actors in conflict scenarios. Women should not be viewed solely as peacemakers or victims, as they fulfil a variety of roles in these situations.⁴³⁶

The Strategic Approach identifies *key objectives and requirements*, stressing the importance of the participation of women and girls from diverse backgrounds in all areas of policy and programming related to peace and security.⁴³⁷ It affirms that the EU will promote and protect the full enjoyment of human rights for all women and girls, recognising this as essential for achieving peace, security, human rights, and sustainable development, in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁴³⁸ This includes:

- Emphasising gender equality and human rights in EU external action
- Implementing the WPS agenda in non-EU countries
- Understanding the underlying reasons for violence and discrimination against women
- “Securing adequate and accessible funding for conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives”⁴³⁹
- “Guaranteeing women’s participation in peace and decision-making process”
- “Supporting and enabling the EEAS principal advisor on gender”
- “Promoting engagement on positive masculinity”
- “Investing in gender-sensitive peacebuilding”⁴⁴⁰
- “Actively engaging CSOs”
- “Increasing support for identifying and addressing the gender-related drivers of fragility and violent and armed conflict”
- “Addressing challenges linked to institutional approaches to gender mainstreaming”
- “Acknowledging that women, men, girls and boys all play important roles in achieving peace, security and gender equality”⁴⁴¹

The Strategic Approach identifies a set of key principles that emphasises the importance the WPS agenda’s internal and external implementation. This includes supporting domestic women’s organisations, human rights defenders, and the integration of a gender perspective into early warning systems and structures. These efforts aim to strengthen the link between the WPS agenda and counterterrorism initiatives.⁴⁴²

⁴³⁵ Ibid para 7-8, p 15.

⁴³⁶ Ibid para 10, p 16.

⁴³⁷ Ibid para 14, p 17.

⁴³⁸ Ibid para 15, p 17.

⁴³⁹ Ibid para 16a-c, p. 18.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid para 16f-j, p 19.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid para 16k-p, p 20.

⁴⁴² Ibid para 17f, p. 21.

Furthermore, the Strategic Approach specifies the need for a holistic perspective, highlighting that gender equality, peace, security, development and human rights are interconnected. Therefore, it is essential to address the root causes of both gender inequality and conflict.⁴⁴³ The protection of women in conflict situations and the promotion of their participation in all aspects of peace and security must be supported by broader developmental considerations, including the promotion of women's civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights.⁴⁴⁴ Gender equality is a central objective of all EU external actions.⁴⁴⁵

Additionally, the Strategic Approach promotes gender mainstreaming. It states that “Gender analysis and a gender perspective should be systematically integrated into all EU action aiming to prevent conflict and respond to threats faced by civilians before, during and after conflict. (...) Moreover, a strengthened commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment in the EU's activities can improve their efficiency and effectiveness.”⁴⁴⁶

Further actions include:

- “Integrate a gender perspective into all EU actions”;
- “Promote gender mainstreaming as a key strategy”
- Based on gender analysis, systematically integrate gender perspective into all peace and security fields and activities;
- Ensuring the Systematic reflection of WPS perspectives in the design and implementation of EU's integrated approach to conflict and crisis⁴⁴⁷;
- Integrating gender perspective into all aspects of conflict prevention and sustaining peace;
- “Systematically integrate a gender perspective into EU action that aims to support non-EU countries' efforts on peace and security”;
- “Ensure that the priorities, capacities, needs and vulnerabilities of women and girls are prioritised and addressed when responding to fragile and conflict-affected situations and in development cooperation and humanitarian response⁴⁴⁸;
- Systematically integrate gender perspective in planning and conducting CSDP missions and operations and humanitarian response;
- Ensuring that all CSDP missions and operations deployed in fragile and conflict-affected situations, as well as in humanitarian emergencies and civil protection interventions, include sufficient capacity and resources for integrating a gender perspective;
- “Systematically integrate a gender perspective into all EU-funded conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions”.⁴⁴⁹

The Strategic Approach promotes the equal and meaningful participation of women and girls, men and boys from diverse backgrounds, identifying this as both a standalone objective and a prerequisite

⁴⁴³ Ibid para 20f, p 22.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid para 22, p 23.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid para 23f, p 23.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid p 24.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid p 25.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid p 26.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid p 27.

of peace, security, and sustainable development.⁴⁵⁰ Further EU actions aimed at promoting participation include:

- “Support women's leadership and participation in all stages of peace processes both through diplomacy and financial support”;
- Recruiting, retaining, appointing, and supporting the career development of women at all levels;
- “Promote the meaningful and equitable participation of women security personnel in security/military operations (...) without re-enforcing gender stereotypes of the expectations of women and men”;
- Removing barriers to the equal participation of women and men in EU delegations, CSDP missions and operations⁴⁵¹;
- “Promote participation, partnerships and networking with civil society”; and “Promote a balanced representation of women and men from diverse backgrounds.”⁴⁵²

The Strategic Approach also emphasises the importance of prevention, stating that “gender-responsive early warning and conflict analysis that pays greater attention to the gender-related root causes of violence make conflict prevention more effective”.⁴⁵³ It further promotes gender equality and women's empowerment in the long term during stages of fragility, conflict, relief, and recovery. Key initiatives include:

- Supporting efforts that address the root causes of violence;
- “Support inclusive civil society initiatives at the community, national, regional and global levels to build sustainable peace and to transform gender-based inequalities”;
- “Support and promote prevention of and victim-centred responses to SGBV and SEA that could occur in the crisis context or arise from or within security, military, development or humanitarian operations”; and
- “Promote gender analysis and the systematic integration of gender perspectives into all mediation and conflict prevention activities.”⁴⁵⁴

Additionally, the Strategic Approach underscores the importance of *protection*, noting that the experiences, roles, and needs of diverse individuals -women, men, girls and boys- differ in the context of armed conflict, prevention, protection, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and reconstruction. It is essential to analyse, assess and address these differences to ensure adequate responses from EU actors. The Strategic Approach highlights that SGBV disproportionately affects women throughout the peace and conflict continuum in both public and private spheres.⁴⁵⁵ Key components include:

- Continuing “to promote full respect of international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls in conflict, especially as civilians”;
- “Promote a system-wide approach to preventing, reporting and punishing SEA and sexual harassment”;

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid para 28, p 28.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid p 29.

⁴⁵² Ibid p 30.

⁴⁵³ Ibid para 31f, p 31.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid p 32f.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid para 37, p 35.

- “Adopt, implement and promote internal and external policies of zero tolerance to discrimination, SEA, trafficking in human beings, sexual assault and sexual harassment.”⁴⁵⁶; and
- “Address CRSV as part of a continuum of GBV closely intertwined with persistent inequalities and broader attacks on gender equality and women’s human rights, including, but not limited to, digital and cyber violence.”⁴⁵⁷

In terms of relief and recovery, the Strategic Approach outlines that EU actions should:

- “Promote women’s participation and leadership in humanitarian action and development programmes”⁴⁵⁸;
- “Ensure that every person who has suffered from SGBV has the right and access to comprehensive healthcare information and services, justice and reparations.”;
- “Ensure that victims are not re-victimised, rejected or ostracised.”; and
- “Ensure, through adequate resourcing, that women are at the centre of humanitarian response, relief and recovery work and of development assistance and programming.”⁴⁵⁹

Regarding the normative framework on equality between women and men, the Strategic Approach reiterates that equality between women and men is a fundamental human right, enshrined in both EU policy and international obligations and commitments.⁴⁶⁰

The Strategic Approach highlights the importance of strengthening local, national and regional ownership while ensuring ongoing consultation and collaboration with local stakeholders and civil society. An inclusive peace process is more likely to identify and address the root causes of conflict and meet the needs of the affected populations.⁴⁶¹

The Strategic Approach also recognises that cooperation and dialogue with other actors are critical for the effective implementation of the WPS agenda. It emphasises the significance of sharing analyses, lessons learned, and resources. Dialogue should occur at local, national, regional, and international levels, as well as between these levels and with CSOs.⁴⁶²

The Strategic Approach identifies four supportive measures.

1. *Political Support*: Effective implementation of the WPS agenda requires a holistic and inclusive approach supported by strong political leadership and commitment.⁴⁶³
2. *Funding and Resources*: Adequate funding is essential for gender mainstreaming, achieving gender balance, and implementing specific actions to promote gender equality.⁴⁶⁴ EU actions in this regard include making it “a requirement to include a budget for gender expertise and/or advisors in all CSDP operations and missions as well as in EU delegations”. Additionally, the EU encourages “the practice of gender analysis as a requirement for EU external action financing”.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid p 36.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid p 39.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid p 40.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid p 41.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid para 42, p 42.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid para 43, p 44.

⁴⁶² Ibid para 44, p 45.

⁴⁶³ Ibid para 45, p 46.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid para 46, p 49.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid p 50.

3. *Capacity Building and Training*: Building capacities and improving education and training related to sustainable peace, security, and gender equality are fundamental to the implementation of the WPS agenda.⁴⁶⁶ Further actions include intensifying and consolidating training at all levels, integrating a gender perspective into all crisis management activities, providing gender equality training for personnel, and supporting training for governmental and non-governmental partners.⁴⁶⁷
4. *Exchange of information and best practices*: Noting the importance of building internal and external partnerships and alliances.⁴⁶⁸

The Strategic Approach stresses that leadership, accountability, and adequate resourcing at all levels are critical for the effective implementation of the WPS agenda, which requires a solid understanding of gender equality and the WPS agenda.⁴⁶⁹ Further actions include ensuring that management staff includes responsibilities related to gender equality and WPS in the job descriptions of all leadership positions, as well as ensuring that these elements are incorporated into the evaluation criteria of management staff. Additionally it underlines the importance of ensuring that individuals “employed or deployed by the EU in leadership positions have received advanced training on gender equality and WPS prior to deployment”.⁴⁷⁰

The Strategic Approach elaborates on support functions, highlighting that the roles of Gender Advisers (GAs) and GFPs are “central to translating the EU policies on gender equality, women’s empowerment and WPS into analysis, planning, conduct and evaluation. GAs and GFPs also play an important role in facilitating the integration of gender perspectives into daily tasks and operations.”⁴⁷¹ The Strategic Approach affirms that the EU will ensure that the GAs and GFPs are strategically positioned and have sufficient resources; continue to strengthen the GA capability function and capacity within the EU; promote gender balance among GAs and GFPs; and encourage the wider use of GFP structures to facilitate and promote gender mainstreaming in daily tasks.⁴⁷²

The Strategic Approach highlights that the EU has a robust monitoring, evaluation and reporting system.⁴⁷³ It underscores the importance of effective, inclusive, and transparent monitoring and evaluation of the WPS agenda, which necessitates collaboration and partnership among the EU institutions, member states, and civil society.⁴⁷⁴ The Strategic Approach expresses that the EU will further develop and employ indicators to implement its strategic approach on WPS. This includes systematising sex-disaggregated data across the EU’s external policies and ensuring that impact analyses extend beyond merely describing/reporting general data on gender inequality. The goal is also to enhance the effectiveness, harmonisation, and streamlining of all EU reporting relating to gender equality, women’s empowerment, and WPS. Moreover, it seeks to encourage effective participation from inclusive civil society, including domestic women’s rights groups and gender experts, in the monitoring and evaluation processes.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid para 48, p 51.

⁴⁶⁷ EU Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security (2018) p 52f.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid para 53, p 53.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid para 54.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid p 55.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid para 55, p 55.

⁴⁷² Ibid p 56f.

⁴⁷³ Ibid para 57f, p 57.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid para 59, p 58.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid p 58.

Annex I: Women, Peace and Security (WPS) in EU external policies

WPS in the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)

The Strategic Approach reaffirms the importance of gender equality and gender mainstreaming within the CSDP framework at all levels. It identifies that the Council has repeatedly acknowledged this commitment since 2006.⁴⁷⁶ The Strategic Approach also identifies that CSDP missions and operations have gradually enhanced their gender advisory capacities to increase gender mainstreaming and accelerate the implementation of the EU policy on WPS.⁴⁷⁷

The Strategic Approach defines the primary role of GAs in CSDP missions and operations as to “provide advice to senior management on gender analysis and the integration of gender perspectives when implementing the mission’s mandate. The responsibilities of the GA can vary depending on the size and structure of the mission and the nature of the mandate”. Externally, gender advisors collaborate directly or indirectly with local counterparts. Internally, they work closely with missions/operations management during strategic and operational planning. GAs serve as facilitators and catalysts by identifying, supporting and advising relevant stakeholders.

The Head of Mission or Commander is responsible for advancing gender equality and ensuring the systematic integration of gender perspectives within the mission/operation.⁴⁷⁸ GFPs are also a common tool for enabling gender mainstreaming and fulfilling the mission’s mandate. GFPs hold responsibilities related to gender equality and WPS, supplementing their primary role. They serve as a bridge between the gender advisor and the different mission entities.⁴⁷⁹

WPS in the European Commission⁴⁸⁰

*Annex II of the Strategic Approach provides a glossary.*⁴⁸¹

*Annex III of the Strategic Approach offers background, context and a summary of the development of the UNSCR 1325 and the subsequent resolutions that comprise the WPS agenda within the UN.*⁴⁸²

*Annex IV of the Strategic Approach includes a non-exhaustive policy inventory on WPS within the EU.*⁴⁸³

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid para 61, p 60.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid para 63, p 61.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid para 64, p 61.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid para 65, p 62.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid p 63-69.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid p 71.

⁴⁸² Ibid p 78-80.

⁴⁸³ Ibid p 81-82.

4.5 EU Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2019–2024)

4.5.1 Introduction

The EU Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (the Action Plan) is a working document produced by the EEAS covering the period from 2019 to 2024. The Action Plan serves as a tool to implement the EU’s Strategic Approach on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). It replaces the 2008 document titled “Implementation of the UNSCRs on Women, Peace and Security in the context of CSDP Missions and operations”.⁴⁸⁴

4.5.2 Executive summary

The Action Plan serves as a tool to implement the EU Strategic Approach to WPS and focuses on six objectives drawn from the WPS agenda and UNSCR 1325: Participation, Gender Mainstreaming, Leading by Example, Prevention, Protection, and Relief and Recovery. Each objective includes fulfilment criteria, actions needed, indicators, details on the responsible parties within the EU for implementation, and a time frame for their implementation.

4.5.3 Extended Summary

The Action Plan reiterates the adoption of the *EU Conclusions on Women, Peace and Security* and the *EU Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security*.⁴⁸⁵ It highlights that the “EU promotes gender equality, human rights, peace and security, within and beyond its borders. It also recognises that it complements and reinforces the GAP.”⁴⁸⁶

The Action Plan aims to implement the *EU Strategic Approach on WPS* through six prioritised objectives. It outlines the necessary actions to achieve these objectives, with each objective linked to specific fulfilment criteria that describes the desired outcomes. Additionally, indicators are provided to evaluate and guide the implementation of the EU Strategic Approach to WPS, which are specified in Annex I.

While the objectives and actions primarily focus on what the EU should do, the Action Plan also specifies who is responsible for the implementation and indicates whether actions should be taken in the short-term, medium-term, or long-term.⁴⁸⁷ These six objectives are derived from the EU Strategic Approach to WPS and UNSCR 1325, and related Resolutions. They are interlinked and mutually reinforcing.⁴⁸⁸

The Action Plan is described as a living document, specifying that it will “undergo mid-term and final reporting reviews” to assess implementation progress and identify areas where further actions is needed to achieve the aims of the EU Strategic Approach to WPS.⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸⁴ EU Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2019) p 3f.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid p 3.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid p 4.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid p 5f.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid p 6.

Below are the main contents of the Action Plan's six objectives, along with the fulfilment criteria and actions needed for each.⁴⁹⁰

(1) Participation: This objective aims for the EU to increase women's leadership and participation in all areas related to peace and security (internal participation) and to support the enhancement of women's leadership and participation in policymaking processes in areas related to peace and security on a broader scale (external participation).

The fulfilment criteria include:

- Identifying and addressing formal and informal institutional barriers that prevent women from being included and meaningfully participating in all conflict-related contexts and areas related to peace and security within the EU institutions.
- Addressing structural obstacles to women's meaningful and equitable participation before, during, and after conflict.
- Using diplomatic and financial measures to promote women's leadership and ensure balanced representation of men and women from diverse backgrounds at all stages of peace processes.⁴⁹¹

(2) Gender mainstreaming: This objective aims "To systematically mainstream a gender perspective as an integral part in all EU policies as well as in internal and external actions and that such a gender perspective, based on gender analysis, is integrated into the implementation of all objectives of this Action Plan."

The fulfilment criteria include:

- Providing mandatory training on gender perspective for all staff at all levels.
- Ensuring that the EU institutions have available and accessible expert capacity and capabilities to conduct gender analysis and support the integration of gender perspective.
- Including women, men, girls, and boys in implementing the Strategic Approach.⁴⁹²

(3) Leading by example: This objective aims to enhance "the EU's political commitments and actions for the implementation of the WPS Agenda at local, national, regional and international levels."

The fulfilment criteria include:

- Utilising all available EU fora to actively promote gender equality and the full implementation of the WPS agenda.
- Providing adequate, transparent, and accessible funding for WPS-related projects and initiatives, including CSOs.⁴⁹³

(4) Prevention: This objective underlines the EU's active role in conflict prevention through the WPS approach at global, regional, national, and local levels. It states that "[t]he EU plays an active role in prevention, monitoring and reporting of conflict-related human rights violations against women and

⁴⁹⁰ The indicators are excluded from this summary. For more information, please consult the Action Plan.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid p 7.

⁴⁹² Ibid p 8.

⁴⁹³ Ibid p 9.

girls and in the promotion of zero-tolerance/full accountability policies to help end impunity and bring perpetrators of such crimes to justice".⁴⁹⁴

The fulfilment criteria include:

- Ensuring that the EU's "early-warning mechanisms and subsequent actions are gender-responsive"
- Enhancing the understanding of the root causes of violence against women and girls, as well as the gender-related drivers of conflict, and taking action to prevent further relapse, including by the strengthening of State institutions
- Ensuring that there are systematic monitoring and reporting mechanisms in place to prevent human rights violations against women and girls in conflict situations.⁴⁹⁵

(5) Protection: This objective calls on the EU to promote and safeguard the rights of women and girls while enhancing their access to justice at local, national, regional, and international levels. It also supports all efforts to establish and/or activate institutional mechanisms for the protection of women and girls, as well as men and boys, in fragile and/or conflict-affected contexts.

The fulfilment criteria include:

- Ensuring that "Institutional mechanisms are established to protect and safeguard women's and girls' rights in fragile and conflict-affected contexts."⁴⁹⁶
- Ensuring that all deployed EU personnel are trained to address CRSV and other forms of SGBV.
- Making EU rules, procedures, and reporting mechanisms on SGBV readily available and effectively communicated.⁴⁹⁷

(6) Relief and recovery: This objective emphasises that "The EU supports and provides adequate and appropriate relief and recovery in conflict and post-conflict situations that meet the needs of women and girls."⁴⁹⁸

The fulfilment criteria include:

- Supporting "the implementation, including the funding, of specific relief and recovery initiatives that meet the needs of women and girls"
- Establishing methods and tools to ensure relief and recovery efforts meet the needs of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid p 10.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid p 10.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid p 11.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid p 11.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid p 11-12.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid p 12.

*Annex 1 outlines the indicators of the Action Plan designed to facilitate the effective implementation of the Strategic Approach.*⁵⁰⁰

*Annex 2 details the indicators of the Gender Action Plan (II).*⁵⁰¹

4.6 EU Implementation of UNSCRs on Women, Peace and Security in the Context of CSDP Missions and Operations (2012)

4.6.1 Introduction

The EU *Implementation of UNSCRs on Women, Peace and Security in the Context of CSDP Missions and Operations* (the Implementation) was agreed upon by the Political Security Committee in 2012. The Implementation builds upon the UNSCRs on WPS and the EU's subsequent commitments to promote and implement the goals related to WPS.⁵⁰² The document aims “to ensure gender mainstreaming and implementation of UNSCRs on WPS from the early planning to the conduct of CSDP missions and operations, including their follow-up and evaluation. The document is to be used by all actors involved in planning and conducting CSDP missions and operations. The Heads of Missions and Operational Commanders are the key implementers of this policy at the operational level.”⁵⁰³

4.6.2 Executive summary

The Implementation focuses on measures to implement the gender, peace, and security agenda in relation to:

- The planning and conduct of CSDP missions and operations
- The financial considerations related to the Council's decision to establish a CSDP mission/operation
- Operational planning
- Force generation/Call for contributions
- The conduct of operations, including reporting, reviews, supervision, disciplinary matters, measures to protect civilians, and training
- Lessons identified
- Other relevant provisions

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid p 13-14.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid p 15-16. GAP II is replaced by GAP III since

⁵⁰² The EU Implementation of UNSCRs on Women, Peace and Security in the context of CSDP missions and operations, p 3f.

⁵⁰³ Ibid p 5.

4.6.3 Extended Summary

The Implementation reiterates the content of the UNSCRs on WPS and emphasises the EU's strong commitment to advancing and implementing the objectives related to the WPS agenda. This commitment is primarily based on the EU Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security (updated in 2018) and the corresponding EU Action Plan to Women, Peace and Security (updated for 2019–2024).⁵⁰⁴

The Implementation uses the title ‘Gender, Peace and Security’ to highlight that these issues are equally relevant to both men and women. Gender mainstreaming concerns both sexes and requires the active commitment and participation of men and women. The Implementation further highlights that “acknowledging the EU commitments to human rights, gender equality and gender, peace and security, each and every member of CSDP missions and operations have a personal responsibility to take these objectives into account in his/her work. Leadership at various levels has a particularly central role in implementing the EU policy.” CSDP missions and operations will be guided by the principles of Protection, Prevention and Participation, along with the humanitarian aspects of the WPS agenda in their efforts to mainstream WPS objectives.⁵⁰⁵

The Implementation introduces a *checklist of measures to implement gender, peace and security*.

Measures to ensure men's and women's representation at all decision-making levels

- “Improve gender balance in all relevant bodies involved in preparing CSDP missions and operations“
- “Generate a more gender-balanced pool of potential candidates for upcoming international assignments and vacancies”. The implementation emphasises this as particularly important when hiring for senior CSDP positions.

In addition to the above checklist, the Implementation introduces considerations for the planning and conduct of CSDP missions and operations.

Advance Planning, including considerations for early warning and situation analysis. The Implementation emphasises that “SITCEN and EUMS are to consider gender, including SGBV, as a factor in situation and security analyses(...).” Additionally, it is encouraged to liaise and to share information with the present EU MS and other relevant organisations, such as UN, OSCE, AU, NATO, ICRC.

Exploratory missions, fact-finding missions and planning teams, including:

- Exploratory missions, fact-finding missions, planning teams, and other planning activities are to consider gender aspects and ensure the inclusion of relevant gender expertise.
- Information on gender dimensions across different functional areas is to be collected, and the specific situations of men and women need to be analysed.
- To understand and assess the situations and expectations of both men and women, missions and planning teams should meet with men and women in decision-making roles, as well as with local and international non-state actors who advocate for human rights and gender considerations in the area of operation.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid p 4.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid p 6.

Crisis management Concept/Strategic Options/Initiating Military Directive, including

- The Implementation expresses that situation assessments should utilise broader expertise on gender, peace, and security, including a summary of gender-related aspects, notably information on SGBV in the area of operations.

1. Council Decision establishing a CSDP mission/operation – financial aspects, including

- “Council decisions establishing a CSDP mission or operation are to adequately consider gender aspects within the framework of the mission or operation mandate”.
- “Budgetary provisions for gender and human rights expertise and outreach activities are to be made, according to the mandate of the mission or operation”.

2. Operational planning, including

- “Dedicated, adequately trained and skilled gender expertise in the EEAS crisis management structures, and throughout the operational planning process, is to be strengthened.”⁵⁰⁶

Concept of Operations (CONOPS),

- The Implementation states that when specific concerns and priorities have been identified, the concept of operations is to address these through the appropriate identification of related tasks. These tasks should be guided by the principles of Protection, Prevention, and Participation, as well as the humanitarian aspects of the WPS agenda.

Operational Plan (OPLAN),

- “The OPLAN is to consider gender aspects in the planning of the mission or operation tasks” and “should give instruction to the ways gender aspects should be conducted in the mission or operation”.
- “The OPLAN is also to include requirements to report on gender related aspects, including on sexual and gender-based violence, within the mission or operation”⁵⁰⁷.

3. Force Generation/Call for Contributions

The Implementation underscores that “the gender balance in CSDP missions and operations should be improved, particularly in the components that have direct contact with the local population”.⁵⁰⁸

4. Conduct of operations

The Implementation affirms that “the Chain of Command is to ensure gender mainstreaming and the implementation of more specific gender related tasks set out in the OPLAN and to consider how each

component of the mission or operation is to take account of gender aspects, including with regard to the possible sexual and gender-based violence in the area of operation”.

- Gender perspective is to be integrated into the policies, programmes and projects of the mission, including the mission planning process, reporting systems and progress indicators.

Reporting, including

- Every component of the operation or mission must systematically report on gender aspects as part of their general reporting.⁵⁰⁹ Whenever possible, reports should include EU and UN indicators on WPS.
- “Reports should include information on consultations with local and international non-state actors promoting human rights and gender equality”⁵¹⁰

Reviews, including

- “Gender aspects are to be included in the regular mission and operation reviews.”⁵¹¹

Supervision and disciplinary matters, including

- “All CSDP missions and operations are to have clear and appropriate provisions for the handling of gender-related complaints”.
- Missions and operations should cooperate with national and local authorities and civil society to promote gender equality, including combating SGBV.
- “The mission or operation can play a supportive role towards local human rights or women’s organisations”.
- “The missions and operations are to ensure that they solicit and incorporate the views of both men and women and local human rights groups working on gender issues”.
- “Where the CSDP mission or operation is involved in mediation processes and peace negotiations, the equal and full participation of both men and women as well as the inclusion of a gender perspective throughout these processes are to be encouraged”⁵¹².
- Depending on the mandate, missions and operations may “stress the importance of gender mainstreaming and actions against SGBV as well as women’s participation and encourage local authorities to implement gender sensitive policies”.

Measures to protect civilians affected by conflict, including

- The EU is to urge all parties to take special measures to protect civilians (women and girls as well as men and boys) from SGBV and other forms of violence during armed conflicts and post-conflict environments in the areas of CSDP missions or operations.
- “The missions and operations are to collect information on SGBV in armed conflict and report to HQ. “Relevant information should be made available, by the EU, to the UN Secretary-General Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and the ICC, as appropriate”.⁵¹³

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid p 8.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid p 9.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid p 10.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid p 11.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid p 11-12.

⁵¹¹ Ibid p 12.

⁵¹² Ibid p 13.

⁵¹³ Ibid p 14.

Training, including

- “Pre-deployment training is to include gender, and relevant UNSCRs training, using as a minimum the concept containing standard training elements on gender in the context of CSDP”.
- “During ongoing missions and operations, (...) personnel are to receive training with a strong and sufficiently long component on gender aspects, including SGBV”.
- Increased participation of women in training activities for the local population in missions and operations is encouraged.
- “Training of local staff should take into account relevant gender aspects”.

5. Lessons identified

The Implementation affirms that “gender mainstreaming and implementation of relevant UNSCRs is to be included (and evaluated) as a specific item in the lessons processes”⁵¹⁴.

The Implementation highlights that it should be viewed as a living document and may, therefore, require adaptations as lessons are identified and implemented.⁵¹⁵

4.7 EU Upgraded Generic Standards of Behaviour for CSDP Missions and Operations (2017)

4.7.1 Introduction

The Upgraded Generic Standards of Behaviour for CSDP Missions and Operations (the Standards) was endorsed by the Political and Security Committee in 2017.⁵¹⁶ It replaces the ‘Generic Standards of Behaviour for CSDP Operations, including its Annex (Document 8373/3/05 of 18 May 2005).⁵¹⁷ The Standards aim to establish “the highest professional standards of behaviour to be implemented both within the missions and operations themselves and as concerns the populations of the host countries”.⁵¹⁸ Furthermore, the Standards “provides guidance to senior management and Heads of Missions and Commanders, and establishes principles for the implementation of the Generic Standards of Behaviour”.⁵¹⁹ It is noted that the Standards does not constitute a limitative framework.⁵²⁰

4.7.2 Executive Summary

The Standards outline the expected standards of behaviour for all personnel involved in both civilian and military CSDP missions. The document addresses standards of behaviour to be implemented internally within the missions and during interaction/engagement with the local populations of host countries. These Standards serve as guidance for senior management and HMO personnel while also providing recommendations and outlining responsibilities for preventing and addressing misconduct by CSDP personnel.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid p 15.

⁵¹⁵ Ibid p 16.

⁵¹⁶ EU Upgraded Generic Standards of Behaviour for CSDP Missions and Operations (2017) p 1.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid para 8.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid para 7.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid para 10.

⁵²⁰ Ibid para 9.

4.7.3 Extended Summary

1.4.7.4 Introduction

The Standards emphasise that the EU is founded on a collective determination to promote peace, stability, and shared values. Key values include respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, the rule of law, human dignity, and equality between men and women. These values are to guide the EU’s external policies, including in the area of Common Security and Defence. The “Adherence to international legal norms, both with respect to human rights and international humanitarian law and to the highest standards of behaviour are essential to the EU credibility and the success of the CSDP missions and operations.”⁵²¹

1.4.7.5 Scope of Application

“The Generic Standards of Behaviour are without prejudice to constitutionally protected rights in the Member States and the rules to which a mission member may be subject to under national, EU or international law, and regulations of the seconding authority”.⁵²² The Standards apply equally to all members of CSDP civilian and military missions and operations of the European Union.⁵²³

Furthermore, the document state that all personnel must adhere to the Standards, and any failure to comply may result in disciplinary action or other appropriate measures. The Head of Mission or Commander has the authority to issue additional mission-specific regulations through Standard Operation Procedures.⁵²⁴

1.4.7.6 Generic Standards of Behaviour for CSDP Missions and Operations

The Standards cover different areas and topics, including:

Guiding principles

The CSDP for civilian and military missions and operations of the EU is rooted in fundamental values, including respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, the rule of law, and human dignity. Additionally, the EU emphasises equality between women and men as outlined in the Treaty of the European Union (TEU), the Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the principles of the UN Charter, and international law (IHL, IHRL and refugee law).⁵²⁵ The EU, its Member States, and participating Third Countries are to uphold a zero-tolerance policy towards misconduct and criminal acts in CSDP missions and operations.⁵²⁶

Professional integrity

The Standards affirms that “all personnel of CSDP civilian and military missions and operations must maintain the highest professional and personal standards of ethical behaviour, respect, impartiality and integrity and must act in an irreproachable manner, during and outside working hours.” “Personnel must refrain from any involvement in criminal or unethical activities including corruption and sexual

⁵²¹ Ibid para 1.

⁵²² Ibid para 11.

⁵²³ Ibid para 12.

⁵²⁴ Ibid para 13-14.

⁵²⁵ Ibid para 15.

⁵²⁶ Ibid para 16.

abuse, activities that contravene human rights, or activities that compromise the image of the European Union and interests of the CSDP mission or operation.”⁵²⁷

Relations with the host population

“Personnel must maintain the highest professional and personal standards of behaviour concerning each other and in relations with the local authorities and host population. All people must be treated with dignity and respect regardless of sex, age, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, social or economic status or political views.”⁵²⁸

The Standards emphasises that “the development of any personal relationship with persons of the host country may create operational or security risks as well as cultural tensions.”⁵²⁹

“Personnel should be aware that both prostitution and the pornographic industry have increased the vulnerability of all civilian population but especially of girls, boys and women and put them at special risk of violence, abuse and exploitation, including prostitution and trafficking in persons. Personnel is prohibited from soliciting or engaging in prostitution, regardless of the age of the person involved and of the local or national laws of the host country.”⁵³⁰

Professional conduct and behaviour

“All personnel must be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of sex, age, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, social or economic status or political views. In their interactions with others, all personnel are expected to behave with tolerance, sensitivity and respect for differences.”⁵³¹

“The right of all personnel to live and work in an environment free from harassment, abuse, unlawful discrimination, intimidation and bullying must be upheld.”⁵³²

The Standards further highlight the special responsibility of supervisors at all levels regarding integrity, safety, and the image of the mission or operation. “They have a duty to create and maintain a work environment free of misconduct including abuse of authority, intimidation and harassment including sexual harassment. They must act as role models by upholding the highest standards of conduct. Responsible authorities have the obligation to ensure that complaints of prohibited conduct are promptly addressed in a fair and impartial manner.”⁵³³

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)

Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), including child pornography, is a violation of EU norms and international law. “The European Union and its Member States have zero tolerance to SEA”.⁵³⁴ Personnel involved in CSDP missions and operations are prohibited from committing SEA and are obliged to report any knowledge or suspicion of SEA using established reporting mechanisms.⁵³⁵ “All

⁵²⁷ Ibid para 18.

⁵²⁸ Ibid para 21.

⁵²⁹ Ibid para 22.

⁵³⁰ Ibid para 23.

⁵³¹ Ibid para 25.

⁵³² Ibid para 27.

⁵³³ Ibid para 28.

⁵³⁴ Ibid para 29.

⁵³⁵ Ibid para 31.

members of CSDP missions and operations are obliged to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse. Heads of Mission, Commanders and managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop measures that maintain this environment.”⁵³⁶

Trafficking in human beings

Trafficking in human beings is a serious crime and a gross violation of fundamental rights. It is prohibited under the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. “Personnel must not in any way contribute to or engage in trafficking in human beings including for the purpose of sexual exploitation.”⁵³⁷

Harassment, sexual harassment and gender-based violence

Any form of harassment - including harassment using new technologies, sexual harassment, cyber violence and other forms of gender-based violence - is strictly forbidden and will not be tolerated.⁵³⁸

Principles for the implementation of the Generic Standards

The Head of Mission or Commander is responsible for the implementation of the Generic Standards of Behaviour within the mission or operation.⁵³⁹ Commanders and senior managers at all levels have a duty to prioritise these values and standards, ensuring they are fully and clearly communicated to personnel and applied consistently.⁵⁴⁰

Personnel are expected to familiarise themselves with the Standards and other relevant documents, such as codes of conduct and discipline, including by attending required training. The Standards should be part of both the mandatory pre-deployment training and the Mission induction training.⁵⁴¹

Each CSDP mission and operation is required to implement a fair and unbiased complaint procedure. Leadership is responsible for ensuring that clear and appropriate provisions are established for handling complaints, including those related to gender. The leadership must also ensure that all personnel are informed about these procedures and that complaints concerning prohibited conduct are addressed promptly, fairly and impartially.⁵⁴² Additionally, reporting on the implementation of measures taken to prevent and address misconduct in CSDP missions and operations, including SEA, should be included in the regular reporting requirements of the missions and operations.⁵⁴³

The Head of Mission or Commander is responsible for ensuring that the local population in the mission or operation area is informed about the principles of the Standards.⁵⁴⁴ They must also ensure that any breaches of the Standards are reported within the EU Chain of Command responsible for appropriate action.⁵⁴⁵

⁵³⁶ Ibid para 33.

⁵³⁷ Ibid para 35.

⁵³⁸ Ibid para 38.

⁵³⁹ Ibid para 52.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid para 55.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid para 54.

⁵⁴² Ibid para 56.

⁵⁴³ Ibid para 59.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid para 57.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid para 58.

4.8 EU Concept on Protection of Civilians in EU-led Military Operations (2015)

4.8.1 Introduction

The EU Concept on Protection of Civilians (PoC) in EU-led Military Operations (the Concept) was established by the EU Military Committee in 2015. This Concept is based on the overarching EU Guidelines for PoC in CSDP missions and operations. Its goal is to “provide guidelines for greater integration of PoC factors in all phases of EU-led military operations and to contribute to achieving coherence and synergy of action in the field”.⁵⁴⁶

4.8.2 Executive summary

The Concept offers guidance for integrating the protection of civilians in CSDP missions in the following key areas:

- Integrating PoC into CSDP Military Operations
- Integrating PoC in Education and Training (E&T)
- Integrating PoC in Planning
- Integrating PoC in the Conduct of Operations
- Integration PoC in Review and Lessons Learned (LL)

It underscores the significance of education and training on PoC both before and during deployment. The integration of PoC is emphasised in the planning and execution of operations, as well as in conducting reviews and lessons learned. All stages, except review and lessons learned, include guidance on gender, although to varying extents.

4.8.3 Extended Summary

A. Introduction

The Concept recognises that civilian populations have become a significant factor for all actors involved in armed conflict and that they increasingly become the victims of such conflicts. Therefore, the Concept highlights that “protection of civilians in armed conflict has become increasingly important in contemporary armed conflicts”.⁵⁴⁷

B. Aim

The Concept aims to “provide guidelines for greater integration of PoC factors in all phases of EU-led military operations and to contribute to achieving coherence and synergy of action in the field”.

⁵⁴⁶ EU Concept on Protection of Civilians (PoC) in EU-led Military Operations (2015), para 7-8.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid para 1, 4.

C. Scope

The Concept is based on the broader EU framework of PoC. “It applies to all military operations where PoC is either a mandated task or the objective, irrespective of whether or not IHL applies.”⁵⁴⁸

D. Integrating PoC into CSDP Military Operations

The Concept highlights that PoC includes both military and non-military aspects that an operation must consider and coordinate to ensure a successful PoC effort. These PoC efforts are long-term and often involve protecting civilians from physical violence and other threats that may infringe on human rights.⁵⁴⁹ As mandated, the military may contribute to temporarily establishing a safe and secure environment where civilians can be protected from violence until the root causes of conflict are resolved.⁵⁵⁰

In CSDP missions where the PoC is a mandated task, military forces must identify and coordinate with various actors. They need to be flexible and prepared to transition from non-kinetic to kinetic actions as the situation demands.⁵⁵¹ Moreover, achieving long-term PoC requires military forces to support national and international non-military actors, such as host nations, NGOs, or IOs. This support enables these entities to work towards the desired outcome by maintaining a safe and secure environment.⁵⁵² In their effort to protect civilians, EU military forces will act in accordance with the following principles:

- Mitigate PoC risks by adopting a proactive posture
- Comprehensively engage with all actors
- Contribute to a protective environment
- Ensure conflict sensitivity⁵⁵³

The Concept also stresses that “PoC aspects will need to be addressed through the whole spectrum of military activities: education, training, planning, conducting of operations, reviewing and lessons learned and Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC) procedures.”⁵⁵⁴

E. Integrating PoC in Education and Training (E&T)

The Concept emphasises that pre-deployment training is the responsibility of the contributing MS.⁵⁵⁵ It also identifies that forces and HQ, including Commanders and Planners, are the target audience for E&T on PoC.⁵⁵⁶ The Concept identifies that “appropriate education would help to build the requisite skills/competence to take important decisions regarding PoC and to help military commanders break down PoC into clearly prioritized tasks, to optimise achievement of operational objectives.”

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid para 8.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid para 11.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid para 12.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid para 13.

⁵⁵² Ibid para 14.

⁵⁵³ Ibid para 15.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid para 17.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid para 22.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid para 19.

The Concept highlights that training on PoC should cover various areas, including “International Humanitarian Law (IHL), Human Rights, Gender, elements to respond to sexual and gender based violence and Children Affected by Armed Conflict (CAAC), conflict analysis and conflict sensitivity/do no harm, issues regarding discrimination, forced labour and trafficking (in situation of armed conflict and post-conflict environment).”⁵⁵⁷ Moreover, the Concept encourages training on conflict sensitivity and cultural awareness, which can “help to ensure correct and appropriate conduct by the Force and avoid negative attitudes and behaviours from host-nation populations.”⁵⁵⁸

F. Integrating PoC in Planning

The Concept asserts that “PoC requirements must be integrated from the very beginning of planning and in conduct of CSDP military operations.”⁵⁵⁹ It notes that “an analysis of the role and mandate of different protection actors should be conducted early on, in order to plan for greater coordination of efforts and complementarity in the field.”⁵⁶⁰ Furthermore, the Concept stresses that “resources and capabilities must match the Mandate’s level of Ambition for effective PoC, so that the military operation can maintain its credibility”. This may involve including a team of senior experts (e.i. on gender and IHL) in the planning process.⁵⁶¹

G. Integrating PoC in the Conduct of Operations

The Concept identifies that a “Thorough understanding of the content of this concept is required at all levels in the chain of command for effective implementation of PoC mandates, starting with identifying individuals, groups and minorities at potential risk. In this regard special attention needs to be paid to Children and to Gender issues.”⁵⁶² Capabilities required in CSDP military operations to fully address PoC includes:

- Human rights and gender advisors.
- “Very well trained officers (possibly gender balanced) and well informed with respect to human rights and local culture and customs, who can detect and address sexual and gender based violence”.
- Strong CIMIC cooperation.⁵⁶³

The Concept highlights the importance of coordination efforts and mechanisms at both operational and tactical levels, in collaboration with various actors, to enhance the effectiveness of PoC initiatives. Key actions include:

- Enhancing situational awareness and early warning systems
- Enabling other PoC activities
- Avoiding overlaps and duplication of efforts
- Establishing trust between PoC actors and the local population while avoiding harm to civilians⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid para 21.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid para 25.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid para 29.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid para 30.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid para 33.

⁵⁶² Ibid para 39.

⁵⁶³ Ibid para 40.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid para 42.

The Concept underscores that engagement with the local communities is essential.⁵⁶⁵

Furthermore, the Concept underscores that “accountability of perpetrators is of paramount importance.” When relevant, military commanders should incorporate an assessment of the IHL and human rights situation in their reports, including information on serious violations of IHL, human rights violations or abuses, and an analysis and suggestions for possible countermeasures to be taken by the EU.⁵⁶⁶

H. Integrating PoC in Review and Lessons Learned (LL)

The Concept states that the LL process serves as a command tool for continuous improvement. It should be designed to enhance the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the use of CSDP tools in PoC.⁵⁶⁷

The Concept includes Annex A titled “Civilian Casualties Aspects, Prevention Considerations and Recommendations”.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid para 43.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid para 49.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid para 52.

4.9 Overview Development of the WPS agenda within the EU

Within the EU Policy framework, a range of gender-related documents are relevant to the military, addressing issues such as gender equality throughout the Union, gender mainstreaming, and the implementation of WPS within CSDP civilian and military operations. Notably, the Council of the European Union has issued several key documents, including the Strategic Compass (2022), the Strategic Approach to WPS (2018), the subsequent Action Plan on WPS (2019-2024), and the Upgraded Generic Standards of Behaviour for CSDP Missions and Operations (2017). The European Commission has contributed with the Gender Action Plan III (2020), while the European External Action Service (EEAS) has published the Operational Guidance on Gender Mainstreaming Military CSDP Policy (2022), the Civilian Operations Commander Operational Guidelines for Mission Management and Staff on Gender Mainstreaming (2018), and the EU Concept on Protection of Civilians in EU-led Military Operations (2015).

The scope of the documents varies based on their character and purpose, as well as the EU body from which they originate. Generally, these documents address all personnel while outlining specific responsibilities for certain roles and functions, including Commanders, Senior Management, Heads of Mission, Gender Advisors, Gender Focal Points, and Human Rights Advisors.

Although gender mainstreaming and the full implementation of the UNSCRs on WPS are well-known EU policies, specific priorities and themes have been identified within the gender-related EU documents examined in this tool. A recurring theme is the emphasis on budgeting and financial resources, as well as the connection between human rights and gender equality, including women's empowerment and equal participation. Terms such as gender mainstreaming, gender analysis, and gender perspective are frequently used in both external and internal contexts. "External" refers to implementation within missions and operations, while "internal" refers to implementation within the EU's functions. The implementation of these concepts is also connected to the EU framework on WPS.

Another consistent theme is the EU's commitment to leading by example and promoting gender-responsive leadership. Education and training on these topics are highlighted across several levels. Furthermore, the WPS agenda, international law, and the EU's core values are underscored, along with the interlinkages between gender inequality, violence against women, and sexual and gender-based violence. On the military side, the EEAS working document on gender mainstreaming military CSDP policy acknowledges that integrating a gender perspective is both a goal and a means to achieve operational effectiveness.

4.10 Related documents

- EU Civilian Operational Guidelines for Mission Management and Staff on Gender Mainstreaming (2018)
- EU Gender Action Plan (III) (2020)
- EU Strategic Compass (2022)
- EU Gender Equality Strategy (2020–2025)
- EU Gender Equality Strategy (2026–2030)

5 Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

The OSCE is an intergovernmental regional security organisation founded in 1975 through the Helsinki Final Act. It has 57 participating states across North America, Europe, and Asia.⁵⁶⁸

The OSCE promotes stability, peace, and democracy among its member states. It is a forum for political dialogue on a wide range of security issues and provides a platform for joint action. The organisation relies on a comprehensive approach to security that encompasses the politico-military, economic and environmental, and human dimensions.⁵⁶⁹

The OSCE has issued several decisions regarding gender related guidance, emphasising that its member states are strongly committed to making gender equality a reality everywhere. The organisation recognises gender mainstreaming as a central strategy to the achievement of gender equality, and the OSCE Secretariat has established the Programme for Gender Issues to provide expertise and tools needed to fulfil their gender-related commitments.⁵⁷⁰

5.1 Definitions

The following definitions are derived from the respective guiding documents and are not necessarily officially adopted by the organisation or the applicable department.

- Gender analysis
- Gender mainstreaming:

GENDER ANALYSIS:

Gender analysis is “a type of socio-economic analysis that uncovers gender roles and power structures within a given society or context. Circumstances can vary significantly between different regions of a country or among different ethnicities within a country. Gender analysis identifies relations between men and women in their respective roles, status, social positions and privileges. It also shows how they live their daily lives and the resources they depend upon, along with areas or routes important to everyday business”⁵⁷¹

GENDER MAINSTREAMING:

“Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality”⁵⁷²

⁵⁶⁸ OSCE, ‘Our History’, <https://www.osce.org/history>, accessed 12 March 2026.

⁵⁶⁹ OSCE, ‘About Us’, <https://www.osce.org/about-us>, accessed 12 March 2026.

⁵⁷⁰ OSCE, ‘Gender equality’, <https://odhr.osce.org/odhr/gender-equality>, accessed 12 March 2026.

⁵⁷¹ OSCE Gender in military operations: Guidance for military personnel working at tactical level in Peace Support Operations (2018) p 13.

⁵⁷² OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality (2004) p 1.



5.2 Mapping

- OSCE-wide roadmap for the implementation of commitments on Women, Peace and Security (2025)
- OSCE Guidance for military personnel working at tactical level in Peace Support Operations (2018)
- OSCE Decision: Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality (2004)
- OSCE Decision: Women in Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation (2005)
- OSCE Decision: Preventing and Combating Violence against Women (2005)
- OSCE Decision: Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women (2018)
- OSCE Decision: Women's Participation in Political and Public Life (2009)

5.3 OSCE-wide roadmap for the implementation of commitments on Women, Peace and Security (2025)

5.3.1 Executive summary

OSCE WPS Roadmap aims to make the OSCE's collective efforts on WPS better visible, and places emphasis on concrete and tangible actions that participating States can undertake to implement WPS commitments. The Roadmap recognises OSCE position to promote and support the implementation of the WPS agenda in the OSCE region, especially in relation to conflict prevention, peace negotiations and post-conflict recovery and reconstruction.⁵⁷³

WPS activities within the OSCE and the OSCE region are spread across a large number of thematic fields, geographies, and actors. However, OSCE highlights need to strengthen coordination and collaboration on relevant work between OSCE participating States and between participating States and OSCE executive structures and institutions, on WPS issues.⁵⁷⁴

5.3.2 Extended summary

The Roadmap provides an overview of OSCE actors implementing WPS as well as current implementation as per the different pillars of the WPS agenda. Actors include: OSCE Secretariat, Field Operations, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM) and OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA).⁵⁷⁵

The Roadmap highlights that OSCE has a role to play in supporting participating States to implement their gender equality commitments, especially given OSCE's strong expertise on politico-military

⁵⁷³ OSCE-wide roadmap for the implementation of commitments on Women, Peace and Security (2025)

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid p 2.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid p 6.

and security issues combined with its political neutrality, which helps it to navigate sensitive gender related issues.⁵⁷⁶

Furthermore, OSCE's Gender Issues Programme in the Office of the Secretary-General plays an important role in promoting the implementation of the WPS agenda, including by organising training and sharing good practices. Another added value for OSCE WPS implementation is its strong field presence and long-term, sustained engagement with national governments, civil society and local communities.

Participation

The OSCE supports women mediators by strengthening mediator networks and promoting women's meaningful participation in security institutions through training and skills development. It also advances learning and expertise on participation, including by hosting regional events on women's participation in law enforcement.⁵⁷⁷

Protection

The OSCE builds capacity and facilitates knowledge-sharing to support survivors of violence. It also works on preventing and monitoring gender-based violence (GBV), addressing harmful norms and power imbalances that drive or exacerbate conflict-related GBV.⁵⁷⁸

Prevention

Under the Prevention pillar, the OSCE develops guidance and tools to integrate gender perspectives into disaster risk management and to prevent GBV in conflict settings. It also raises awareness and provides training on conflict prevention and resolution, including topics such as arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation.⁵⁷⁹

Relief and recovery

The OSCE promotes inclusive, gender-sensitive humanitarian responses, including through its Extra-Budgetary Support Programme for Ukraine.⁵⁸⁰

Furthermore, the Roadmap sets out concrete optional actions participating States could take forward to accelerate the implementation of WPS commitments in line with OSCE frameworks. It also introduces OSCE pledge to WPS actions, where participating States are encouraged to pledge to individual actions. By pledging, participating States commit themselves to working towards implementing the action in question through their work in the OSCE.⁵⁸¹

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid p 8.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid p 6.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid p 7.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid p 10.

Diplomatic action

- Reaffirm commitment to WPS and the Gender Action Plan (2004), which is the most comprehensive document in the OSCE to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Use Chairpersonships and positions of responsibility to advance WPS commitments.
- Implement WPS commitments taking into account persons in vulnerable and marginalised positions.
- Undertake intersectional analysis of the critical issues affecting the most marginalised and vulnerable across the OSCE
- Undertake steps to collect disaggregated equality data reflecting the intersectionality of gender and vulnerable groups

Operational – multilateral level

- Continue concrete action to advance the agenda.
- Continue and build upon coordination efforts to advance WPS goals collaboratively.
- Commit to practical support to strengthen networks aiming to advance WPS goals.
- Support and promote the role of men in advancing WPS goals.
- Undertake annual reporting on measures by security sector institutions to implement WPS commitments.

Operational – national level

- Develop a first NAP-WPS, ensuring broad consultation and ownership in doing so.
- OSCE pS who have a NAP-WPS, and are committed to develop further editions, could draw on OSCE support and guidance to support effective implementation
- Ensure emerging challenges and transnational threats like climate change and cyber security are included in NAPs-WPS.
- Identify and commit to addressing persistent challenges and issues undermining the effective pursuit of WPS goals.
- Commission gender-sensitive regulatory impact assessments.

OSCE Executive Structures and Institutions

Work with pS to develop a range of standards to guide OSCE pS WPS commitment implementation.

Undertake proactive, consistent and targeted action to promote women's leadership.

Senior leaders within OSCE Secretariat, Institutions, Field Operations and pS could demonstrate their clear leadership on, and commitment to, critical WPS issues.

Finally, the Roadmap gives examples of OSCE activities across the four pillars of WPS and highlights analysis and good practice across key areas of WPS; strengthening normative framework, concrete actions to advance the agenda, financing, implementation and accountability and adapting to emerging challenges.⁵⁸²

5.4 OSCE Gender in Military Operations: Guidance for military personnel working at tactical level in Peace Support Operations (2018)**5.4.1 Introduction**

The Gender in Military Operations: Guidance for military personnel working at a tactical level in Peace Support Operations (the Guidance) was released in 2018. It is a manual that “suggests practical entry points on how to account for gender dimensions when conducting operations related to Peace Support Operations. The manual is designed to assist military personnel at tactical level to realise national and international commitments by providing materials and examples of how gender perspectives might be integrated when conducting military operations”.⁵⁸³

5.4.2 Executive summary

The Guidance provides detailed guidance for implementing a gender perspective in efforts aimed at ensuring peace and stability. It is highlighted that a gender-sensitive approach is central in military operations relating to conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. It also provides suggestions for increasing women's participation in the aforementioned processes. The Guidance includes a total of nineteen chapters, each of which is covered in the subsequent paragraphs of this summary.

5.4.3 Extended Summary

The Guidance recognises gender equality as an integral part of comprehensive security, and asserts that further work is required to ensure the full implementation of the WPS agenda. The Guidance provides the reader with practical entry points for implementation, and provides illustrative examples in order to assist military personnel on the tactical level.

1. Operational Benefits from the Inclusion of Gender Perspective

The Guidance notes that “integrating gender perspective in operational planning and activities benefits military missions and operations as it strengthens the overall operational picture and situational awareness, which provide guidance to selection and design of interventions that is essential for establishing a safe and secure environment”⁵⁸⁴. It outlines several aspects of gender perspectives and its dimensions, including:

⁵⁸² Ibid p 18.

⁵⁸³ OSCE Gender in Military Operations: Guidance for military personnel working at the tactical level in peace support operations (2018) p 7.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid p 9.

Sex-disaggregated data

- “Adds depth and context to Situational Awareness”.
- “Enables comprehensive Analysis and Assessments”.

Female participation

- Enables increased outreach to local women and women’s organisations.
- Facilitates operations that may be sensitive to local cultures (e.g. body search, patrolling, and checkpoints).
- Provides additional perspectives and inputs to operational and security measures

Knowledge of CRSV and GBV

- Knowledge increases the understanding of the behaviours of traumatised people and survivors of sexual abuse.
- Contributes to Situational Awareness and early warning of raising tensions.⁵⁸⁵

Gender analysis

- “Provides information about potential security threats to women, men and children, enabling more adequate protection operations and contributing to the overall security situation”.
- Provides insights into significant routes and areas for women, men, and children, as well as their distinctive patterns of movement, which allows for prioritised infrastructure support and assessments of Freedom of Movements (FoM) priorities.
- “Contributes to the overall operational picture, development and design of campaigns and Courses of Action”.

Engagement with women, women NGOs and female stakeholders

- “Enhances the reliability of information by engaging more sources”.
- “Provides a more comprehensive operational picture”.
- “Provides a more comprehensive foundation for decision-making, planning and execution of operations”.
- “Contributes to enhanced Force Protection”.⁵⁸⁶

2. Team Composition

The Guidance highlights that “having teams composed of both women and men increase possibilities to reach out, engage and retrieve information, leading to a more comprehensive approach and better situational awareness”.⁵⁸⁷ Additional benefits include, but are not limited to, the ability to address and be present in all situations, including gender segregated gatherings. Gender balanced team compositions can also serve to challenge gender stereotypes.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid p 9.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid p 10.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid p 11.

3. Gender Analysis

The Guidance states that “conducting a gender analysis prior to any operation is essential to ensure that operational responses are effective and will have the intended outcome, while also protecting against unintentional harm to any group of the society.”⁵⁸⁸ In addition, the Guidance states that “Gender analysis identifies relations between men and women in their respective roles, status, social positions and privileges.” This can include assessment of women and men as politicians, activists and human rights defenders, paying special attention to if and how gender norms are being challenged. This also includes paying attention to intersectional conditions, such as religion, ethnicity and disabilities.

The Guidance provides examples of four different dimensions to consider when conducting a Gender Analysis:

I. Activity Profile

Understanding how men and women live their lives, including their activities, where they are most likely to reside, and what duties they perform and where. Key information to explore includes:

- The distinction between gender and age.
- The venues where activity takes place.
- The time allocated to various activities.⁵⁸⁹

II. Resources Profile

Identifying what resources people use in their daily activities and the vulnerabilities or dependencies that may accompany them, including:

- Access to and control over resources and their usage.
- “The beneficiary benefits from the outcome and use of the resource (production, exploitation, treatment)”.

III. Influencing factors

Examining factors that influence “differences in the division of labour, access, control and benefits of resources from a gender perspective”, including:

- Community norms and social hierarchies.
- General economic conditions, such as poverty rates, inflation, and corruption levels.
- “External and internal political settings, influencers and stakeholders”.
- “Judicial system, access to basic rights and services and discriminatory laws”.
- Access to education, information, and available infrastructure.
- The prevalence of different forms of violence affecting different groups.
- Formal and informal power dynamics: “who has power/influence over whom?”⁵⁹⁰
- IV. Consequences

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid p 13.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid p 14.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid p 15.

- Examining potential consequences includes assessing how the above mentioned factors impact the lives of women, men, girls, and boys, taking into consideration the specific situations and circumstances in which they may experience increased vulnerability.⁵⁹¹

Finally, the findings of the analysis should be used to guide the planning of operations and the development of operational concepts and courses of actions. This enables assessment of the operation's impact on men, women, girls and boys.

4. Sources of information

The Guidance highlights that “gathering information from diverse sources through the engagement of women, men, girls and boys provides access to additional and different types of information; thereby increasing Situational Awareness and leading to better founded decisions and planning”, enhancing operational effect and force protection.⁵⁹²

The Guidance expresses the need to:

- Recognise local women as potential actors and active agents in conflict prevention, mediation, and reconciliation efforts, as they can serve as valuable sources of information and resources.
- Remember that men and women are often affected by decisions differently; they may have unequal access to information and may hold varying opinions, priorities, and needs.
- Avoid potential biases.⁵⁹³

5. Patrolling

The Guidance notes that the most common activity during patrols is information collection. It emphasises the importance of employing mixed-gender teams to engage with both men and women effectively. This approach helps to ensure a high level of situational awareness and a comprehensive operational picture.⁵⁹⁴

6. Reporting

The Guidance highlights that reporting is a vital component for developing situational awareness, enhancing the operational picture, and supporting analysis. To enable accurate assessments and analysis, reporting mechanisms must include gender dimensions and disaggregated data.⁵⁹⁵ At a minimum, information on populations should be broken down by sex and age, but preferably also by additional factors such as ethnicity, religion, and social status. Additionally, it could be beneficial to explore the diverse roles of women and men, including politicians, activists, human rights defenders, as well as those who challenge gender norms.⁵⁹⁶

⁵⁹¹ Ibid p 16.

⁵⁹² Ibid p 19.

⁵⁹³ Ibid p 20.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid p 21, 23.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid p 25.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid p 25f.

7. Engagement

The Guidance expresses that “the active participation/involvement of women and men affected by a crisis in identifying their security needs and interests can substantially improve Situational Awareness, operational effectiveness and stabilisation”. Actions of engagement require a range of considerations on gender, including:

- Security risks to local women and men.
- Ensuring equal and active engagement from all participants.
- Cultural context-sensitive matters.⁵⁹⁷

8. Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) and Information Operations

The Guidance states that information-related capabilities and information operations are vital. To maximise the “effect and intended outcome and outreach of campaigns, a thorough gender analysis should be the starting point for the campaign's design and execution”.⁵⁹⁸ Considerations for outreach - including topics, methods, timing, audience, and presenters- should all stem from a gender analysis.⁵⁹⁹

9. Search Operations

Search operations are often conducted in complex environments to seize personnel or materials, ensure that an area is clear and safe, or demonstrate military control to the local population. Poorly executed search operations may harm the credibility and reputation of the forces involved. Therefore, it is imperative that forces are trained on IHL, Rules of Engagement, and the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution. The Guidance identifies that planned searches of individuals and premises requires specific precautions and considerations, including:

- The use of mixed teams.
- Ensuring that men are not alone with or allowed to touch women.
- The presence of a local witness.⁶⁰⁰

10. Checkpoints

The Guidance recognises that checkpoints and body/vehicle searches can, to varying degrees, affect a person's dignity and privacy. When implementing checkpoints, certain aspects should be considered, including:

- Where? Who will be affected by the checkpoint? “How and why does the position of the checkpoint impact women, men, boys and girls?”⁶⁰¹
- When? “Following the societal and gender analysis, the time of the day, week, or year when checkpoints are likely to have the most negative impacts should be considered”

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid p 27f. For more information see p 28ff.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid p 31f.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid, see p 32-35.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid, p 36. For further information, see p 37-39.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid p 40.

- By whom? “Body searches should be carried out professionally by a person of the same gender and in the least intrusive manner possible”⁶⁰²
- How? “Ensure there are separate searching facilities for men and women” and that “search facilities are covered from view”⁶⁰³

11. Crowd and Riot Control

The Guidance emphasises that IHL prohibits indiscriminate attacks and requires adherence to key principles such as distinction, proportionality, and precautions. These principles must be applied in conducting military operations and mitigating the effects of attacks. These principles should be considered together with “a gender analysis of the context and the specific situation in order to understand the underlying dimensions of the crowd’s actions”⁶⁰⁴ and to inform the selection of the appropriate course of action.

12. Demining

The Guidance affirms that “assessments of how the clearance of mines could best improve the lives of individuals and the community should be a priority in order to assess the impact of mine clearing to women, men, girls and boys”⁶⁰⁵.

13. Targeting Processes

The Guidance asserts the importance of incorporating a gender perspective into the target selection process to complement applicable IHL principles and prohibitions. Understanding the effects of a strike on different genders is crucial “to ensure that elimination of selected targets supports the overall military objectives without causing unnecessary suffering or unintended effects”. The Guidance underlines that considerations during target selection should focus on how women, men, girls, and boys may be differently affected during and after the strike.

14. Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV)

The Guidance recognises that individuals of all genders - women, girls, men, and boys- can be affected by CRSV. However, it primarily impacts women and girls, who are disproportionately affected. “CRSV is one aspect of the overall security situation for which military personnel must have strategies in place”⁶⁰⁶ The gender dimensions of CRSV should be considered in various contexts, including the provision of SASE services, interviewing women, men, and children, participation in processes, monitoring, reporting, fighting impunity, as well as providing assistance, training and education. The Guidelines offers tactical-level guidance regarding these considerations.⁶⁰⁷

⁶⁰² Ibid p 41.

⁶⁰³ Ibid p 41f.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid p 44f. For further information, see p 45-47.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid p 51.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid p 60.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid p 61-68.

15. Trafficking in Human Beings (TIB)

The Guidance expresses that “if the mission mandate includes for providing a Safe and Secure Environment the mission must have plans and strategies in place to deal with trafficking in human beings and have knowledge of the phenomena”⁶⁰⁸ It details gender dimensions to consider in relation to trafficking in human beings in relation to providing protection and a safe and secure environment, interviewing women, men and children, monitoring and reporting, assistance and training and education.

16. Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Processes (DDR)

The Guidance states that “the objective of a DDR process is to contribute to security and stability in post-conflict environments, supporting the reduction of arms available in a region so that recovery and development can begin”. “DDR processes seek to support male and female combatants, as well as women, men, girls and boys associated with armed forces”⁶⁰⁹.

The Guidance specifies certain gender considerations focusing on inclusive selections, inclusive processes and design.⁶¹⁰

17. Quick Impact Projects (QIPs)/Cimic Projects

The Guidance recognises the importance of integrating gender perspectives throughout phases of QIP and Cimic projects. Considerations from a gender perspective include:

- What? “Have men, women and children been consulted? Has their needs and priorities been analysed?”⁶¹¹
- Why? Might the project reduce someone’s access to or control of resources and benefits or situation in some other way? “What will be the effects on men, women, and children in the short and longer term?”
- Who? “Who will benefit from the project? “Are there appropriate opportunities for women and men to participate in and contribute to the project?” “Does the evaluation of the project reflect both women’s and men’s perceptions on whether the project was successful or not”⁶¹²

18. Humanitarian Assistance: Equal Aid Distribution

The Guidance highlights the supporting role that military forces often play in humanitarian intervention by contributing to establishing a Safe and Secure Environment. This effort requires cooperation with humanitarian actors. It is noted that conducting a “gender analysis ensures a more accurate understanding of the situation and facilitates the design of appropriate interventions to address the distinctive needs of women, men, girls and boys.” The Guidance provides several examples of how to integrate gender perspectives in different dimensions.⁶¹³

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid p 69.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid p 77.

⁶¹⁰ Ibid p 77-81.

⁶¹¹ Ibid p 82.

⁶¹² Ibid p 83f. See also p 85.

⁶¹³ For more details, see the original document.

What are the population demographics?

- “Total number of households and family members, disaggregated by sex and age”
- “Who can be expected to request for humanitarian assistance? Which parts of the population need special attention?”
- “Women-headed households are often unable to access services because there is no help with child care or support to collect water or firewood. Single male headed households often have specific needs as they may not have the skills to cook, to care for young children or to do household chores.”⁶¹⁴

What is the social, political, cultural and security context? What has changed as a result of the emergency?

- Are there differences between women’s and men’s positions, roles and responsibilities (formal and informal) within the community?
- Are all members of the community equally affected by the emergency? Are women, men, girls and boys affected differently?⁶¹⁵

Design

- Ensure that distribution points are accessible and as close as possible to beneficiaries
- “Content of aid packages should be adapted to the different needs of women, men, boys and girls”
- “Ensure that all of concern are equally and fully informed about the aid interventions”

Security

- “Incorporate strategies to prevent, monitor and respond to violence, including gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse”
- “Adopt positive measures to redress any discrimination in the allocation of resources.” The Guidance notes such measures may include prioritising the dispersal of food towards vulnerable groups, such as lactating women, the elderly and children under the age of five.
- “Identify, together with communities and partners, safe and easily accessible areas for distribution”⁶¹⁶

19. Humanitarian Assistance: Disaster Relief

The Guidance expresses that “while disasters pose threats to lives and livelihoods of everyone in their path, they tend to have different impacts on women, men, girls and boys. A vulnerability approach to disasters would suggest that inequalities in exposure and sensitivity to risk, as well as inequalities in access to resources, capabilities and opportunities, systematically disadvantage certain groups of people, rendering them more vulnerable to the impact of natural disasters.”⁶¹⁷ On this note, the Guidance provides several examples of how existing vulnerabilities affecting women may be exacerbated during and after natural disasters. Some examples include restricted access to information, vulnerability to sexual violence, and lack of life-saving skills such as swimming, driving or climbing. It also notes that men

614 Ibid p 86f.

615 Ibid p 87.

616 Ibid p 88f.

617 Ibid p 91.

may experience heightened vulnerability during and after disasters. Here, gender roles might expose men to hazardous situations when providing food, water or protection for their families..⁶¹⁸

5.5 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality (2004) Decision No. 14/04

5.5.1 Introduction

The OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality (the Action Plan), was adopted by the Ministerial Council in 2004. It aims to outline “the priorities of the OSCE in promoting gender equality, in the Organization and in all participating States, and to ensure the monitoring of its implementation”.⁶¹⁹ Furthermore, the Action Plan aims to “promote the practice of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the OSCE area”.⁶²⁰ The Action Plan builds on the 2000 OSCE Action Plan for Gender Issues and incorporates both internal OSCE documents and human rights and international agreements, including UNSCR 1325.⁶²¹

5.5.2 Executive summary

The Action Plan focuses on gender mainstreaming throughout OSCE and affirms that a gender perspective is to be considered in all OSCE activities, projects and programmes. The Action Plan aims to achieve gender equality both internally within OSCE and externally among participating states. The Action Plan promotes gender equality through various initiatives, including gender mainstreaming efforts and training on gender awareness. Additionally, it supports the implementation of gender equality measures in participating states.

5.5.3 Extended Summary

The Action Plan highlights the need to integrate a gender perspective into activities conducted under the auspices of the OSCE. It underscores that promoting gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the OSCE region is essential for achieving comprehensive security.⁶²²

The Action Plan reaffirms the OSCE’s commitment to equality between men and women, stating that “respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, and the rule of law is at the core of the OSCE’s comprehensive concept of security”.⁶²³

Utilising a UN definition, the Action Plan recognises gender mainstreaming as a key method for advancing gender equality. It asserts that gender perspectives should be considered in all OSCE activities, projects, and programmes, recognising that both women and men benefit from gender equality.⁶²⁴

618 Ibid p 92f.

619 OSCE 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality (2004), para 9.

620 Ibid p 2.

621 Ibid p 1.

622 Ibid p 1f.

623 Ibid para 1.

624 Ibid para 3.

5.5.4 Promoting Gender Equality in the OSCE

A. Gender mainstreaming the structures and working environment and gender mainstreaming in recruitment

Training: The OSCE will provide training programmes for staff focused on gender awareness and sensitisation to gender equality.⁶²⁵ The Action Plan states that the OSCE shall develop training programmes, including training programs for OSCE officials on gender awareness and how to integrate gender perspectives in their daily work. Additionally, this training will address how to implement gender mainstreaming, and address gender considerations in OSCE programmes, projects, and technical cooperation activities.⁶²⁶

Management: The OSCE aims to cultivate a professional and gender-sensitive management culture and working environment.⁶²⁷ Leadership levels shall exercise strong and active leadership in building sustainable gender awareness within the OSCE and shall intensify their efforts towards achieving a gender-sensitive and professional working environment and management culture.⁶²⁸

Recruitment: The OSCE will implement strengthened and innovative recruitment strategies to promote equal opportunities for all.⁶²⁹ “Recruitment in the OSCE shall be based on a transparent process, subject to open competition among nationals of participating States, thereby securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity.”⁶³⁰

B. Mainstreaming a gender perspective into OSCE activities, policies, programmes and projects

Mainstreaming: The OSCE aims to achieve effective gender mainstreaming in OSCE activities and policies, as well as in the activities and policies of participating States.⁶³¹ The aim shall be to promote gender equality across the OSCE region, which is essential for comprehensive security. This effort focuses on empowering women and ensuring the participation of both women and men in public, political, and economic life within the context of democratic and economic processes. The Action Plan also highlights the aim to overcome negative stereotypes and foster attitudes supportive of equality between women and men in all participating States.⁶³²

The Action Plan affirms that gender advisers shall be involved at an early stage in the development of new directives, rules and regulations, including those related to field operations.⁶³³ It highlights that gender mainstreaming of OSCE activities, policies, projects, and programmes within the politico-military dimension shall consider the obligations of UNSCR 1325, which advocates for increased participation of women in conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction processes.⁶³⁴

⁶²⁵ Ibid para 10a.

⁶²⁶ Ibid para 11.

⁶²⁷ Ibid para 10a.

⁶²⁸ Ibid para 14.

⁶²⁹ Ibid para 10a.

⁶³⁰ Ibid para 19.

⁶³¹ Ibid para 10a.

⁶³² Ibid para 32.

⁶³³ Ibid para 33.

⁶³⁴ Ibid para 36.

5.5.5 Promoting Gender Equality in Participating States

The Action Plan highlights that participating states hold the primary responsibility for the implementation of their commitments on gender equality and therefore recommends participating states to:

- “Ensure that the OSCE develops policies which effectively promote gender equality and that new proposals and initiatives take a gender perspective into account”
- Establish new or strengthen existing mechanisms to ensure gender equality
- “Adhere to and fully implement the international standards and commitments they have undertaken concerning equality, non-discrimination and women’s and girls’ rights”⁶³⁵

The Action Plan outlines key priorities aimed at assisting OSCE participating states in fulfilling their commitments on gender equality:

- Ensuring non-discriminatory legal and policy frameworks⁶³⁶
- Preventing violence against women. OSCE structures will assist participating States in developing programmes and activities aimed at the prevention of all forms of gender-based violence. The Action Plan notes that “as negative gender stereotypes contribute to the persistence of violence against women, OSCE programmes, projects, and activities should aim at women’s empowerment.”⁶³⁷
- Ensuring equal opportunities for the participation of women in political and public life⁶³⁸
- Encouraging women’s participation in conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict reconstruction.⁶³⁹
- Promoting equal opportunities for women in the economic sphere⁶⁴⁰

⁶³⁵ Ibid para 42.

⁶³⁶ Ibid para 44b.

⁶³⁷ Ibid para 44c.

⁶³⁸ Ibid para 44d.

⁶³⁹ Ibid para 44e.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid para 44f.

5.6 OSCE Women in Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management and post-conflict rehabilitation Decision No. 14/05 (2005)

5.6.1 Introduction

The OSCE *Women in Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation Decision* (the Decision) was adopted by the Ministerial Council in 2005. It draws upon the 2004 OSCE *Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality*, the UNSCR 1325, and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.⁶⁴¹

5.6.2 Executive summary

The Decision builds on the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality. It outlines specific activities aimed at increasing women's participation in conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation within the organisation.

5.6.3 Extended Summary

The Decision highlights that the knowledge, skills, and experience of both women and men are essential for achieving peace, sustainable democracy, security, and stability in the OSCE region. It emphasises the importance of women's full and equal participation in all phases of conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding.⁶⁴² To achieve this objective, the Decision outlines multiple activities, including to

- Ensure the implementation of the 2004 OSCE *Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality throughout the OSCE*⁶⁴³
- Integrate relevant aspects of UNSCR 1325, which empathises the role of women in all levels of conflict prevention, crisis management, resolution, and post-conflict rehabilitation⁶⁴⁴
- Actively encourage the recruitment of women to OSCE field missions, with the goal of having a substantial number of these missions led by women⁶⁴⁵
- Urge participating States and OSCE structures “to support and encourage training and educational programmes focusing on women and girls, as well as projects aimed at women's participation in building sustainable peace; to empower women's organizations; to support women's peace initiatives through the media and workshops on human rights and gender equality; and to raise awareness among women concerning the importance of their involvement in political processes”⁶⁴⁶
- Recommend that “participating States regularly evaluate their efforts at gender mainstreaming in conflict prevention, conflict management and rehabilitation processes, and make such evaluations public, to be used for gender-sensitive training purposes, and in implementation of relevant commitments as well as to increase awareness of their importance”⁶⁴⁷

⁶⁴¹ OSCE Women in Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation Decision No. 14/05 (2005), p 1.

⁶⁴² Ibid p 1.

⁶⁴³ Ibid para 1.

⁶⁴⁴ Ibid para 2.

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid para 5.

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid para 6.

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid para 9.

Additionally, the Decision details measures for reporting and monitoring the implementation of this document, assigning responsibilities to the Secretary General, the Secretariat, OSCE structures, and OSCE participating States and intuitions.⁶⁴⁸

5.7 OSCE Preventing and Combating Violence against Women (2005) Decision No. 15/05

5.7.1 Introduction

The OSCE Decision on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women (the Decision) was adopted by the Ministerial Council in 2005. It draws upon the UN Declaration on Elimination of Violence against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), and UNSCR 1325.⁶⁴⁹ The Decision applies at the strategic-political level within military context.

5.7.2 Executive summary

The Decision references several instruments of both hard law and soft law, urging participating OSCE States to undertake legislative and policy measures aimed at preventing and combating all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls. It underscores the importance of providing various support and assistance to victims, including physical, psychological, and judicial aid. , Additionally, it highlights the need for training, education, and raising awareness on this issue.

5.7.3 Extended Summary

The Decision reaffirms the commitment of the OSCE and its participating states to human rights, gender equality, and gender mainstreaming. The Decision recognises that women and girls, particularly those belonging to minority groups such as indigenous women, refugees, internally displaced persons, migrants, individuals in institutions or detention, as well as individuals with disabilities may be specifically targeted and vulnerable in situations of armed conflict.⁶⁵⁰

The Decision expresses “its deep concern at the persisting level of violence against women and girls in the OSCE region, as well as the human and political costs of this phenomenon and recognizing that violence against women constitutes a threat to human security”. Consequently the Decision makes several important declarations:

- It “Urges participating States to take all necessary legislative, policy and programmatic monitoring and evaluation measures to promote and protect the full enjoyment of human rights of women and to prevent and combat all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls”⁶⁵¹
- It urges participating States to adopt and implement legislation that criminalises gender-based violence, to provide timely physical and psychosocial protection for victims , and to meet the special needs for protection and assistance of girls victims of violence⁶⁵²

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid p 2f.

⁶⁴⁹ OSCE Decision No. 15/05 Preventing and Combating Violence against Women p 1.

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid p 1.

⁶⁵¹ Ibid para 1.

⁶⁵² Ibid para 4.

- It encourages efforts to collect, analyse, and disseminate data and raise awareness on violence against women and girls, emphasising that these issues are often underreported⁶⁵³
- It “Urges participating States to take all necessary steps to prevent gender-based violence against women and girls during and after armed conflict and emergencies, including the bringing to justice of perpetrators of crimes, and to take special measures to address the needs of women and girls in the post-conflict environment”⁶⁵⁴

The Decision references human rights frameworks, UNSCR 1325⁶⁵⁵, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Rome Statute, and other international treaties,⁶⁵⁶ as well as international case law. The Decision reaffirms a commitment to intensify the cooperation with the UN, the CoE, the EU, and other international and multilateral organisations in the effort to combat violence against women.⁶⁵⁷

5.8 OSCE Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women (2018) Decision No.4/18

5.8.1 Introduction

The Decision on *Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women* (no.4/18), adopted by the Ministerial Council in 2018, reaffirms previous commitments made by the OSCE regarding the Promotion of Gender Equality (no.14/04) and earlier Ministerial Council decisions on preventing and combating violence against women (No. 15/05 and No. 7/14). The Decision also reaffirms the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993), UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, as well as international law frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979) and the Beijing Declaration (1995).⁶⁵⁸

5.8.2 Executive Summary

The Decision reaffirms previous relevant OSCE commitments and references international law frameworks, urging participating States to continue their efforts to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against women. This includes efforts to raise awareness and build capacity within the armed forces and law enforcement agencies to prevent and combat gendered violence, as well as addressing emerging forms of violence that women face through digital technologies.

5.8.3 Extended Summary

The Decision recognises that inequality between men and women is the root cause of violence against women and girls.⁶⁵⁹ Furthermore, it highlights the Ministerial Council’s deep concern for the persistence of violence against women and girls in all its forms, recognising it as one of the most significant obstacles to their full enjoyment of human rights and effective participation in political, economic, and public life.

⁶⁵³ Ibid para 5.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid para 7.

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid p 1.

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid para 2-3.

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid para 8-10.

⁶⁵⁸ OSCE Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women (2018) Decision No 4/18 p 1.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid p 2.

To address this issue, the Ministerial Council calls upon the participating States to undertake several actions, including:

- *Awareness-Raising and Capacity-Building*: “Take action, including through awareness-raising and capacity-building for the armed forces, law enforcement agencies, judicial systems and other legal professionals, on preventing and combating all forms of violence against women and girls.”⁶⁶⁰
- *Education on Gender Equality*: Adopt measures, as appropriate, to encourage education on gender equality, human rights, and non-violent behaviour. This education aims to contribute to the prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls, which can include harmful practices, sexual violence, domestic violence, and sexual harassment.⁶⁶¹
- *Addressing Violence*: Take action to address violence, abuse, threats, and harassment directed at women, including those occurring through digital technologies.⁶⁶²

The relevant executive structures of the OSCE are tasked, in accordance with their mandates, to:

- Assist participating States, upon request, in improving their legal and policy frameworks and in implementing measures for preventing and combating all forms of violence against women and girls.⁶⁶³
- Continue cooperation with relevant international and regional organisations to collect sex-disaggregated data and statistics on the occurrence of all forms of violence against women and girls in the OSCE area.⁶⁶⁴
- Continue to ensure full implementation of, and to review the need for strengthening and/or increasing training on, the OSCE Code of Conduct for OSCE staff and mission members, as well as the OSCE policy on the professional working environment, stressing a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment, including through efforts by senior management.⁶⁶⁵

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid para 2.

⁶⁶¹ Ibid para 3.

⁶⁶² Ibid para 5.

⁶⁶³ Ibid para 12.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid para 13.

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid para 16.

5.9 OSCE Women’s Participation in Political and Public Life (2009) Decision No. 7/09 (2009)

5.9.1 Introduction

The OSCE Decision on Women’s Participation in Political and Public Life (the Decision) was adopted in 2009 by the Ministerial Council. It reaffirms the commitments of the participating States in the OSCE Decision 14/04 on the *OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, the 14/05 Decision on Women in Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation*, and 15/05 Decision on *Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women*. It also draws upon the UNSCR 1325 on women’s participation in conflict prevention, post-conflict reconstruction, and maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

5.9.2 Executive summary

The Decision focuses on ways of enhancing women’s participation in political and public life. This includes reaching a gender balance in decision-making roles within security services, including armed forces, as well as allowing for the equal contribution of women and men to peace-building initiatives.

5.9.3 Extended Summary

The Decision recognises that women may face additional barriers to participation in political and public life that extend beyond those based on gender.⁶⁶⁶ The Decision calls for participating States to undertake several actions, including to:

- “Consider providing for specific measures to achieve the goal of gender balance in all legislative, judicial and executive bodies, including security services”⁶⁶⁷
- “Consider taking measures to create equal opportunities within the security services, including the armed forces, where relevant, to allow for balanced recruitment, retention and promotion of men and women”⁶⁶⁸
- “Allow for the equal contribution of women and men to peace-building initiatives”⁶⁶⁹
- Take steps to establish effective national mechanisms for measuring women’s equal participation and representation⁶⁷⁰

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid p 2.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid para 1.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid para 4.

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid para 6.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid para 7.

5.10 Overview Development of the WPS agenda within the OSCE

The OSCE has issued several decisions regarding gender-related guidance, urging the participating states to consider or take specific actions.

In contrast to the abovementioned Decisions, the “Gender in Military Operations Guidance for military personnel working at the tactical level in Peace Support Operations” (2018) is different in scope. The Guidance act as a manual to assist military personnel at the tactical level in supporting national and international commitments by providing materials and examples of how to integrate a gender perspective into military operations.

Despite these documents’ varying focus and scope, several recurring themes emerge. Education and training are frequently mentioned, either as an asset for advancing gender equality or as a tool to facilitate the integration of gender perspective and prevent different forms of violence, including gender-based violence. Furthermore, most of the documents referenced in the Mapping highlights relevant international frameworks, such as the WPS agenda, and, to a lesser extent, international law.

Most documents included in the Mapping stresses the importance of liaison, partnership, and cooperation at regional, national, and local levels to advance the integration of a gender perspective in various activities such as DDR, CIMIC, and THB.

Furthermore, the OSCE Guidance for military personnel working at the tactical level in Peace Support Operations (2018) addresses biases and stereotypes, especially in relation to awareness-raising efforts and activities. It also emphasises the importance of considering gender roles and intersectionality when conducting gender analyses.

5.11 Related documents

- Study: Implementing Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the OSCE Region (2020)
- DCAF, OSCE & UN Gender and Security Toolkits⁶⁷¹

⁶⁷¹ Toolkits available at <https://odhr.osce.org/odhr/gender-security-toolkit>

6 Acronyms

CAAC	Children and Armed Conflict
CIMIC	Civil-Military Cooperation
CMDR	Crisis Management and Disaster Relief
CRSV	Conflict-Related Sexual Violence
(EU) CSDP	(EU) Common Security and Defence Policy
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DFS	Department of Field Support
DPKO/DPO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations (now called Department of Peace Operations, DPO)
EAPC	Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council
EU	European Union
GA	Gender Advisor*
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GENAD	Gender Advisor**
GFP	Gender Focal Point
GMO	Gender in Military Operations
HoM	Head of Mission
HS	Human Security
ICCW	In Close Collaboration With
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IHRL	International Human Rights Law
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PoC	Protection of Civilians
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
THB	Trafficking in Human Beings
UN	United Nations
UNSCRs	UN Security Council Resolutions
UNSG	UN Secretary General
WPS	Women Peace and Security

* The acronym “GA” is used in EU document summaries included in the Navigation Tool

** The acronym “GENAD” is used in NATO document summaries included in the Navigation Tool

