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STEP FORWARD OF SERBIAN ARMED FORCES TOWARDS HIGHER GENDER EQUALITY STANDARDS

Abstract: The paper deals with different aspects of incorporation of the principle of gender equality in the Serbian Armed Forces and military academic education, with a special view of the military realities, the inherited state of affairs, and current trends in other countries. The implementation of gender equality in this context calls for a synchronized action by wide range of relevant institutions. The process requires systematic, step-by-step approach, which ought to engender an array of intertwined and mutually conditioned activities. The author concludes that the most significant step forward to reach higher standards in the field of gender equality in the Serbian Armed Forces has been an increase in the number of women enlisted in the professional military service. Importantly, this improvement includes greater openness in the admission of girls as cadets to the Military Academy.

Key words: *gender equality, Serbian Armed Forces.*

Introduction

Measures taken in the last few years in the Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces in order to remove obstacles for acceptance of women in professional military service resulted in apparent changes in two key indicators of gender equality. These are: 1) constant increase of percentage of women in overall structure of the Armed Forces, and 2) broadening area of work engagement of women in the Armed Forces, i.e. increase in number of duties available to them under same conditions as for men.

Intensifying acceptance of women in professional military service

Increase of the percentage of women's presence in Serbian Armed Forces

In order to be accepted in training for professional soldiers and thus acquire qualification for performing certain jobs in Serbian Armed Forces in the capacity of professional military personnel, women have to comply with general

recruitment requirements: to be medically fit, to get a positive grade in psychology selection tests and to "pass" appropriate security clearance. Unlike men, prior to assigning to training for professional soldiers, women are not obliged to serve mandatory service period. This concession to women was made because they were not mandatory military conscripts and therefore insisting in this condition, which is completely justified from the point of rationality and efficiency of the training, would result in further continuance of the gender inequality in respect of employment opportunity in Serbian Armed Forces.

Removing the traditional barrier for entrance of women in military ranks has proved justified in the context of formal battle with one form of discrimination on women and from the standpoint of rational disposal of defence human resources. This conclusion is supported by information on the number of women that met the criteria for assignment to professional soldiers' training and results that they achieved in mastering the basic and specialty training program. Out of total of 1,919 candidates accepted for training in 2009, 367 or 19 percent were women. Special attention must be given to the fact that percentage of candidate that successfully completed the training is somewhat higher among women than among men — 99 percent in comparison to 95 percent. Women kept the advantage in successful mastering of the program in further cycles of the training. In first half of 2010, 2,305 candidates went through four cycles of training for professional soldiers, out of which 353 (15 percent) were women. In this case also, their passing rate at the course was extremely high (98 percent) and one percent higher than men passing rate.¹ According to the training records, in average women achieve somewhat better results than men in adopting theoretical knowledge, in physical aptitude test (according to criteria applicable for women), then in professional-specialty training contents (in craft specialties, in particular) and in mastering activities that require precision and concentration. On the other hand, they are weaker than men in adopting tactical training contents, at firing infantry weapons and close-order drill.

Stated indicators of women's capability to successfully complete the training, which at the same time are valid parameters for estimating efficacy in performing jobs in capacity of professional soldier, correspond to the results of the research on what jobs should women be predominantly engaged, i.e. towards which jobs should they be directed in terms of their professional orientation.² This does not question their right to make a free decision

¹ Status in August 2010.

² Šaranović J., Marček J., Kilibarda Z., *Obim i modaliteti angažovanja žena u savremenim armijama*, Institut ratne veštine, Beograd, 2005.

for which opening in the armed forces will they apply under equal terms as men, pursuant to their own preferences and estimates. In support of supremacy of this right speaks the observation from the training analysis that no particular problems were observed in women's training in comparison to men's training, as well as the fact that the main reason why some women fail to complete the professional soldier training is not poor result in training. In most cases, this happens due to termination of training on personal request (due to lack of interest in acquiring the professional soldier status) or due to failure to comply with certification requirements due to long period of sick leave, which can be indirectly connected with mainly undisputed experience-based knowledge of women's higher probability of injuring during the training.

Speaking of work efficiency of women on professional soldier formation positions, feed-back information from the units show that when it comes to fulfilling tasks they demonstrate high level of responsibility, and even more will and perseverance in craft specialist jobs, which recommends them, in accordance with similar observation from training, as candidates that should have advantage in the process of filling the openings of such kind.

In any case, it can be noted that women, now equally with men, can apply for any job opening in the Serbian Armed Forces, and that adequate positive climate has been created in this respect in the military environment, which altogether has favourable effect on women's response on training invitations. Vast majority of women successfully complete the training, so the share of women in overall composition of the professional part of the Serbian Armed Forces has significantly increased in the last five years. Just as a reminder, in mid-2000s, in then Serbia and Montenegro Armed Forces and Ministry of Defence, there were only 206 women in all categories of professional military personnel (officers, non-commissioned officers and professional soldiers). By September 2010, this number more than tripled, with percentage share increased from almost negligible 0.82 percent to 2.83 percent (see Table 1).³ Chances are real that by the end of the year, in line with plan for professionalization of Serbian Armed Forces and relatively high response of women to open competition for admission to professional military service, the total number of women in Serbian Armed Forces and Ministry of Defence, will have been significantly increased.

³ Stated data were obtained from Staff Administration, HR Department of Serbian Ministry of Defense within the work on National Action Plan for implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

Table 1

Share percentage of women in defence system (2005–2010)

Year	Staff category						Total	%
	Officers	%	Non-commissioned officers	%	Professional soldiers	%		
2005	16	0,19	30	0,28	160	2,66	206	0,82
2006	15	0,22	30	0,35	116	2,57	161	0,81
2007	15	0,23	29	0,36	114	2,72	158	0,84
2008	18	0,28	29	0,37	152	3,23	199	1,05
2009	27	0,42	29	0,38	368	5,72	424	2,06
2010	28	0,44	29	0,38	569	7,02	626	2,83

The following data speaks in favour of the estimated increase of the share of women – professional military personnel, in the overall composition of the Serbian Armed Forces: among professional soldiers accepted in the military service during 2009, there were 11.39 percent of women, and during 2010 (August inclusive) 13.96 percent. In contests for acceptance into military service announced in 2010, among the applicants there were 20.54 percent of women, out of which 90 percent complied with the criteria set out for dispatching to basic training. This trend in contest response (two candidates for one opening in branch position), with expected high rate of course completion (that was around 98 percent during training in 2009 and 2010), will probably result in increase of the percentage of women professional soldiers in the ranks of Serbian Armed Forces. At the same time, with graduation of the first generation of girls at the Military Academy (2011), the number of women professional officers will start to increase, thus making a fundamental progress in terms of gender equality in Serbian Armed Forces and Ministry of Defence.

Broadening the scope of work engagement: conquering “men’s jobs”

Thanks to the new approach in admittance into professional military service, free of formal limitations and obstacles based on former rigid stereotypes and prejudice about “whimsical women’s nature” and her inferiority, the practice of admitting women to work positions that used to be practically unavailable although there were no official bans in this respect, has become more and more apparent. Certainly, this already obvious trend of broadening the scope of work engagement of women has not erased

traditionally emphasized higher representation of men on jobs that require massive physical strains and in branch positions that entail direct exposure to enemy fire in case of combat action, but presence of women in such duties already ceased to be exclusive phenomenon that causes wandering or ridicule, that used to accompany such news in the past. Measured by total number of branch positions that in this period become available to women, not only declaratively but also practically, the broadening of the scope of their work engagement can be qualified as doubling “conquered” space. This means that the possibility to select the type of job in line with personal affinities and capabilities of women interested in service in Serbian Armed Forces was *de facto* significantly increased.

Given the vast number of duties (military occupational specialty codes) of professional soldiers in Serbian Armed Forces, the number of duties performed now by women (64 in total) is not impressive *per se*, but — in comparison to situation five years ago (35) — undisputedly illustrate the trend of leaving traditional practice of favouring men in military profession, established on stereotype belief that they are superior to “weaker sex” and justified by centuries long and supposedly natural division of work into “male” and “female”. When it comes to evidence of essential, and not only formal broadening of the scope of women’s work engagement in the armed forces as one of undoubtedly significant indicators of gender equality improvement, a much more important indicator than the number of duties performed by women is which newly-conquered duties are these, i.e. what is the character of the broadening of work scope of women soldiers — whether it is mainly quantitative or at the same time qualitative change.

If we observe the first part of the rank list of branch positions in Serbian Armed Forces compiled based on number of professional women soldiers that occupy them, i.e. work positions with most women representation (where there are 10 or more women), it can be noted that there are seven “newly-conquered” positions among them, out of which at least four fall into category of jobs that until recently, at least unofficially, were perceived as male. These are: mortar men (31), telephone operator (29), sapper (17) and guard (14).⁴ Performing stated tasks entails relatively high level of life and health risk related to handling weapons or explosive ordnance, or with increased physical strain, which is by the rules and criteria of labour and industrial psychology generally not recommended to persons with weaker psycho-physical constitution.

⁴ Numbers in brackets indicate the number of women performing stated jobs in Serbian Armed Forces.

The other important fact related to the jobs in which the representation of women is most obvious is that their highest inflow in the ranks of professional soldiers for the last five years has been recorded in branch position shooter — as much as 77 newcomers, thus increasing their number for little over six times (from 15 to 92). Of course, shooter’s duties entail execution of tasks by use of firing arms, which means (as a rule) from the most forward position in the unit’s line of battle, and accordingly it is sufficiently demanding from the point of military professional competency and psycho-physical fitness. When we also take into account that at the same time, based on successfully completed general and specialty training, Serbian Armed Forces admitted as much as 30 women for mortar man duties, 31 for telephone operator duties and 8 for duties of machinegun shooter (where in previous period there were no women), then in fact there is no place to objections that can be heard from time to time, although unofficially: that women come to serve in Serbian Armed Forces just to be called professional soldiers, namely to get the salary of a professional, and that in reality they perform “civilian” jobs, without even “seeing the real army”.

The large inventory of jobs where women’s presence is merely symbolic — one or two (four at the most) — speaks in support of the qualitative change in practice of hiring women in Armed Forces, in terms of broadening scope of their engagement, although even such presence is worth mentioning because of exclusivity of the role they perform. These are the jobs that under all classic standards can be classified in group of those “unbecoming for women’s nature”, those that women should steer clear of “for their own good”, whether because they are dangerous, or because they are too demanding, which is the reason why until recently it was almost unthinkable to find a women in uniform in such place. These are, for example, jobs that women perform on the following branch positions: tug-boat operator (4), armoured personal carrier gunner (3), amphibious carrier operator (3), counter-terrorist (2), amphibious carrier driver (1), amphibious carrier commander (1) mechanic for ammunition and low-explosive devices (1) and pontoon bridge operator (1).⁵ In addition, among the women included in current professional soldiers’ training cycle, there are those that will be appointed to branch positions occupied exclusively by men until now, such as: paratrooper, rocket system operator, artillery gunner, tank gunner, rocket system mechanic, aviation ordinance person.⁶

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ The list of work post in Serbian Armed Forces for which women did not stand chance to be employed in capacity of a professional soldier is not complete. For example, in 2010, Armed

Based on the stated data that undoubtedly indicate increasing trend in share percentage of women in total composition of professional soldiers, along with broadening of their work scope, especially in direction of “conquering” jobs that were until recently “reserved” primarily (and even exclusively) for men, it can be concluded that the practice in Serbia, when it comes to hiring women in Armed Forces, undoubtedly changes in such way that guarantees constant progress in the spirit of proclaimed principals of gender equality. Significant contribution to achieving this goal has been made by amendments of regulations that enabled, parallel with increase in number of women among professional soldiers, more efficient solving of the problem of their extremely low presence among the structures of officer personnel. These amendments made the base for subsequent, deciding step on the road to objectification of gender equality.

Beginning of girls’ education in Military Academy

Within intensifying of the process for creating conditions for more significant participation of women in the structure of professional Armed Forces personnel, the most significant step forward was made by passing decision to begin education of girls in Military Academy. This act opened the way for women to all levels and forms of military-professional education, thanks to which they will perceptively be in position to apply for all jobs in Armed Forces equally as men, including those at the highest management levels. Thus, the last serious obstacle was removed from the path of achieving essential gender equality in the Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces.

Minister’s instruction from 2006, prescribed that it is necessary to “secure adequate conditions for admission of women in military schools for certain specialties” and that education should start in the following school term.⁷ Given that the education at the Military Academy was exclusively reserved for men, “ensuring adequate conditions” for beginning of girls’ education entailed obtaining certain information on potential candidates in order to take timely measures for valid selection of girls, their motivation for military vocation and successful integration into military environment. In

Forces expressed the need to fill branche positions towed train driver, dozer and loader operator, commando, light diver, tracked and wheeled vehicle mechanic, and steam boilerstoker, but there were no women interested for taking these positions (according to the data obtained from Humen Resource Department).

⁷ “Minister’s instruction for the year 2006”, Defense Policy Sector, Ministry of Defence, Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2006.

particular, in order to know how to prepare for education, how to begin, it was necessary to know what is the starting position. In line with that need, in the first half of 2007, Institute for strategic research conducted a research “Opinion of High School Students about Education in Military Academy”.⁸ One of the goals of the research was to determine the extent to which the senior high-school students, especially girls, are interested in education in Military Academy, and for which courses in particular.

According to the results of the said research, 128 (9.1 percent) of girls high-school graduates expressed wish to study at Military Academy. It is interesting that the percent of those who want to study at Military Academy is approximately equal in both male and female sub-sample (Table 2). It must be admitted that this is somewhat unexpected, given that in Serbia, military vocation has always been and still is considered to be men’s. However, maybe this very fact hides the explanation for girls’ interest in education in Military Academy. It is possible that the very fact that such possibility did not exist until now, activated the “novelty appeal” motivation, which as a rule is extremely pronounced in persons prone proving themselves in challenging situations. Significant number of such persons are equally present among men and women, and for women, military profession as area in which they did not have the opportunity to prove themselves, is a typical example of a challenging situation. Given that they are not acquainted with all difficulties of that vocation, nor warned of it by the society (because they are not perceived as military personnel), they are usually spared of negative halo-effects related to this vocation.

Table 2
Interest of high-school students for studying at the Military Academy

Question:	Answers	Boys		Girls	
		Number	%	Number	%
Do you want to study at the Military Academy?	I do	120	10,7	128	9,1
	Undecided	294	26,2	322	22,8
	I do not want	706	63,0	957	68,1
	Total	1 120	100	1 407	100

High school girls interested in studying at the Military Academy, first of all wish to be educated for aviation duties. Attractiveness of this course is much greater than any other. There are at least two reasons for that: 1) girls probably see themselves in aviation exclusively in the role of pilot, which is the most attractive duty of all professional military personnel; 2) given the high price of

⁸ Subject sample consisted of senior Serbian highschool students. Total number of subjects was 2,527 students, out of which 1,407 were girls. Research included 67 schools in 61 town in 25 counties.

aircraft steering training, for the vast majority of those who want to become pilots, free studying at the Military Academy is the only way to fulfil their wishes. Other courses (army, logistics and navy's river flotilla) are almost equally interesting to girls. It is notable, however, that girls in comparison with boys show less interest in army, and higher in logistics. This result is expected, given that according to stereotype division of jobs into "male" and "female", officer jobs in army fall into "typical male" category. Furthermore, officer duties in this arm of service, in comparison to duties in other duty branches, are undoubtedly more physically demanding, which girls probably have in mind when deciding on the education course at the Military Academy. At the same time, higher interest for logistics course indicate that they most likely pay attention to what duties would that be performing in the armed forces, as well as to possibilities of employment outside armed forces, in case they are forced to leave the military profession before completing full years of service. Military Academy diploma acquired in logistics course certainly gives more opportunities in that respect, then diploma acquired in army course.

Girls' response to competition for education at the Military Academy

Announcement of the competition for education of girls at the Military Academy was the end of the preparatory phase in realization of the decision to equal the rights of men and women in respect of the opportunity to choose military profession. At the same time, this was the beginning of the process for verification of girls' motivation for choosing military vocations, i.e. testing the premise of their readiness and capability to comply with the requirements of the vocational-educational process at the Academy, life conditions (accommodation) and the same studying for cadets of both sexes. In the generation of Military Academy students (cadets) enrolled in 2007, there were 30 positions for girls (17.3 percent). In that year, 56 of them applied, or 1.8 candidates for one position (Table 3). Judging by the number of applicants in comparison to number of positions and percent of graduates that expressed interest for education in Military Academy during the research conducted in the first half of that same year, such response could not be qualified as sufficiently high. Just as reminder, among questioned graduates there were 128 girls that expressed wish to study at the Military Academy and 322 girls that were hesitant in this respect. This means that in total population of graduated high school students there were much more interested in education in Military Academy then the ones that actually applied for the open competition.

Table 3
Response of the girls to the open competition for education in Military Academy

Response indicators	School year				Trend
	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	
Number of girls accepted	30	32	49	57	increase
Number applied for one position	1,8	3,3	4,9	5,66	increase
Average high school grade	4,76	4,64	4,38	4,34	decrease

Probably the one reason for this discrepancy between interest in education and response to contest is insufficient information of high school students on life and study conditions at the Military Academy, which is evidenced by the result of the same research. It is shown that high percent of subjects were not informed that there is a possibility for girls to study at the Military Academy. In addition, it is certain than a number of them did not apply to the contest because, given insufficient information regarding the study conditions, they doubted that there was a possibility to win a place at the Military Academy, or in successful mastering of the curriculum. To this end speaks the fact that average high school grade of all girls that applied in the first generation was extremely high, as much as 4.76. Practically, almost only straight 'A' students had the courage to apply for the contest.

In the second generation, year 2008/2009, response of the girls was much higher than in the previous year. For only two places more (32 instead of 30) applied almost two times more girls (106 in total, or 3.3 for one place). At the same time, average school grade of all applicants was only slightly lower (4.64). Grater response of equally good candidates is a result of adequate promotion of the girl education practice and feed-back information on successful start of the first generation of girl cadets, which resulted in better awareness of the high school students and their parents of the new educational opportunity for girls, which at the same time was encouraging for potential candidates to apply for the contest.⁹

Even more impressive increase in girls' response to Military Academy Contest was recorded in the following year 2009/2010, when for 49 places envisaged for girls almost two and a half times more candidates applied than in the previous year (243 in total, or 4.9 for one place). It is understandable that such increase in response was followed by decrease in average high school grade of the applicants. After all, it is known that invitation for higher number of open places frequently

⁹ Within promotion of girls in Military Academy during 2007, two monographs were published with the topic in question ("*Education of Girls at Military Academy*" and "*Graduating Students on the Profession of an Officer*").

results in perception of increased pass rate, which the ones with weaker references see as their chance to be accepted and therefore decide to apply, something that they would not otherwise do in fear that they might unpleasantly face failure. Nevertheless, judging by the average high school grade of applicants that is 0.38 lower than in the previous year, it can be said that the response increase in this case was more influenced by increased popularity of military vocation and therefore higher motivation for education in Military Academy, and not calculation of higher pass rate at the contest based on increased admission numbers.

Conclusion

The response to the 2010 contest undoubtedly confirmed the presented increasing tendency in the number of girls applying for one open position, with retaining relatively high quality of candidates. This time, 323 girls applied for 57 positions, thus increasing the number of applicants per one position to 5.66. When taken into account that average high school grade of girls candidates (4.34) is slightly, or more precisely symbolically lower (0.04) in comparison to the previous year, it is justified to conclude that response of girls for education at the Military Academy in this (fourth) year continued with the growing tendency in both quantitative and qualitative terms. This in particular means that, as far as the high school average grade as one of the relevant indicators of educational success in subsequent schooling levels is concerned, if this trend in girls' response continues, the Military Academy has the possibility to be the certain source for filling in the Armed Forces with quality officer staff from the ranks of female population. Of course, validity of this premise implies fulfilment of a number of other preconditions, from the adequate knowledge that must accompany the high grade average in high school, i.e. work habits, through an adequate psychological selection procedure that will guarantee the selection of women with adequate personality profile, to creating conditions for full integration of girl cadets into military environment.

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WOMEN IN SECURITY SECTOR AND EURO-ATLANTIC INTEGRATION OF MONTENEGRO

Abstract: UN SC resolution “Women, peace and security” invites states and international organizations to actively protect women and children from violence in armed conflicts, to prevent sexual war crimes, to advocate for gender equality in peace operations, to improve specialized training and to support peace initiatives of local women. NATO, as one of the largest international security organizations, is highly dedicated to implementation of Resolution 1325. So far, NATO member states have started to implement the Resolution primarily in military issues. They have approved specific guidelines for the integration of gender equality issues into all NATO plans and operations, including the Code of conduct for military personnel. Moreover, they have established posts specifically determined for gender equality advisors within the ISAF mission in Afghanistan and also to deal with issues of how to improve training and cooperation in gender equality issues with EU, UN and other international organizations. Having in regard the traditionally inadequate position of women in Montenegro, the process of European and Euro-Atlantic integration is a good opportunity to carry out fundamental changes in this area together with other reforms, and to implement modern standards of developed Western European countries, especially in the field of security. Bearing in mind that for a long time the Balkan region has been exposed to war conflicts where women were the greatest victims, it is safe to claim that the integration of this region into NATO is the best model for permanent solution to the accumulated security problems.

Key words: *women, security, NATO, Montenegro.*

Introduction

State gender equality policy, especially in the security sector, is accepted today not only in EU member countries, but also in those aspiring to become one. The success of this policy primarily depends on the degree of influence of traditional heritage, intensity of changes in people's consciousness, and their