GLOBAL AGENDA *"WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY"*: MAINSTREAMING GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN THE SECURITY SECTOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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During 2000, the UN SC launched an intense discussion on protecting the rights of women in conflict situations and increasing their role in the peacemaking process. Regardless of the cultural level and that of mentality, wars and armed conflicts affect in a similar way women's condition. On 31 October 2000, the UN SC adopted unanimously the Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, being one of the most important UN resolutions in the area of peace and security, and being mandatory for all the UN Member States, without the need to be additionally ratified. Currently, the principles and values promoted by the UNSCR 1325 serve as basis for the fundamental values of EU, NATO, OSCE, EC.

The international commitments assumed by the Republic of Moldova Government in implementing the UN SC Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, as well as the problems identified at the national level in relation to ensuring an inclusive security sector have determined the need to develop and approve a National Action Programme. Although the Women, Peace and Security Agenda is a relatively new topic for the Republic of Moldova, there are already some lessons learned, such as: (1) the need to encourage the decision-makers to foster the political will for implementing the UNSCR 1325, (2) the need to ensure an inclusive security sector and (3) the lack of resources dedicated to implementing the UNSCR 1325.

The discussions regarding the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 is one of considerable importance in the context of the global crisis as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Undertaking immediate measures to counteract the threats induced by COVID-19, the states neglect the implementation of the UNSCR 1325. But the states acknowledge less the fact that the coronavirus pandemic invites to collaboration based on the principles established in the UNSCR 1325, taking into account the different security needs regardless of COVID-19 or any other threat.

Keywords: Resolution 1325; Women, Peace and Security Agenda; Action Plan; security needs; female leadership; COVID-19;

INTRODUCTION

In 2020, it has been 20 years since the UN SC Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on *Women, Peace and Security* was adopted. It establishes a strong normative framework for ensuring the needs, voices and perspectives of women and girls in preventing and settling conflicts, hence contributing to building up sustainable peace. The anniversary is a good impulse for reviewing the progress and the challenges in implementing the UNSCR 1325 and other related resolutions. Moreover, an international trend has been noted over the past years to acknowledge not only women's and girls' personal costs for the failure to protect them in the military conflicts' context, but also the extraordinary collective costs for the global community in achieving the objectives of peace building and post-conflict society reconstruction. The outcome of this acknowledgement was the adoption of a number of UN SC resolutions on *Women, Peace and Security*, national action plans, impressive speeches and structural changes setting the scene for real progress. And all this, because women's status in a country is a predictor of peace. Where women have few rights or opportunities to participate in decision-making, there are higher levels of violence and conflict. Changes in the treatment of women are among the first indications of instability (*Illustrated fact sheet of Women, Peace & Security by the Numbers*, 2008).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights sets forth that *All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights* (art. 1). The societies with a high level of equality assurance indicator are associated with lower levels of different forms of conflict occurrence. The states with higher levels of equality between women and men prove to have a less violent behaviour within the state, and at the international level.

In the context of the current security environment, the states of the world have to cope with the crisis consequences provoked by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which is an unprecedented global threat for social, economic and environmental security, as well as for national and international governance structures. Respectively, multiple pandemic implications are already felt in the implementation of *Women, Peace and Security Global Agenda (WPS Agenda)*. On the one hand, the mistaken perceptions regarding women's role in peace and conflict processes or the stereotyped perceptions regarding the gender perspective

in security and defence sector are preserved. Besides, during the crisis periods, gender equality represents an objective which frequently is placed in temporary stand-by. The existing studies reveal that there might be the danger for escalation of such perceptions in conflict zones or even humanitarian crises might emerge, and in some countries the level of domestic violence has increased in the context of self-isolation measures. The international experience shows that women's involvement as leaders in decision-making process has contributed to decreasing the pandemic effects, like in Germany, Thailand, New Zeeland, Finland and other. Instead of engaging in a political campaign, the female leadership from these countries have promoted solidarity and compassion among their citizens.

Currently, although the issue of mainstreaming gender perspective in security and defence sector is on the national agenda, as well as on the agenda of regional and international security organisations, it is nevertheless a complex and highly discussed topic, because there are still difficulties in mainstreaming a concept which promotes equal opportunities in a working environment dominated, on the one hand, by masculinity, and on the other hand, by stereotypes related to frequently mistaken understanding of gender perspective. Hence, the activists, policy authors and law makers, concerned with ensuring a high degree of equality between women and men, have promoted mainstreaming gender perspective into the legislative agenda. Thus, this article will focus, first of all, on the legal-political framework determining the commitments of the states and other stakeholders in implementing the Global Agenda *Women, Peace and Security* and, secondly, will point out the factors determining mainstreaming gender perspective in the security and defence sector of the Republic of Moldova. The mainstreaming of *gender perspective* in a context of policies or programmes represents a strategy to cope with concerns and experiences of women, as well as those of men in all areas of activity (political, economic, societal, security etc.), benefitting equally from opportunities and responsibilities (*Law No. 5 on ensuring equal chances between women and men*, in Albu, Mârzac, Negru, 2018, p. 33)[1].

Gender equality policies are specially created to solve problems resulting from gender discrimination or inequality situations. Based on the topic of the article, we will focus on the policies referring to the security sector through the lens of WPS Agenda provisions' implementation.

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[1] Note: for comparison, the exact translation on the official documents from Romania is *"mainstreaming approach for equality of chances and treatment for women and men"*. The official documents from the Republic of Moldova use *"complex approach of equality between men and women"*.

POLICY FRAMEWORK REGARDING THE GLOBAL AGENDA *WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY*

The UN SC Resolution 1325 on *Women, Peace and Security*, adopted on 31 October 2000, tackles directly the war impact on women and women's contribution to settling conflicts and achieving stable peace. Actually, the *"Beijing Declaration"* and the *"Beijing Platform for Action"* adopted in 1995 represent the starting point for a long-term women empowerment strategy and underscore women and armed conflicts as one of the 12 key action areas. They require greater participation of women in conflict prevention and conflict resolution, peacebuilding, governance and in the protection of women during armed conflicts.

It is for the first time in an international agreement, when the platform underlines the importance of tackling women's safety and contribution in relation to peace, security and development. The UNSCR 1325 (point 4) calls upon the Secretary General to extend the role and the contribution of women to UN field operations, especially among military observers, civil police, personnel for human rights and humanitarian personnel. In this context, it should be pointed out that one of the priorities of the National Army of the Republic of Moldova refers to Moldovan militaries' participation in peace-keeping missions, being thus an evidence of the state's aspiration to promote the ideas of peace, stability and security within the country, but also abroad, so as to become a state which contributes to enhancing peace, and 1.8% of all participants in such missions are women.

To facilitate the fulfilment of the objectives envisaged in the UNSCR 1325, each of the mandates of the resolution is linked with one of the four main pillars: *participation, protection, prevention and recovery (Annex 1)*. To implement the four pillars, the organisations and the states adopt, as a rule an *Action Plan* referring to UNSCR 1325 as well as other related resolutions. The prior recommendations made by UN regarding the development of national action plans underline the fact that they should observe other legislative frameworks and national policies for their subsequent enforcement. Because the states differ, respectively the gender issue is tackled differently (either conflict situations or cultural and religion peculiarities have to be taken into consideration), there is no homogenous set of policy tools for implementing the *WPS Agenda*.

As of 2008, the UN SC adopted a number of resolutions completing the provisions of UNSCR 1325 and developing mechanisms for implementing the general objectives of peace, security and gender equality *(Annex 2)*. These resolutions enhance the global commitments, existing treaties and conventions regarding

women's rights during peace and conflicts, and set up the *Women, Peace and Security Agenda*, which recognises the urgent need to integrate gender perspective in peacekeeping operations, hence contributing to maintaining and promoting peace and international security.

In 2015, during the *UN General Assembly Session, a new Universal Agenda for Sustainable Development* was established based on the Millennium Development Goals and supplemented with new goals. The new Agenda envisaged for 2015-2030 suggests sustainable development goals (SDG) and strategic targets, which are integrated indivisibly in the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. The new global trajectory of the Agenda is found as well in the *Strategy for Ensuring Equality between Men and Women in the Republic of Moldova (for 2017-2021)*, which stipulates equality assurance in rights and opportunities for women and men, including as well objective 4 on *ensuring gender equality in security and defence sector* (Resolution no. 259 on 28.04.2017).

Together with the UN SC resolutions, *the General Recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations* (GR30), approved in 2013, provide to the states guidelines on legislative and policy measures, as well as other corresponding actions to fully ensure the duties to protect, observe and apply women's rights in preventing conflicts, in conflict and post-conflict situations. GR30 ensures the application of the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*, approved by the UN General Assembly in 1979, which is a comprehensive international treaty and aims to achieve gender equality, to ensure women's rights in all the areas of life and, in general, to improve conditions for women. RG30 and resolutions on WPS Agenda are mutually referring to each other and provide modalities for enhancing each other's implementation. The Republic of Moldova ratified CEDAW in 1994 (Resolution no. 87 on 28.04.1994).

On 21 March 2018, the Government of the Republic of Moldova has approved the *National Programme for Implementing the Resolution 1325 of the UN Security Council on Women, Peace and Security for 2018-2021* (hereinafter referred to as the Programme) and the Action Plan to enforce it (Resolution no. 259 on 28.03.2019). The mentioned programme is the tool setting forth the implementation actions, expected results and implementation indicators for UNSCR 1325 at the national level.

From demining to disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), from elections to constitutional changes, from security sector reform (SSR) to justice transitory measures, from economic recovery programmes to initiative for long-term

prevention of conflicts, from negotiation of peace agreements to settling problems related to refugees and displaced persons, the UNSCR 1325 points out that women's participation is imperative. In this context, 84 states at the global level have developed National Action Plans to implement the UNSCR 1325 (National Action Plans for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, National-Level Implementation, 2020), recognising that it ensures gender equality promotion and women's empowerment within a peace and security framework relevant for all the security sector areas. The Government of the Republic of Moldova decided to develop and approve such a programme based on the fact that it committed itself to implement the UNSCR 1325 under the Individual Action Plan of Republic of Moldova – NATO Partnership for 2014-2016, on the one hand, and there were identified certain limits/barriers at the national level for ensuring an inclusive security sector, on the other hand.

Ensuring equal opportunities and treatment between women and men in peace and conflict situations seems to be an up-to-date topic at the international and regional levels and within such organisations, as NATO and EU. The policies for promoting gender perspective of these organisations contribute to deepening the gender equality efforts in the area of security and defence. Based on the international commitments to implement the WPS Agenda, the states try to increase women's role in civil and military structures at the national level. Acknowledging the importance of implementing the WPS Agenda, NATO issued the *Directive Bi-SC 40-1* on 8 August 2012, which suggests including the UNSCR 1325 and gender dimension in NATO command structures, including the measures on protection during military conflicts (BI-Strategic Command Directive (BI-SCD) 40-111).

The North Atlantic Alliance has adopted as well an Action Plan for implementing the WPS Agenda. The first plan was adopted in 2010, mainstreaming the UNSCR 1325 into the operations and missions led by NATO (*NATO Action Plan on Mainstreaming UNSCR 1325 into NATO-led operations and missions*). This plan includes clear actions to be undertaken by commanders of NATO-led operations in Afghanistan (ISAF) and Kosovo (KFOR). The last Action Plan was reviewed and approved in 2018, fully acknowledging the importance of women's active inclusion, participation, and role so as to cope successfully with the security challenges from the 21st century, and reconfirming NATO and its partners' commitment to observe the main principles of UNSCR 1325 (NATO/EAPC Policy on Women, Peace and Security, 2018). As well, NATO has updated its policy under the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) from the UNSCR 1325 perspective (NATO/EAPC Policy for Implementing UNSCR 1325

on Women, Peace and Security, and related Resolutions, 2018). The general principles approved by NATO member countries and its partners for implementing the WPS Agenda: (1) *Integration* – ensuring that gender equality is an integral part of NATO policies, guided by effective gender mainstreaming; (2) *Inclusiveness* – promotion of increased representativeness of women within NATO and national armies; (3) *Integrity* – accountability on all efforts to increase awareness and implementation of the WPS agenda will be made a priority in accordance with international frameworks (Women, Peace and Security, 2019).

At the same time, we cannot neglect the fact that equality between women and men is one of the fundamental values of the European Union (EU). In 1957 the principle of equal pay for equal work became part of the Treaty of Rome, and in 2016 the *Strategic commitment for gender equality for 2016-2019* was approved setting forth the activity programme of the European Commission in relation to equality. Referring to the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 at the EU level, it should be pointed out that in September 2005 an optional document was approved regarding the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 in the context of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). The document included recommendations on mainstreaming gender perspective at all the stages of ESDP missions/operations, from planning to reporting, and lessons learned. Based on this document, the European Council developed a *checklist*, which was adopted in July 2006. Besides, the Council adopted in November conclusions on mainstreaming gender equality in ESDP. Moreover, during the same year, the European Parliament issued a Resolution regarding women's situation in military conflicts and their role in the rebuilding of democratic process in post-conflict countries.

At the same time, the Gender Equality Promotion Commission has assumed itself the commitment to promote the *WPS Agenda* beyond the EU. This commitment is also found in the context of implementing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the 2030 Agenda. Having a valuable experience in implementing the SDG 5 *Gender Equality* and SDG 16 *Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions*, EU supports the partner countries, such as the Republic of Moldova, in implementing the Agenda 2030 for *Fulfilling gender equality and capacitating all women and girls*, as well as *Promoting peaceful societies and favourable to inclusion for sustainable development, ensuring access to justice for all and creating efficient, accountable and favourable to inclusion environment, at all levels*.

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTING THE UNSCR 1325: PERSPECTIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

As mentioned previously, the four pillars for implementing the UNSCR 1325 facilitate the structuring of priority interventions or sector actions under the Action Plans for *WPS Agenda*. In reality, the UNSCR 1325 does not specify the reforms' content, the way in which they will be implemented or the necessary procedures for ensuring the implementation of provisions set within it. From outside, the UNSCR 1325 seems to be rather complicated than complex in relation to the internal dynamics of the states, hence leading to the question if the generic tools for mainstreaming the gender perspective may be applied efficiently in preventing and resolving conflicts as well as in post-conflict recovery (Barrow, 2009, p. 67). That is why the countries are encouraged to define exactly the relevant procedures in their action plans. The preliminary recommendations provided by the UN for drafting national action plans underline the fact that these plans should observe the national legislative and policy frameworks for their subsequent enforcement.

The national strategies or action plans for enforcing the UNSCR 1325 are relevant for all the countries, and not only for those involved in conflicts (*Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace*, 2015). The states are frequently affected by conflicts with neighbours, countries from the same region or donor countries, involved in peacemaking efforts. Besides, the states are already reviewing how women, as human resources, should be included in the security structure at the national level. A number of studies have shown, for instance, that including more women in the military area and peacekeeping operations has increased considerably the efficiency of military operations' management (Olsso, Tejpar, 2012). This can be achieved by improving the acknowledgment and awareness level about the specific security threats. As a result, gender-sensitive policies are promoted to meet the different security needs. In spite of the adopted Programme and the initiated discussions regarding the COVID-19 pandemics' implications from the perspective of the different security needs, there are certain limits for acknowledging the need to implement the WPS Agenda.

In general, the legal-political framework for ensuring equality between women and men in the Republic of Moldova has been substantially improved over the past decades. Different legislative acts set forth provisions that directly or indirectly refer to non-discrimination and equality principles. These provisions are regulated both in the codified legislation (Criminal Code, Criminal Procedure Code, Civil Code, Civil Procedure Code, Contravention Code, Labour Code, Education Code and other),

as well as in organic and ordinary laws of the Republic of Moldova. A brief analysis of the respective provisions and their compatibility with international standards may be found in the Legislative Report *Analysis of international standards and national legal framework in the area of gender equality in security and defence sector* carried out with the support of UN Women Moldova (Vieru, 2016, p. 96).

As for the *Strategy to ensure equality between women and men in the Republic of Moldova for 2017-2021* – it aims to empower women and fulfil de-facto equality between women and men in the Republic of Moldova. The main objectives of the strategy are to ensure complex approach to quality between women and men through women's participation in decision-making, to enhance the institutional framework for ensuring gender equality, to combat stereotypes in the society, to promote non-violent communication and to ensure gender equality in security and defence sector (Resolution no. 259 on 28.04.2017). In relation to security and defence sector, the Strategy stipulates a separate objective: General Objective 4. Promoting Gender Equality in the security and defence sector (Specific Objective 4.1: Ensuring women's access to management and execution positions in the area of security and defence; Specific Objective 4.2: Mainstreaming gender dimension in sector security and defence policies).

The *National Programme for implementing the Resolution 1325 of the UN SC on Women, Peace and Security for 2018-2021* is the tool establishing the implementation actions, expected results, and implementation indicators for UNSCR 1325 at the level of the Republic of Moldova Government, respectively at the national level. The aim of the Programme is to *express the organisational willingness of the institutions from the security and defence sector regarding the implementation and enforcement of provisions under the UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions and other complementary tools to ensure mainstreaming gender perspective within the respective institutions (see Chapter III – Institutional Framework) for carrying out the set missions.* To achieve the suggested goal, two basic objectives were set: (1) increasing women's representativeness in security sectors and (2) ensuring an inclusive security sector by implementing eight basic programmes adopted as eight objectives *(Annex 3)*.

The mentioned objectives were set as a result of the activity of the working group for Programme development. The need to develop a Programme at the national level was determined by the obvious existence of gaps from the sector's and society's perspective. After analysing the respective gaps/problems, eight basic barriers were structured: (1) Gender stereotypes about women's participation in the security sector still persist within the system (but also outside the system).

(2) The security system does not allow men and women to reconcile the professional and family life. (3) The security system does not have full capacity to prevent and combat discrimination, harassment and gender-based violence. (4) The security system does not have an inclusive and pro-active human resources management system. (5) The security system does not apply reasonable adjustment and special temporary measures to allow a wider representation of women. (6) The security system is not transparent enough when it comes to the participation of the civil society, women's organisations and citizens. (7) The security policies are not gender responsive. (8) Limited policies for ensuring equal participation in peace-building and peace-keeping missions.

Every identified barrier is worth to be deeply analysed, because the institutions from the security sector have related, but nevertheless different missions, and the personnel status may be different or the activity programme is special. To this end, for instance, the problem of women's participation in peace-keeping missions is specific for the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Moldova and maybe in future it will be a discussion topic for the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Women's absence in peace negotiations and in peace-building process is already a proved phenomenon, respectively there is a need to develop some policies for engaging women in the negotiation and mediation processes. Coherent and comprehensive approaches and strategies for enforcing the UNSCR 1325 become even more important when realities in the field are analysed. There is not yet a *"critical mass"* of women – negotiators and mediators to be involved in peace formal processes at the international level, as well as at the national level. The number of women-negotiators, mediators and signatories of peace agreements remains to be very small (*Facts and figures: Peace and security*, 2019). To a big extent, women's limited access to peace-building and negotiation processes as well as to decision-making process is also determined by the fact that there is no approach that would ensure the connection between presence and influence. Women's participation, without ensuring their influence, does not guarantee gender-sensitive peace agreements. Women have reduced access to formal institutions, power structures, monitoring mechanisms and funds, and remain to be widely excluded from implementing peace agreements.

Moreover, the gender-related problems are tackled as *"women's problems"* and not as structural issues of social justice faced by the society in general. These issues should be discussed in the context of specific legal, social and economic problems of negotiations – for instance, women's access to land rights should be

discussed when negotiating the land rights and not only in relation to women's rights in general.

The fulfilment of the Programme's objectives contributes as well to increasing cooperation between ministries, with nongovernmental organisations and civil society, hence ensuring the visibility of actions carried out by the respective institutions in relation to implementation of the UNSCR 1325. Analysing the respective Programme from an academic perspective, it can be pointed out that it covers a synergy between the needs of the Republic of Moldova to implement the UNSCR 1325 and the four mentioned pillars. Although the UNSCR 1325 pillars are frequently used for organising priority interventions and actions in the national or sector action plans regarding the *WPS Agenda*, nevertheless there is no homogenous set of policy tools to implement the UNSCR 1325. As a rule, the stakeholders get adjusted to the four pillars depending on the identified problems and established priority areas.

Although the Programme is an essential tool or frequently the only bridge between the national and global levels for implementing the Resolution 1325, nevertheless such a Programme should not be the single modality of ensuring the continuity for implementing the *WPS Agenda*. The enforcement of the UNSCR 1325 at the national level could be carried out by changing, amending or adopting new internal legislative provisions. For instance, the *Law on Equality of Women's Rights* from Israel has included the mandate of having more women in peace negotiation, in line with the arrangements related to *WPS Agenda* (Hudson, 2013). It should be also mentioned that ambitious plans do not necessarily turn into efficient changes, if they are not drafted according to the national context, commitments, capacities and resources. As a rule, the results-focused actions are supported by political will, funds and commitment to changes tackling inequalities and structural exclusions in sustainable and effective ways (Swaine, 2015).

Actually, the development of an Action Plan to implement the UNSCR 1325 resides in its perspective to enhance and strengthen the obligations of the international law and, especially, the role of the *soft law* in promoting human rights among women and girls in peace and conflict situations. The notion of *soft law* is frequently used to describe different types of quasi-legal tools of the European Union: *codes of conducts, guidelines, communications* etc. At the same time, the national action plans for implementing the WPS Agenda are efficient tools for a better systematisation of the necessary activities to implement the four pillars of the UNSCR 1325.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVES
ON IMPLEMENTING UNSCR 1325

Currently, it is considered that there is an obvious correlation between the gender equality indicators in the society and the level of ensuring the respective objective in the security sector, especially in a military institution. For instance, according to the study carried out by Mary Caprioli and Mark A. Boyer, it is less likely for the states having an increased level of gender equality at the national level to use violence in an interstate conflict (Caprioli, Boyer, 2001, pp 503-518).

As traditional gender roles still prevail in the Republic of Moldova, a woman's decision to teach in a military institution is intermediated in two stages. Firstly, the population perception on choosing an appropriate vocation for women, which would be in line with her socialisation and education in a specific gender role, and secondly, based on the institutional decisions of hindering their access.

Currently, there is more and more support for the fact that gender is a transversal analytical category, which should be applied to all the society development areas – political, economic, environmental, social, cultural and institutional. In this respect, the institutions from security sector are part of the governmental sector and interact with the society. But all institutions should take into account the fact that a *gender mainstreaming* strategy does not have a simple aim to produce documents that would include information about women and men and would provide evidence that a gender analysis was carried out, but also to lead to specific actions which would ensure an increased potential for promoting gender equality. This could lead to changes regarding the way in which: (1) objectives are expressed, (2) activities are developed and (3) anticipated results are defined (Hannan, 2000, p. 5).

The implementation of *gender mainstreaming* process needs a clear understanding about the gender perspective so as to determine its involvement in different areas and problems of the security sector. For instance, in relation to the issue of women in politics, it is important to understand the gender perspectives to be able to determine what actions should be undertaken to ensure equality between women and men at the decision-making level.

To include gender equality in general attention, *gender mainstreaming* should be tackled as a systematic strategy, meaning as a permanent objective of already existing public policies. For instance, the draft National Defence Strategy includes genders aspects in Chapter IV Resources for defence fulfilling, point 60 *"Mainstreaming gender perspective in the country's security and defence policies will be carried out in line with the needs to complete the national defence system with human resources, both during the peace time, but also during war/conflict*

times. At the same time, this fact will contribute to implementing the commitments assumed by the Republic of Moldova, regarding the Resolution 1325 of the UN Security Council" (Hannah, Ibid.).

At the same time, it should be taken into consideration that mainstreaming gender perspective in the security sector does not mean just simple inclusion of more women in the sector. Although full and equal representation of women represents an important step towards ensuring gender equality, this does not ensure the fact that gender perspective is taken into consideration. Hence, gender mainstreaming has two dimensions specific for security sector: *internal and external*.

The internal dimension refers to the fact that gender mainstreaming represents a modality to encourage the institutions from the security sector (armed forces, public order and law enforcement structures) to base themselves on men's and women's capacities. Thus, in June 2018, the Republic of Moldova Government approved the *Professional Army Programme for 2018-2021*, which aims to prioritise the development areas of the defence sector (Resolution of the Republic of Moldova Government, 2018). As a rule, such processes may have a *structural effect*, one of the most visible being the *sharp growth of the need to increase the share of military women*. The reason is simple: all the people called upon to perform the compulsory military service in the Republic of Moldova were men. While the global figures show that the share of female personnel in uniforms may go up mechanically. That is why the defence sector should be ready to apply a gender-mainstreaming approach taking into account the staffing needs with human resources.

In this context, the need to increase women's proportion in the armed forces implies, first of all, gender by considering two aspects: (1) problems related to gender equality within an organisation, such as equal opportunities in relation to recruitment, advancement, work conditions etc. and (2) such topics as norms, attitudes, values, organisational culture and management styles. Both aspects have a direct as well as an indirect impact on the extent to which adequate attention is provided to gender equality problems in the basic activity of the organisation and in the ways in which such organisational factors as management styles, work styles and organisational culture may have an impact on the mainstreaming potential. Hence, whenever the organisational culture is low, it is more problematic for the military institution to achieve gender equality. That is why, frequently when mainstreaming gender perspective in internal strategies as a result of increasing women's number in the security sector, it is necessary to come up with training, for instance in preventing violence or sexual harassment at the work place.

Secondly, the *internal dimension* refers to mainstreaming gender both at the management and executive levels within institutions of the security sector. Thus, it should not be neglected that a gender-sensitive strategic management of human resources provides the basis for recruiting personnel with different qualifications, either females or males. For this to happen, the armed forces should conceptualise what gender perspective and UNSCR 1325 mean for them.

At the same time, in the context of national armed forces professionalisation, the transformation of the modality to plan and fulfil operations by the armed forces needs a strategic plan for all intentions that backstop gender mainstreaming – what are the goals and what do we do to achieve them, *who is responsible for achieving them*? Only in this case, the intentions of the strategies will be followed by actions that can facilitate the change e.g. allocation of financial resources for gender-related items, reporting of failures and successes, accountability of persons. For instance, some states establish such positions as ministers' gender advisors. In this respect, the neighbouring state would be an example, where the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence established a position which is responsible for ensuring equality in rights and opportunities for women and men in the Ukrainian armed forces.

Referring to the Republic of Moldova, besides those eight barriers mentioned in the Programme for implementing the UNSCR 1325, the limits for mainstreaming gender in security sector were also determined by the fact that *there is direct correlation with the barriers for women's participation in politics and in high-level decision-making process*. This fact limits the assurance of balanced participation, from gender perspective, in management positions within institutions of the security and defence sector, as well as the full involvement in the parliamentary committees responsible for security issues or within diplomatic missions (only seven women as heads of diplomatic missions in 2019).

The problem resides in the so-called vicious circle, meaning that gender inequalities on the labour market from the security sector also lead to unequal chances for women in decision-making process and vice versa, the lack of women in management and decision-making positions limit the adoption of relevant policies to ensure equal opportunities in recruiting women (*National Human Development Report 2016 – "Inequalities in Human Development"*, 2017, p. 100)[2].

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[2] Note: In the Republic of Moldova, the *Law on Political Parties* does not contain provisions which would impose barriers for women's representation, but they are found in the mechanisms for setting the lists of candidates and in women's participation in political life, in general. A study from 2015 reveals that women-candidates were mainly concentrated in the second part of party lists, while the first part advantaged men; hence the first decile of places with real chances would include 11% men-candidates and only 5.9% women-candidates; the average positions held by a man-candidate is 5-10 positions closer to the head of the list. It is established positively that women's share for the first five positions has increased considerably (from 5.3% in 1998 up to 23.1% in 2014).

In this context, the data of the Gender Barometer are very relevant, as they confirm that the main causes for inequalities in women' and men's rights derive not only from women's social role of double tasks – to maintain the family and to raise the children (mentioned by 36.5% of respondents), but also the fact that *women are not promoted in management positions* (25%) (Gender Barometer. *How women and men participate in politics and decision-making processes?*, 2017, p. 25). Hence, as it was mentioned previously, according to the critical mass theory, as long as women represent a distinct minority in a specific community – in our case the security sector – it is less likely for the community norms to get adjusted to allow promoting them. For instance, when women have no access to specialised necessary facilities and services, they are less susceptible to get qualified for specialised tasks. Hence, women do not benefit from equal opportunities and respectively, *nolens volens*, they are isolated or have no access to administrative positions or are discouraged to get promoted in decision-making positions (*Moldova's Security Sector Institutional Self-Assessment from the Gender Perspective*, 2016).

The external dimension of the process of gender mainstreaming in security sector refers to increasing security level and efficiency of security structures. It means that security institutions, depending on their mandates, interact with civilian population. For instance, the police forces ensure public order or fight against domestic violence; the Customs ensure the economic security of the country by combating frauds at the state border, hence ensuring not only the security of the state, but also of the population. And the different security needs of women and girls, and men and boys, induce a gender-based approach of the institutional policies.

In relation to the military sector, these two dimensions, internal and external, are tackled in the specialised literature more frequently from the perspective of international operations. Externally, having a gender perspective improves the way we look at a society and therefore it enlarges our *"situational awareness"*. This creates a better understanding of culture, local customs and values. It can improve access to and communication with the local population, local government and the International Community. A proper gender analysis can be a force-multiplier and improve mission effectiveness. If conducted in the right way it should also include an internal focus, looking at our own internal procedures, policies, training means and assets (Groothedde, 2013, pp. 23-24) and other relevant practices in the process of localising security needs.

COVID-19 GLOBAL CRISIS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF *WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY* GLOBAL AGENDA

Currently, in the context of major challenges in the security area, more convincing findings emerge establishing that COVID-19 crisis has shown that women's leadership is an indicator of healthier and more equal societies, which are open to political agendas placing social and environmental wellbeing in the centre of national policies' drafting process (Conscieme et al.). In this framework, the statistical analysis of available data regarding COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the review of certain dimensions of basic human needs, inequalities and economic resilience, carried out under *Women in power: Female leadership and public health outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic study* have pointed out important correlations, such as:

- The countries with women in leadership positions registered six times fewer COVID-19 confirmed deaths that the countries with male leadership;
- The governments led by women were more efficient and more rapid in flattening the epidemics curve, with daily death peaks six times smaller than in countries led by men;
- The average number of days with confirmed deaths was 34 in countries led by women and 48 in those led by men (Deane, 2020).

One of the study authors states that governments led by women shared similar approaches to the crisis, which are characterised by early consultation with experts and national advisors in health area, and isolation measures were implemented timely. On the other hand, the majority of governments led by men have reduced initial warnings and responded with substantial delays to the crisis. For instance, when on 14 March (with only 102 confirmed cases of novel coronavirus) the New Zeeland Government led by Jacinda Ardern announced strict lockdown measures, the British government led by Boris Johnson allowed during 10-13 March (with over 700 confirmed cases) mass gatherings of people in wide events, such as the soccer match of UEFA Champions' League, Cheltenham Festival, Crufts and other music concerts.

A similar positive model was noticed in Denmark, Norway and Finland – all of them led by women, unlike Sweden, where economic considerations have affected health concerns and, finally led to the highest number of deaths per capita in Europe. In spite of the general situation in the USA, one of the biggest leading state in the top reported coronavirus cases (*COVID-19 cases and deaths among hardest hit countries worldwide*, 2020), in California State, the mayor from San Francisco, London Breed, the first black woman who has ever had such a portfolio, has obtained advantages in managing coronavirus pandemic at the local

level. The mayor undertook certain rapid prevention measures although there were still zero confirmed cases of coronavirus among San Francisco residents, and the global situation has changed rapidly (*City of San Francisco Moves Proactively to Prepare for Possible Novel Coronavirus Activity in the Community*, 2020).

In reality, these findings provoked multiple discussions and disputes at national and international levels, especially in the context of the approach that *female leaders see and manage the risks differently as compared to their male counterparts*. One of the disputes refers to the fact that some correlations do not necessarily represent the cause-effect relation and the leader is not a valuable determinant in combating COVID-19 pandemic or there are other more important factors, such as the culture of wearing masks in Taiwan. Indeed, when analysing the data about coronavirus spread and deaths caused by this virus, it is important to include in the analysis the following: population density, exposure to those who have travelled and the date when lockdown measures were applied. The first two indicators cannot be really influenced by leaders, while the date of the so-called *lockdown actions* is directly related to the actions undertaken by leaders. It is indeed presumed that the number of deaths caused by COVID-19 is substantially lower in the areas where leaders acted earlier, even one week earlier.

In this context, a number of researchers refer to the famous study from 1994 which has caused quite a stir by identifying what we call now *the white male effect* (Flynn, Slovic, Mertz, 1994). It seems that white men perceive health and technological risks as being low as compared to women and black persons. Developing this topic, it is considered that this is due to the fact that women, black persons, persons with disabilities are subject to daily risks, hence they have to cope continuously with some risks. That is why they perceive the risks differently and they act differently in relation to risks. Moreover, female leaders are more susceptible of being blamed if decisions are not popular or not efficient, or are always questioned for certain actions, and here we can provide Maia Sandu's example when her government was dismissed based on a non-confidence vote in November 2019. Due to these reasons, female leaders know that they need more *coverage* than men that have to be sure that their actions and policies are efficient. However, only 7% of the total number of state leaders are women.

Further to the above, there are already studies which point out that countries with women-led governments meet better the basic human needs, which is a component of the social progress index, encompassing aspects related to basic healthcare, sanitation, shelter and personal safety. Here, we do not talk about discrimination or diminishing the capacity of one gender as compared to the other,

but it is rather outlining the correlation among general equality, *security culture* and *good governance*. The countries with female leadership are among the top countries with a high good governance indicator *(Good Governance study*, 2017) and high- performance score for *Women, Peace and Security index (Women, Peace and Security Index 2017/18)*, for instance Germany, Finland, Denmark, Estonia, Canada and other. In other words, the countries that have already a longer experience of mainstreaming gender in their security policies, namely gender stereotypes, are out of date and offer conditions for guaranteeing equal opportunities at all the levels, thus promoting inclusive governance, stability and prosperity.

Hence, COVID-19 pandemic does not cancel the implementation of security policies and strategies, including the *WPS Agenda*, but on the contrary, new solidarity efforts are needed to tackle the different security needs, respectively to have a more inclusive society. Moreover, COVID-19 has multiples implications on *WPS Agenda*. Directly or indirectly, the multidimensional nature of these consequences has an impact on international and national security, as well as on state security and individual security. For instance, the following has been noticed: (-) exacerbating disputes and rivalry among global stakeholders; (-) escalation danger for some local conflicts, as already existing studies reveal humanitarian crises in conflict zones; (-) long-term implications for national security and human security (financial crises, increase in political instability, review of security policies, reorientation of work practices). Counteracting risks and threats as a result of pandemic effects imposes the need to undertake some immediate or preventive measures, as well as to initiate actions for getting adapted to post-COVID-19 life by leveraging existing policies.

The pandemic contributes to aggravating the harmful perceptions regarding gender or leads to insufficient resources for implementing the Actions Plans under the WPS Agenda, as all the efforts are focused on the fight with COVID-19. Nevertheless, this pandemic is also an opportunity to challenge the harmful gender norms, as the crisis disturbs and brings light to many systemic and structural barriers which have impeded gender equality promotion. The already emerging examples include the binding teleworking measures adopted by numerous organisations from the entire world, thus opening traditional work places for the value and productivity of remotely working employees. Briefly, this lockdown could be a chance to switch to more flexible, more inclusive and more family-friendly jobs and a more balanced share of family and care responsibilities between working mothers and working fathers. For instance, in the context of COVID-19 crisis, the need has been acknowledged in the Republic of Moldova to apply more actively of the objectives set in the *National Programme for implementing the UNSCR 1325*

on Women, Peace and Security for 2018-2021, especially the objectives 2 and 5, which refer to increasing the possibilities of women and men from the system to combine professional and family lives and to undertake special measures, such as flexible work programme or remote work.

Hence, based on the international experience, an inclusive governance that can get adjusted to new challenges contributes to increasing resilience, credibility and stability. The development of post-COVID-19 security culture will also depend on whether the different security needs were taken into consideration during the pandemic situation.

CONCLUSIONS

The value of the UNSCR 1325 for *WPS Agenda* is determined by the fact that this document has reaffirmed the importance of women's role in preventing and solving the conflicts and in the process of peace building; underlying as well the importance of increased women's role in decision-making in peace and conflict processes etc. Based on the international commitments to implement the *WPS Agenda*, the states try to increase women's role in civilian and military structures at the national level. The changing nature of modern conflicts and wars as well as their impact on civil population and especially on women determined the Security Council to recognise at the international level the fact that women's rights are excessively violated during conflicts; women become victims of different forms of violence, and the economic conditions get radically changed regardless of cultural and mentality differences.

The efficient implementation of the UNSCR 1325 and respectively of the *WPS Agenda* envisages, first of all, the development of an Action Plan. Many countries are testing their first plans, while others are implementing already the second or even the third generation of such plans. The Republic of Moldova's perspective to develop and implement a NAP for UNSCR 1325 is relatively new. Just like in the case of any public or national crosscutting policy, there are implementation challenges, but also achieved successes. Some plans do not have adequate resources (only 22% of adopted plans include an allocated budget for enforcing the NAP after its approval), are not politically supported, do not point out national priorities or are not personalised in the local context. They are *big on paper*, but do not have efficient mechanisms for coordination or accountability.

Hence, by drafting a political-legal framework for implementing the *WPS Agenda* through developing a National Programme, the Republic of Moldova would strengthen the implementation of the following commitments: (-) to intensify the strategic orientation of its efforts to implement the Resolution 1325 and (-) to develop and provide a new uniform reference frame for its actions/measures.

In this process, the institution from the security sector, usually, hope to get additional synergy and mobilisation effects and to communicate more efficiently their activities among the interested public, as well as to international partners. On the other hand, a policy framework for ensuring a gender mainstreaming approach in the security and defence sector provides the national governments with: (-) an opportunity to go through all the policies of the *WPS Agenda* implemented by different governmental bodies, ensuring that Agenda's provisions are taken into consideration and no essential area is omitted, thus ensuring *supervision and comprehensiveness*; (-) an opportunity to have a *coordinated process so as to avoid doubling of efforts*, when expertise and knowledge are shared instead of being collected by every institution just for itself; (-) an information framework for relevant governmental stakeholders and civil society regarding the *WPS Agenda*, hence contributing to *increasing the awareness level*; (-) an opportunity de develop a wider accountability for *WPS Agenda – governance/ownership*; (-) tools to monitor the relevant actions *which* get to be identified and *who* should implement them, thus developing the *responsibility*.

A specific element for the Republic of Moldova is the fact that the approach through those eight barriers and two basic problems has facilitated the development of ministerial action plans depending on the institutional needs and capacities for ensuring gender mainstreaming, from the sector's internal perspective – increasing women's representativeness in the security sector, as well as the external one – ensuring an inclusive security sector. These two dimensions provided a major support for mainstreaming gender in sectary sector, either internally – meaning the institutional culture and work relations, or externally – security suppliers.

In conclusion, gender-sensitive policies and practices should be considered as a precondition for responding to challenges and will become a reflex for decision-makers involved in managing, preparing for, responding and mitigating crises. Moreover, the transforming vision of a post-COVID-19 world will be focused on people, prevention, peace, cooperation and human security. In this context, empathy, confidence and solidarity are necessary for a better understanding of the different security needs. The pandemic crisis has also pointed out the need to develop resilience and leadership spirit so as to become more adjustable, and leverage everybody's creativity and talent, by using new methods and practices for ensuring an inclusive security environment.

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ANNEXES:

Annex 1. Pillars of Resolution 1325 on *Women, Peace and Security*

PARTICIPATION	Requests increased participation of women (•) at the decision-making levels, including in national, regional and international institutions; (•) within mechanisms for preventing, managing and settling conflicts; (•) in peace negotiation; (•) in peace building operations, as soldiers, policemen and civilians; and (•) as special representatives of the UN General Secretary.
PROTECTION	Requests especially women's and girls' protection against sexual and gender violence, including in emergency and humanitarian situations, such as refugees' camps.
PREVENTION	Requests for improvement of intervention strategies (•) to prevent violence against women, including through criminal investigation of persons responsible for violating international law; (•) to enhance women's rights based on national legislation; (•) to support local peace-maintaining initiatives and conflict settlement processes.
RECOVERY	Requests promotion of rescue and recovery measures to tackle the international crises through gender lens/dimension, including by observing the civil and humanitarian nature of refugee camps, taking into consideration women's and girls' rights while designing the respective refugee camps and settlements.

Annex 2. UNSCR on Women, Peace and Security

Resolution 1325 (2000)
was the first to tackle the different and sometimes unique impact of military conflicts on women
Resolution 1820 (2008)
recognises sexual violence as war tactics and mentions that rape and other forms of sexual violence may be war crimes, crimes against humanity or an element of genocide.
Resolution 1888 (2009)
focuses, as well, on the problem of sexual violence in military conflicts; provides for new mechanisms under the UN system; reiterates that one of the important objectives is to promote women's participation in negotiations and to increase their number in UN missions.
Resolution 1889 (2009)
calls upon the member states to promote women's participation in processes of political-economic reconstruction and decision-making.
Resolution 1960 (2010)
points out the importance of gender-disaggregated data of reference regarding the impact of conflicts; sets forth institution tools for combating impunity, presents the specific stages necessary for prevention and protection against sexual violence in conflict situations and sets forth the sexual violence consequences.

Resolution 2106 (2013)
points out the importance of guaranteeing criminal investigation of sexual violence acts, with the aim to combat the widely spread impunity for this crime.
Resolution 2122 (2013)
introduces measures for ensuring the participation and leading role of women in preventing conflicts, peace processes and all the measures for post-conflict recovery.
Resolution 2242 (2015)
encourages the member states to ensure the strengthening of Resolution 1325 and underlines repeatedly the importance of women's involvement in preventing and solving conflict and building peace.
Resolution 2272 (2016)
calls upon the member states to ensure the eradication of sexual exploitation and violation committed by persons involved in peace keeping missions and punishing the abusers.
Resolution 2282 (2016)
expresses concerns regarding the costs and increase of human suffering caused by military conflicts, underlines that a comprehensive approach to transitory justice and responsible security sector are essential for enhancing peace, reducing poverty and impeding the states to relapse in conflicts.
Resolution 2331 (2016)
the first resolution regarding trafficking in human beings which has condemned the phenomenon and pointed out how trafficking in persons may aggravate the conflicts and favour insecurity.
Resolution 2467 (2019)
refers to sexual violence in conflict and was voted with 13 „pro" votes and two abstentions (China and Russia).
Resolution 2493 (2019)
requested additional information regarding the progresses and disadvantages from the WPS agenda, as well as recommendation for tackling new and emerging challenges.

ANNEX 3. Programmes/Objectives in implementing
the National Programme regarding the UNSCR 1325

PROGRAMME 1. *Reducing stereotypes related to women's role in security sector* aims to increase women's participation in peace and security processes by promoting security culture at the institutional, local and national levels. Women's visibility from the sector at the national level, awareness raising campaigns regarding the Resolution 1325 at the local level and periodical trainings regarding gender equality will contribute to increase the positive perception of women's involvement in the security sector, and this the level of population confidence will increase for security institutions.

PROGRAMME 2. *Increasing the possibilities for women and men from the system to combine professional and family lives* will allow reviewing at the institutional level the opportunities for introducing options of flexible working hours for women and men – parents from the system, as well as other measures that would allow men and women from the system to get more involved in the family life. The actions from this programme also aim to diminish the factors that contribute to women's mistrust in their forces in a system dominated by men or not friendly and not open to women.

PROGRAMME 3. *Preventing and combating discrimination, harassment and gender violence in the sector* envisaged to ensure the development of institutional capacities in this area, by developing policies, establishing **internal procedures** for reporting cases of harassment and violence etc., preventing and combating discrimination. The respective programme will contribute to decreasing the risks of emergence of situations of discrimination and sexual harassment in the context of increasing the number of women in the security sector.

PROGRAMME 4. *Developing an inclusive and pro-active system for human resources' management* will ensure the operation of institutions from the security sector, taking into account the non-discrimination and gender equality principles, hence contributing to increasing personnel and women maintenance in the security system. One of the aims of the programme is to enhance transparency and integrity of the system for career promotion.

PROGRAMME 5. *Implementing reasonable adjustments and special temporary measures in the security system* will allow applying some specific actions for wider representation of women in the sector by reviewing certain recruitment requirements, adjusting the needs from system infrastructure, and initiating internal programmes for mentoring and leadership dedicated to women from the system.

PROGRAMME 6. *Enhancing transparency and involving civil society in decisions adopted by the security system* will facilitate communication between the security institutions and civil society regarding gender topics in the sector of security and defence. As well, the respective programme represents visible premises for creating a consultancy platform for the institutions from the security sector with the civil society, as well as for creating partnerships with organisations from the area of women's rights and human rights.

PROGRAMME 7. *Developing the institutional capacities for mainstreaming gender and security policies* aims to raise awareness about the policies in the security sector regarding gender equality, taking into account the different needs of women and men in the security area. The programme will ensure the establishment of an internal procedure for ensuring mainstreaming gender equality in security policies and reviewing the needs for appointing gender units within security sector institutions.

PROGRAMME 8. *Increasing women's participation in peace enhancing and peace keeping missions* responds to the obvious need to encourage through different mechanisms women's participation in peace and security processed at the regional and international levels. This programme aims to set up a programme for reintegration and rehabilitation of militaries (men and women) who have participated in peace-keeping missions.