

Integration of Women into Ground Combat Units – Slovenia as an Example of a Successful but a Small Country

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ABSTRACT

Slovenia has been a member of the Alliance since 2004. It has been participating in international operations and missions since 1997. In August last year, the share of women in the Slovenian Armed Forces amounted to 16.5%. In independent Slovenia, this has always been high share compared to other NATO countries, and has on the average ranked between 14% and 16%.

Slovenian women have traditionally been active in the domain of security and, in particular, national defence. They made an important contribution during WWII and after the war, when Slovenia constituted one of the former Yugoslav republics.

Slovenia as a small country, which spreads on about 20,000 km², with a population of about 2,000,000 and an armed force of 6,691 members is currently present in Kosovo, Iraq, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Afghanistan, Syria, Lebanon, Macedonia, Serbia, Mali, Latvia and operation EU NAVFOR MED with 346 people per rotation, 242 of which are deployed in Kosovo.

Compared to large countries, Slovenia represents a small sample, which is generally not comparable and interesting enough for scientific research on an international scale. However, it is, on the other hand, eminent enough to represent a case study for other comparable countries such as Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and others. Women in those countries have also played a very prominent role in the armed forces, both from the aspect of their cultural tradition and a sociological point of view.

In the Slovenian Armed Forces, we have been intensively monitoring the role of women from several different perspectives. In 2015, on the anniversary of UN Resolution 1325, we focused on their role in international operations and missions. For this purpose, we prepared a special questionnaire and attempted to find out how they themselves perceived their role, how their role was seen abroad by their male colleagues and how they as women in uniform were accepted by the international environment in different locations.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In 2019, the Republic of Slovenia celebrates an important anniversary with regard to international political, security and defence matters. As the first republic of the former Yugoslavia, Slovenia joined NATO with the other nine countries in 2004. In the past fifteen years, Slovenia as a small country with its armed forces and police forces participated in many international operations and missions.

It is important to emphasize that when members of the former Yugoslav National Army left the territory of Slovenia after the ten-day war, the country had to establish its own military forces. Thomas Young writes that most Eastern European countries with post-communist regimes had specific problems with their armed forces, in the way that they had to transform the forces from a post-communist pattern to the Western way of developing the defence systems. However, in the case of Slovenia, a few of those points of view were different¹¹. One of them was the fact that Slovenia's new military were members of the former republic Territorial Defence forces that had fought against the Yugoslav National Army and were the beginners of the new sovereign armed forces today known as the Slovenian Armed Forces (SAF). Many women in the SAF today started their military careers as members of the Territorial Defence forces.

Slovenia is surrounded by four neighbouring countries: Italy in the west, Austria in the north, Hungary in the east and Croatia in the south. As a small country, which spreads on about 20,000 km², with a population of about 2,000,000 and an armed forces of 6,691 members is currently present in Afghanistan – RSM, Bosnia and Herzegovina – JOINT ENTERPRISE, Kosovo – KFOR, Macedonia – JOINT ENTERPRISE, Bosnia and Herzegovina – ALTHEA, Mali – EUTM, Lebanon – UNIFIL, Syria – UNTSO, Italy – EUNAVOR, Iraq – OIR and Latvia – eFP².

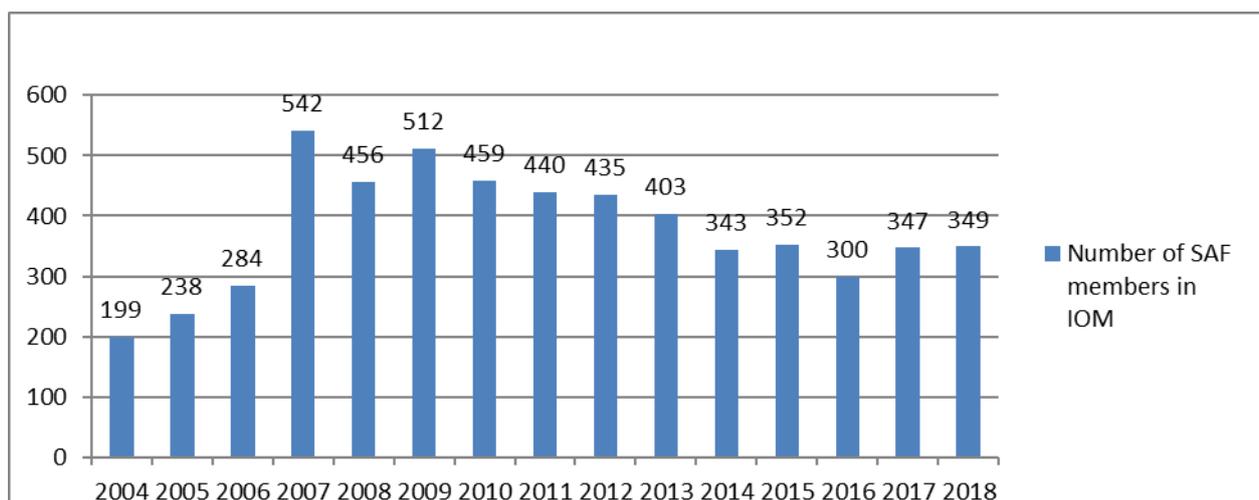


Figure 1: Number of Slovenian Armed Forces members in international operations and missions³ (IOM).

¹Young, T. (2017). *Anatomy of Post-Communist European Defence Institutions, The Mirage of Military Modernity*. Bloomsbury, London. (pp. 116-143).

² See more at <http://www.slovenskavojska.si/en/international-cooperation/international-operations-and-missions/>.

³ The numbers are from the end of December in each year in the last rotation. There are two to three rotations per year depends on the duration of each rotation and the location of the activities.

As shown on the official web page of the Slovenian Armed Forces, “International operations and missions”⁴, SAF members were deployed for the first time to a crisis response operation on 14 May 1997, namely to the humanitarian operation ALBA in Albania with a medical unit and four liaison officers. Female personnel from the medical branch were also included in this first contingent. Later on, the number of SAF members, also female, gradually increased.

Since 2004, when Slovenia became a member of Alliance and the European Union some 11.000 personnel were deployed, many of them several times.

2.0 IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION 1325 IN SLOVENIA

The Republic of Slovenia is monitoring the processes and activities that are part of international ambitions to accomplish the quality level of human rights, equity for men and women, and is an active partner in the implementation of UN resolutions 1325 and 1820 as well as others, which are based on these two.

Slovenia adopted the Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Men and Women in 2005. Its 2015 edition applies to the period 2015–2020. Equal Opportunities for Men and Woman Act is the core legislative document for achieving equal opportunities for men and women in political, economic, social, educational and others areas of interest. Data show that Slovenia respects international resolutions on gender. National action plan for the implementation of both resolutions was adopted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2010. Since then, Slovenia has been reporting to the UN, OSCE and NATO Committee for Gender Perspective every year⁵. Special action plan on gender perspective for the Ministry of Defence and the Slovenian Armed Forces was envisaged in the National Action Plan. Together with the Defence Act, Law on Service in the Slovenian Armed Forces and Code of Military Ethics, we have the core legislative framework for the implementation of equal opportunities for men and women.

Within the project of the Professionalization of Slovenian Armed Forces (PROVOJ⁶) in 2004, a special subproject on equal opportunities was launched for both sexes. By order, special topics were determined such as organizational, professional-technical topics, equal representation of both sexes in the military structure and in the processes of military decision making, on the educational structures including international operations and missions, etc.⁷

Gender perspective in the Slovenian Armed Forces can be broken down into four periods.

1. The first one was before the independent Slovenia. Women joined the Territorial Defence forces as administrative or logistics support. There were less than 1% female officers in the period before 1992.
2. The next period was from 1993 to 2013. In this period, women were able to join the Slovenian Armed Forces according to the Defence Act, but they had to complete military schools within the Slovenian Armed Forces in two years. According to Šteiner, this was not the best solution concerning

⁴ <http://www.slovenskavojska.si/en/international-cooperation/international-operations-and-missions/>, 15.1.2019.

⁵ Šteiner, A. (2015). Slovenska vojska med tranzicijo in transformacijo. Slovenska vojska, Center vojaških šol. Ljubljana.

⁶ Original name of the project was *Poklicna vojska dopolnjena s pogodbeno rezervo*.

⁷ Šteiner, A. (2015). Slovenska vojska med tranzicijo in transformacijo. Slovenska vojska, Center vojaških šol. Ljubljana.

competences⁸, but Slovenia was going through a transition process and had to find solutions rapidly and effectively. In 2004, the voluntary military service was organized and available to men and women.

3. The third period was between 2004 and 2008, when women were able to participate in all structures of the Slovenian Armed Forces, although there were still some issues that needed to be solved such as the adaptations of uniforms, boots, separate accommodation and sanitary facilities, etc.⁹
4. In the fourth period, which started after 2008, we are following all the suggestions, resolutions and international trends on gender perspective as was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

Summaries of NATO reports from 2014 and 2016 show that Slovenia holds the six place among NATO nations in percentage (13.6%) of women on active military duty. The retention of women in 2014 was 2.7% higher than retention of men, which places Slovenia fourth among NATO nations. The Slovenian Armed Forces have no support networks established specifically for women, and there are no specific programmes and policies to maintain work-life balance. Slovenia has one training program related to the UNSC 1325 and gender-related topics are included into pre-deployment training for all personnel. The training aims in raising the awareness about gender perspective, includes UNSCR 1325 in the peace support operations with the emphasis on non-discrimination, and non-sexual harassment policies and code of ethics. Due to financial restrictions, not all equipment is fit for both men and women. The report shows unequal distribution of senior NCO and officer ranks (OF3 and higher). However, the overall percentage of women participation in NATO-led operations is 8.9%, which is higher than overall percentage of women, i.e. 5.6 %.

3.0 GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN THE SLOVENIAN ARMED FORCES

Awareness on the importance of gender perspective in the military has been present in the Slovenian Armed Forces since the beginning of our independence. In 1995, the Ministry of Defence published a special booklet on women in the armed forces. Its Centre for Strategic Studies joined domestic and foreign experts to exchange some views and case-studies to find out how to be prepared for the future. Jelušič emphasized how important the role of women was during the Second World War and still was today. She noted that the roles of a mother, woman and soldier were three important and very often incompatible roles, which women need to play¹⁰. The first account of a female senior officer showed how many different challenges the military could pose, especially at the beginning of the Slovenian Armed Forces development¹¹. Some foreign experts like Gasperini¹² and Bauwens¹³ shared their expertise and practices as a way ahead for Slovenia, but from the present perspective, important findings were presented by Kotnik¹⁴. He underlined

⁸ Jelušič, L. (2003). Slovenian Public Opinion on Security, Defence and Military Issues. V Marie Vlachova (ur.). *The Public Image of Defence and the Military in Central and Eastern Europe*, 182-200. Geneva: Centre for the Democratic Control of the Armed Forces (DCAF); Belgrade: Centre for Civil - Military Relations (CCMR).

⁹ Šteiner, A. (2015). *Slovenska vojska med tranzicijo in transformacijo*. Slovenska vojska, Center vojaških šol. Ljubljana.

¹⁰ Jelušič, L., (1995). *Ženske vojakinje – emancipacija ali muhavost*. In Vegič, V., (ed.), (1995). *Ženske in oborožene sile*. Zbornik študij. Ministrstvo za obrambo, Center za strateške študije. Ljubljana, 1995.

¹¹ Pešec, M., (1995). *Ženska kot nadrejena vojakinja – osebne izkušnje*. In Vegič, V., (ur.), (1995). *Ženske in oborožene sile*. Zbornik študij. Ministrstvo za obrambo, Center za strateške študije. Ljubljana, 1995, pp. 149-157.

¹² Gasperini, G., (1995). *Ženske in oborožene sile-sedanje stanje in obeti*. In Vegič, V., (ur.), (1995). *Ženske in oborožene sile*. Zbornik študij. Ministrstvo za obrambo, Center za strateške študije. Ljubljana, 1995, pp. 129-138.

¹³ Bauwens, E., (1995). *Vključevanje žensk v belgijske oborožene sile*. In Vegič, V., (ur.), (1995). *Ženske in oborožene sile*. Zbornik študij. Ministrstvo za obrambo, Center za strateške študije. Ljubljana, 1995.

¹⁴ Kotnik, I., (1995). *Nekatera vprašanja vključevanja žensk v sodobne oborožene sile*. In Vegič, V., (ur.), (1995). *Ženske in oborožene sile*. Zbornik študij. Ministrstvo za obrambo, Center za strateške študije. Ljubljana, 1995, pp. 87-92.

some factors that he found significant for increasing the number of female servicemembers in the armed forces. According to Kotnik, these include demographic trends; development of military technology, technique and weapons; changed role and tasks of armed forces, and changed role of women in the society (ibid). Later on in 2002, when the Ministry of Defence and the Faculty of Social Sciences published another booklet on gender perspective titled *Sexism and the Armed Forces*, Kotnik wrote an article on limiting factors at the inclusion of women into the armed forces¹⁵. These limiting factors¹⁶ were the leading imperative for the preparation of the concept of the questionnaire which was distributed among members of the Slovenian Armed Forces in autumn 2015. Once again, a few women from the Slovenian Armed Forces wrote articles about their experiences as women in the military. Later on in 2016 a special thematic issue of the *Contemporary Military Challenges* was published on the occasion of 15th anniversary of the UN resolution 1325 with the international group of authors¹⁷.

What we found important for our analysis in 2015 was the data about women positions and their ranks. This enabled the comparison of the functional and positional integration of women into the armed forces during the period of 15 years, and potential influence of UNSCR 1325 on this process¹⁸.

According to Tkavc “since its very beginnings, the Armed Forces of the Republic of Slovenia – at that time the Territorial Defence (TD) – have been open for employment to both men and women. The main reason was found in the national legislation which supported gender equality. There are no lawfully forbidden areas for female personnel nor programmes or branches legally excluding the participation of women in the SAF. The percentage of women in SAF structure has ranged between 15 and 16 percent in the last decade”¹⁹

Area	Women Percentage (%)	Men Percentage (%)
Administration	47.52	52.48
Communications	7.50	92.50
Finance	84.21	15.79
Infantry	13.85	86.15
Legal	64.71	35.29
Logistics	17.32	82.68
Medical	59.68	40.32
Musicians	18.75	81.25

¹⁵ Kotnik, Dvojmoč, I., (2002). Omejevalni dejavniki pri vključevanju žensk v oborožene sile. In Jelušič, L., & Pešec, M., (eds.), (2002). *Seksizem v vojaški uniformi*. Fakulteta za družbene vede in Ministrstvo za obrambo. Ljubljana, 2002, pp. 28-66.

¹⁶ The limiting factors according to Kotnik are the following: “tradition, culture and patterns of sexual roles; military costs; physical futures of women; psychological futures of women; health problems of women; parenthood and family life; relations between sexes and sexual harassment; morale, cohesion and efficiency of military units; the questions of including women in battle tasks; functional and positional differentiation and discrimination of women” (2002, pp. 28-66).

¹⁷ Thematic issue with the title *Women, peace and security on the 15th anniversary of UN Security Council resolution 1325*, http://www.slovenskavojska.si/fileadmin/slovenska_vojska/pdf/vojaski_izzivi/2016/svi_18_3.pdf.

¹⁸ Pešec, M., (2002). *Ženske v Slovenski vojski*. In Jelušič, L., & Pešec, M., (eds.) (2002). *Seksizem v vojaški uniformi*. Fakulteta za družbene vede in Ministrstvo za obrambo. Ljubljana, pp. 138-141.

¹⁹ Tkavc, S. (2016). Some of best practices in gender perspective and the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the 25 years of Slovenian Armed Forces. *Contemporary Military Challenges*, No. 18/3, September, 2016. Slovenian Armed Forces, pp. 45-63.

Personnel	38.68	61.32
Public Affairs	42.86	57.14

Figure 2: Positions held by women and men (as of 31 December 2015)²⁰

Tkavc claims that both women and men in the SAF are serving in leadership, commanding or decision-making positions at home and abroad. Those positions have ranged and continue to range from the tactical level (e.g. platoon commanders), up to the positions at the strategic level (e.g. heads of sections, divisions, joint divisions, chiefs of staff). The first female battalion commander was appointed in January 2006 as the commander of the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Battalion; the second was appointed in March 2007 as the commander of the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Battalion up to August 2010. By November 2011, one more female had been appointed commander of one of the motorized battalions. From 2011 to 2013, the Officer Candidate School was headed by a female commander. More recently, in October 2016, another woman took over the position of commander of the Initial Training Centre²¹.

Year	Number (No) Total	Female (No)	Female (%)
2000	194	10	5.2%
2001	165	16	9.7%
2002	136	8	5.9%
2003	341	9	2.6%
2004	425	13	3.1%
2005	474	49	10.3%
2006	575	68	11.8%
2007	994	88	8.9%
2008	961	94	9.8%
2009	1037	92	8.9%
2010	919	62	6.8%
2011	894	61	6.8%
2012	897	60	6.7%

²⁰ Tkavc, S. (2016). Some of the best practices in gender perspective and the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the 25 years of Slovenian Armed Forces. Contemporary Military Challenges, No. 18/3, September, 2016. Slovenian Armed Forces, p. 52.

²¹ Ibid.

2013	1119	80	7.2 %
2014	1129	101	8.9 %
2015	999	69	6.9 %

Figure 3: SAF female active military duty personnel deployed to IOMs in the period 2000 – 2015 (from 1 January to 31 December of each year)²²

The highest rank to be held by a woman in the SAF since 2011 has been that of brigadier general but at the end of the 2018 she became a Major General and Chief of Defence. As a brigadier general she has held one of the highest positions in the SAF at the General Staff before and was responsible for one of the three pillars in the SAF, i.e. the operations pillar; she thus held the position of Chief of Joint Operations Division and Assistant to Chief of General Staff. She has also held the positions of Chief of Staff at General Staff, chief of a division, commander of a battalion, and others. Until recently, one of the female colonels held the position of Deputy Commander of one of the brigades. Tkavc²³ mentions that here are also other women taking deputy commander's positions; one of these is, for example, in the Military Medical Unit (regiment level). The contribution of the SAF to the structures of different international institutions has been in place for many years. Several female SAF members have been posted to different positions, also holding senior and decision-making positions abroad. One example is a female military active duty officer who in 2008 was selected for the position of Director of the International Military Sports Council (CISM) in the rank of a colonel for a three-year tenure. She became the first female director in the 60-year history of this international organization with 134 member countries. She was also the Deputy Secretary General of CISM. From 2012 to 2016 one of the colonels was appointed to Allied Command Transformation as the National Liaison Representative. In July 2016, another colonel was posted to the position of Head of Training and Exercise branch at one of NATO's Joint Force Commands. Last but not least, the first female military attaché from the SAF was appointed in 2014, serving in the rank of a colonel²⁴.

Tkavc continues that both women and men from the SAF are posted to senior positions, performing decision-making and commanding duties in IOMs. For example, in 2007 a woman was deployed as Commander of the Slovenian contingent to EUFOR Althea (European Union Force Althea) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and two women were deployed as Deputy Commanders in the same year, one as Deputy Commander of the Slovenian contingent in ISAF in Afghanistan, and the other as Deputy Commander of a task force in KFOR (NATO peace support operation in Kosovo - the Kosovo Force). In the period between 2009 and 2010, two female Colonels were deployed as chiefs of branches at KFOR HQs. In 2013/2014, Slovenia deployed two Lieutenant Colonels, one as a shift director and another as the operations and training advisor. At the same time, the Ministry of Defence, which deploys civilian functional experts (as outsourced specialists, or MoD employees) in IOMs, also posted two female civilians from Slovenia to advisory positions in Kosovo. Both male and female, military personnel and civilians, are posted to different advisory

²² Tkavc, S. (2016). Some of best practices in gender perspective and the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the 25 years of Slovenian Armed Forces. *Contemporary Military Challenges*, No. 18/3, September, 2016. Slovenian Armed Forces, pp. 45-63.

²³ Lieutenant Colonel Suzana Tkavc is the first full-time Principal Gender Advisor (GENAD) in the SAF. She was appointed to serve in the General Staff of the SAF in June 2015. In 2018, she served for one year as Chief Gender Advisor (CHIEFGENAD) to the KFOR Commander.

²⁴ Tkavc, S. (2016). Some of best practices in gender perspective and the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the 25 years of Slovenian Armed Forces. *Contemporary Military Challenges*, No. 18/3, September, 2016. Slovenian Armed Forces, pp. 45-63.

positions²⁵. The SAF had her first female commander in Lebanon-UNIFIL in 2017, and UN first female commander also.

4.0 ANALYSIS OF THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN THE SLOVENIAN ARMED FORCES – A QUANTITATIVE COMPARISON (2008-2016)

Before analyzing the questionnaire, we conducted a quantitative comparison of data on the position of women in the Slovenian Armed Forces (SAF) from 2008 and 2012 and assessed the position of women in the beginning of 2016.

In March 2016, the SAF had eleven generals (OF-6 to OF-8), three of whom were appointed to general's positions and one to a military position within the civilian structure of the Ministry of Defence. In 2012, seven women worked in top management positions and two in commanding positions. In 2016, the only Slovenian female brigadier general served in a general's position within the General Staff. Four female colonels, two female lieutenant colonels and two senior military specialists (equivalent to senior officers) worked in seven top leadership positions and one commanding position. We can estimate that since 2012 there has been substantial progress in the promotion of women to senior ranks and senior leadership positions, but a smaller number of female commanders. Since 2008, the share of women among senior officers (from major to brigadier general) has increased from 7 to 10 percent. Compared to 2008, the number of young female officers in the SAF has decreased. In 2015, there were 43 percent less first lieutenants and second lieutenants (39) than in 2008 (68).

The situation with the non-commissioned officers is similar. There are almost three times as many women with the top four NCO ranks as in 2008, but none of them in a top position. In 2015, there were 52 percent fewer women with the two lowest NCO ranks (53) than in 2008 (110).

In tactical units, the number of female platoon commanders has not changed compared to 2008. However, there has been a positive trend with company commanders. There are now three female company commanders compared to 2012 when there was only one. An analysis has shown that in this specific commanding position, which is the first one intended for the selection of future commanding officers, the possibility for a woman to be selected is the lowest. Although, since 2010, every young officer, male or female, who completes his/her officer training has to serve as a platoon commander or as a comparable-level commander, women are only rarely chosen to serve as company commanders, although this is a prerequisite for them to ever in their career be considered as candidates for a battalion or regiment commander. It can therefore be concluded that among equally qualified candidates the selection goes in favour of male candidates.

For officers, serving in a commanding position is a prerequisite for their advancement to the highest-level decision-making positions in the armed forces. A comparison between the data of 2008 and 2016 showed that in 2008 there were as many as 80 women serving in captain, major or lieutenant-colonel positions, however in the eight-year period up to 2016, only two women had the opportunity to serve as battalion commanders. In 2011, a first female officer in the Slovenian Armed Forces was appointed to become a military school commander. Since 2013, however, there have been no female battalion, regiment, school or brigade commanders in the Slovenian Armed Forces.

²⁵ Ibid.

5.0 RESEARCH OF 2015

5.1 Methodological approach

We decided to address almost identical questions to both men and women in the SAF simultaneously. We prepared 29 questions for women and 24 for men. Both questionnaires begin with the same 6 questions about the demography. The next part of the questionnaire for female respondents included 13 questions about women in the SAF in general, while the questionnaire for male respondents included 11 questions about women in the SAF which were the same as those for women. The last part of the questionnaire was about international operations and missions and included 8 questions for women and 7 for men. However, this article includes only a few selected results referring to international operations and missions, with focus on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325).

The questionnaires were designed on-line with the support of the www.mojaanketa.si webpage and were separate for men and women. We started to invite women to fill in the on-line questionnaire on 3 September and the men were invited the next day. By the end of the month, 99 female SAF members (9%) and 80 male SAF members (1.3%) filled in the questionnaire. We did not proceed with the process, because we had already reached our goal – the sample of 5 to 10% of all women in the SAF as well. It would be very good to have a 5 to 10% sample of the male population in the SAF, but we realized that this would be very hard to reach since there were 5,912 male SAF members in October²⁶ 2015. After all, our main focus was on women in the SAF and their involvement in international operations and missions.

5.2 Results on International operations and missions

In order to ensure better understanding of the results, it is important to take into consideration the demography of our sample (Table 2). Most of female respondents were in the age category 30 to 50, but the largest percentage (44.4%) included respondents between 40 and 49 of age. The largest male age group in the sample (36%) of male servicemembers was of the same age group (40 to 49). The majority of women (84.8 %) and men (88.8%) were married.

Table 1: Military personnel (by category).

	privates	NCOs	officers	military specialists	civilians
Female	10%	25.3%	28.3%	24.6%	12%
Male	15%	33.8%	45%	5.1%	1.3%

In the section of the questionnaire about international operations and missions we started with the question on how many times Slovenian Armed Forces members had participated in international operations and missions. Below, you will find the comparison of the answers given by male and female Slovenian Armed Forces members respectively.

²⁶ This kind of goal would be very hard to reach because Slovenia witnessed severe floods in September and many SAF members were included to help on the field. Additionally, the SAF hosted the exercise Immediate Response 2015.

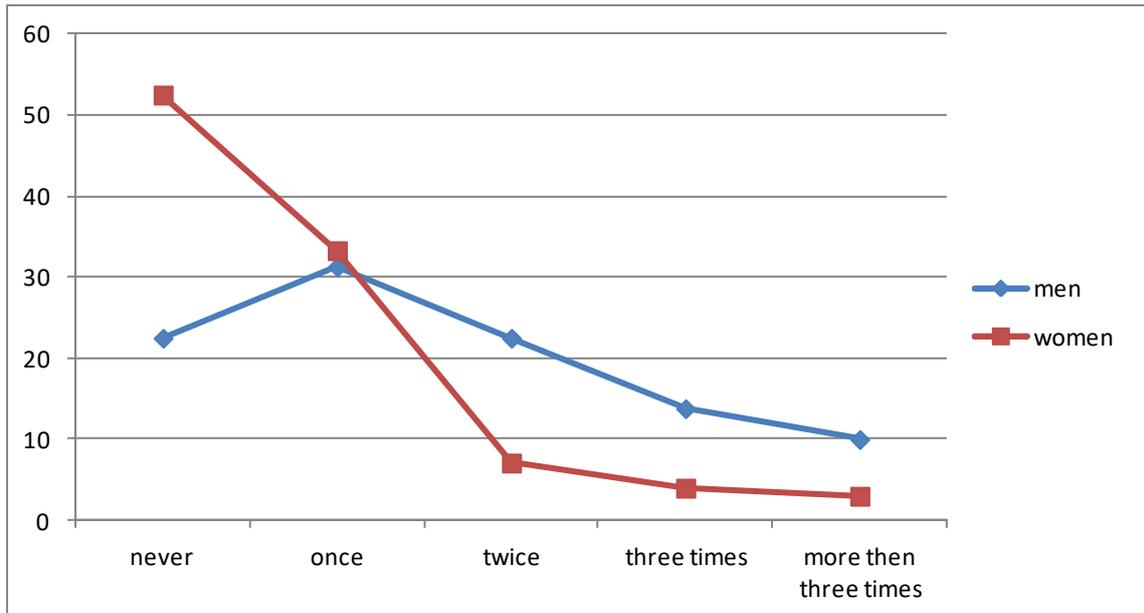


Figure 4: Question: How many times were you deployed in international operations and missions?

The results in Figure 4 show that more than half of women in the sample had not been deployed in international operations and missions. In order to understand this in comparison with the Slovenian Armed Forces statistics, we need to take into the consideration that only 6.1% of women respondents work in the combat area; 36.7% of them perform specialist tasks such as law enforcement, protocol, information and technology (CIS); 42.9 % work in staffs within planning, human resources and similar branches, and 14.3% of them on administrative and technical support.

Additionally, we asked if they worked mainly in the HQ/Command structure or in the combat units, also if they have been regularly deployed on field duties. 80% of the women who had been deployed in international operations and missions responded that they had worked in the HQ/Command structure of the military base. In the ‘comments’ section, some of them explained that they had worked at both places depending on the international operation and mission, as they had been deployed more than once. Three women in the sample have been deployed in international operations and missions more than three times.

In the following question, we wanted to confirm if our respondents believed that the participation of women in international operations and mission contributed to the quality of the mission.

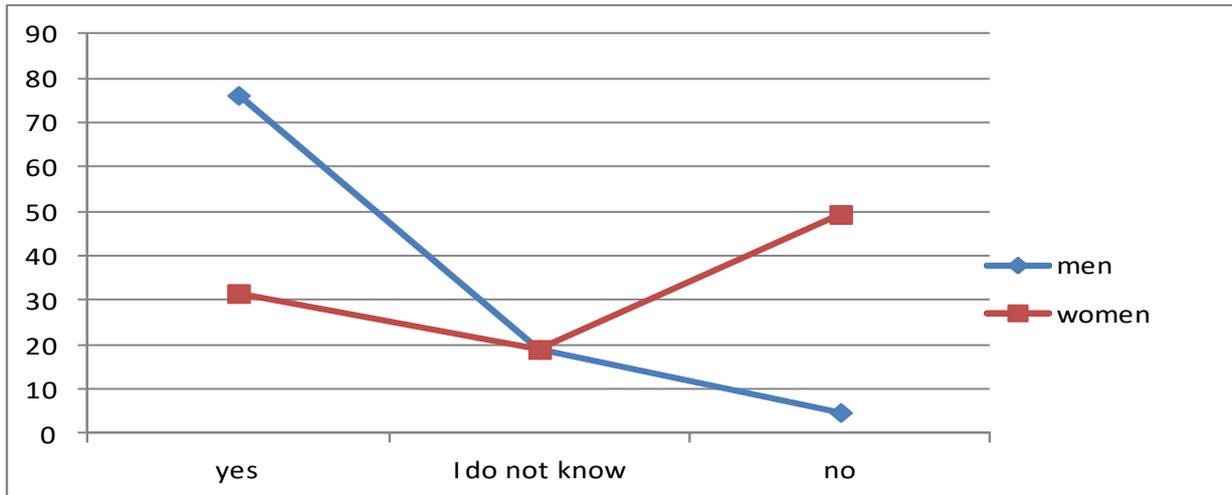


Figure 5: Question: Do you believe that the participation of women in international operations and mission contributes to the quality of the mission?

The answers show that male Slovenian Armed Forces members value the role of women in International operations and missions more highly than women value themselves.

With the following question, we focused on the local environment of international operations and missions where military personnel are deployed. We wanted to find out more about the opinion on the role of female members with regard to the local environment as well as get an insight into the awareness on gender perspective in international operations and missions.

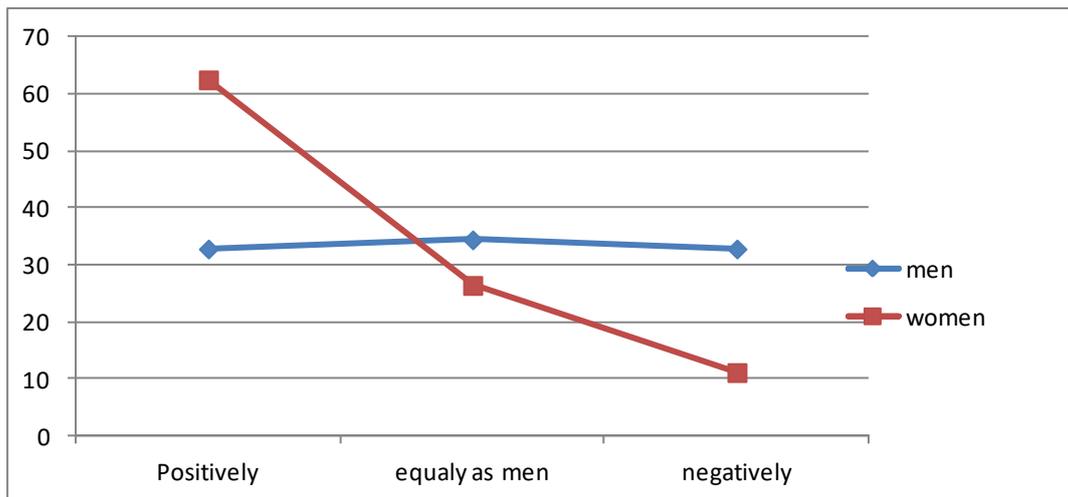


Figure 6: Question: According to your experience, how does the local environment in the country where military members are engaged, accept women in comparison to men?

The question focused on the acceptance of female military in the local environment in comparison to male service members. It was interesting to see if there were any differences between men and women regarding this question. In the sample of 99 women, 72 of them responded to this question and their attitude about it was very positive. We understand this as a view of the women who have actually been deployed and speak

from their own experience. The rest of them commented on this question in a special section for comments where they wrote that they had not been deployed yet. The answers of male respondents were evenly distributed among the three possibilities.

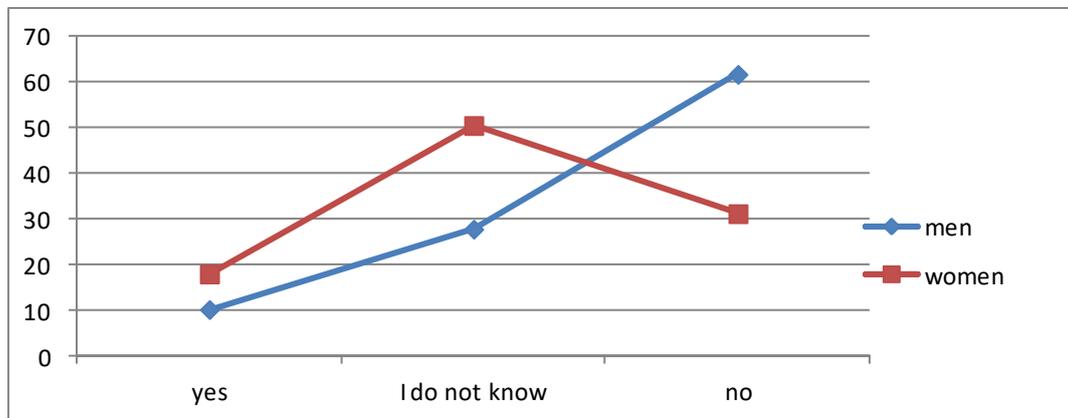


Figure 7: Question: Do you believe that there are duties within military operations for which it is essential that they are performed by women?

The results presented in Figure 7 at first seem surprising. It is interesting that just a small part of male and female respondents replied affirmatively and that a large part of the respondents replied either negatively or chose the answer “I don’t know”. By looking deeper into the results, we found that the awareness about the role of women in international operations and missions was present. Nevertheless, most comments to this question were added at the end. The majority of comments were provided by female respondents. They emphasized the importance of cultural background of a country where military forces were deployed. For some posts, it is essential that they are held by women. This is especially important in the areas where military forces come into interaction with the civilian environment. Liaison Monitoring Teams, medical support, intelligence, security in relation with senior local leaders and inspection of persons at check points were specifically mentioned.

The last question referred to UNSCR 1325 and the social roles of women in the local environment with the focus on the question if women in the military could induce changes there.

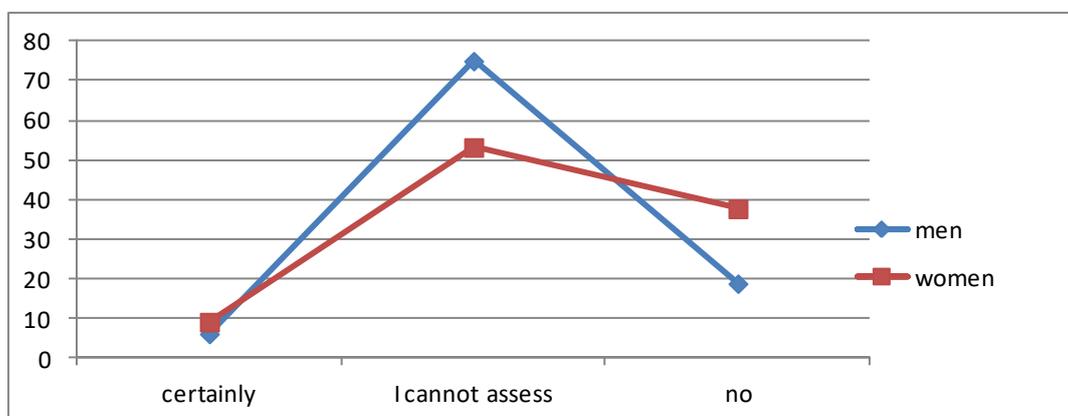


Figure 8: Question: Do you believe that there are duties within military operations for which it is essential that they are performed by women?

The majority of respondents, both male and female, replied “I cannot assess”. A substantial number of them replied negatively, and just a small number of respondents replied affirmatively. Nevertheless, like with the previous question, the comments speak for themselves. None of the male respondents commented on this question. However, female respondents did add comments. They emphasized the role of education which is, according to their opinion, even more important for men than it is for women. Many respondents commented that female military can be seen as role models for local women, encouraging their empowerment. It can be concluded from the comments that female military with international experiences understand the complexity of the international environment and how challenging and important their assignments on the mission are. Those results also showed the awareness about the role of the UNSCR 1325.

6.0 CONCLUSION

On the 15th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in Slovenia, special attention was devoted to its implementation in the Slovenian Armed Forces. We made a review of two booklets published before UN Security Council Resolution 1325 was adopted. We had a brief look at the history of Slovenian contribution to gender topic so far. Additionally, we made an overview of the acts, documents, resolutions and other references and asked male and female SAF members about their opinions on the currently applied gender perspective. Later on, new thematic booklet was published in 2016 with the title “Women, peace and security on the 15th anniversary of UN Security Council resolution 1325”. It included articles by SAF GENAD advisor, UN Women advisor, and experts from Ireland, Serbia, New Zealand and Slovenia.

Research has shown that women limit themselves when deciding to serve in the commanding positions of combat units. Some of the most frequent self-limiting factors that have been exposed in research since 2000 as well as in the 2015 questionnaire are the division between work and family and judging or doubt of their own abilities. The research has shown that self-limiting factors are often the result of the lack of adequate organizational support for women who, as mothers, face more difficulties performing military duties (absences, balancing/control of work and family obligations), or are put in an unequal position with most of their male counterparts in their subsequent career due to the use of their right of absence from certain military activities (field activities, exercises, deployments) at the time when children are small. Self-limitation was also identified in the fact that women assess their abilities in a multi-dimensional manner, only rarely in terms of their ambition for progress. Women often do not choose to accept the offered positions, if they are not fully convinced of their own knowledge, skill and experiences. This is due to the fact that they are aware that as members of the minority they are more exposed and more rigorously assessed.

Our findings can be characterized as good; not because the results are so perfect, but because we learned what we have to do in the future to see improvement in this area of research. In this context, international operations and mission are of special importance. As our results have shown, the share of women in international operations and missions is small. The functional and positional discrimination there is thus even more evident. Most female servicemembers perform support tasks and work in the headquarters. None of them have assumed a commanding position in the past seven years (except the one who was a commander in UNIFIL Lebanon but this was in 2017). According to the majority of our male respondents, women have a negative impact on the quality of functioning of armed forces and no influence on the changes of the role of women in the local environment.

Such observations confirm that when deciding on the posting of women in operations, the determining limiting factors are still related to the issues of morality, cohesion and effectiveness of combat units.

Above all, decision makers are the ones who can ensure full gender mainstreaming, continuous promotion of

gender equality and women's participation in the activities related to defence. Slovenia adopted Resolution 1325 and its implementation should be doing more, and follow good practices. Therefore, the need for a systematic empirical monitoring of the position and the role of women in the SAF remains equally important in the future.

We believe that experiences, good practices and results of the SAF on gender and equality topics can be very interesting for other small countries such as Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. Continuous monitoring is the core methodological instrument for every country to improve their efforts on this field of research. The presence and effectiveness in international operation and missions is very important, regardless of the fact if the troops are coming from a small or a bigger country. Slovenia with its legacy in international operations and missions can be a good case study in the future for other Western Balkan countries aspiring to become members of the Alliance.
