

NATO and the Women: Exploring the Gender Gap in the Armed Forces

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A Norwegian SFOR soldier
in Sarajevo (Reuters)

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Summary

Since the late 1980s, a political goal of the Norwegian government has been to increase the number of women in the Norwegian Armed Forces (NAF). Nevertheless, growth has been slow and Norway is falling behind compared with other NATO countries. Despite being among the top four countries to establish initiatives for the recruitment and retention of women in military service, Norway is among the least successful of the NATO member countries in securing female personnel in its armed forces. Recruiting women at the national level serves to enlarge the pool from which female personnel are drawn for international operations. Thus, learning from countries that have been successful in maintaining a high number of women in their national force is essential if Norway is to secure a national pool of female personnel. Success in recruiting and retaining women in the national force, however, does not automatically reduce the gender gap in international missions. Trends in Norway suggest that different strategies must be used to target female candidates for international military service.

Introduction

Norway and NATO's goals to increase the participation of women in the armed forces and to integrate a gender perspective in international operations follow directly from United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on *Women, Peace and Security* (2000) (hereafter Resolution 1325). The resolution emphasizes that women and men are affected by, and play, different roles during and after conflict, and that both are essential to promoting sustainable peace. The national armed forces provide the pool from which personnel is recruited for international operations. A high percentage of women nationally therefore serves as a prerequisite for advancing the number of women in missions abroad. The contribution of female military personnel to conflict resolution and peacebuilding has become particularly evident in contemporary conflicts in which civil and military relations are inextricably linked. In this context, gaining access to the entire population is essential for operational effectiveness and forces protection and, thus, crucial for the success of the operation.

A policy dialogue between the UN and troop- and police-contributing countries about the gender balance in UN peacekeeping mission in 2006 (UN Report, 2006:3) underlines the close association between female military personnel and conduct of an operation by concluding that 'in all peacekeeping operations where significant interaction with host communities is required, the deployment of female peacekeepers has become not just desirable, but an operational imperative.' Similarly, experiences from Swedish contributions to missions in Chad, Congo and Afghanistan suggest that a focus on women's role in conflict promotes increased operational effectiveness (Johansen, 2008; Swedish Armed Forces, 2009). American use of all-female teams, like the Lioness program in Iraq and the Female Engagement Team (FET) in Afghanistan, were essential to force protection and operational effectiveness through enabling searches of women, gathering information and building societal trust through substantive engagement with the female population (Pottinger and Shaffer, 2009). Similar experiences among the Norwegian troops in Afghanistan have prompted internal requests for Female Engagement Teams within the Norwegian Armed Forces (Solberg, 2010).

'To some, the idea that the Swedish Armed Forces as a military organization are concerned with gender issues is baffling and somewhat out of the ordinary. I strongly feel that those individuals fail to recognize that gender awareness is of vital importance to a military operation. Experience from previous operations show that if we are able to implement a gender perspective in accordance with the UNSCR1325/2000, we will have an improved chance to succeed with our mission, to bring peace and security to the whole society in our AOR.'

Lieutenant General, Anders Lindström,
Director of Operations Swedish Armed Forces
(Swedish Armed Forces, 2009)

Reducing the gender gap in the Norwegian Armed Forces serves several purposes in relation to equal rights, representation, Norway's military reputation abroad and maintaining national security through international military commitments. In a January 2010 address to the Oslo Military Society, the Norwegian Minister of Defence, Grete Faremo, acknowledged that 'the conduct of Norwegian soldiers serving abroad is an important factor in determining the reputation of the armed forces' (Faremo, 2010a), and her partner in the Norwegian Armed Forces, Lieutenant Colonel Rune Solberg, linked this reputation to the demand for female military

personnel in responding to today's conflicts. According to Lieutenant Colonel Rune Solberg, female personnel in Afghanistan serve two purposes: first, gathering intelligence that increases troop security and, second, promoting favorable attitudes to the Norwegian Armed Forces and its operations abroad (ABC Nyheter, 2010).

However, although increasing the participation of women in the armed forces has been a political and military priority since the late 1980s,¹ the percentage of female military personnel in the NAFs (nationally and internationally) only slightly exceeded 9 percent as of February 2010.² Despite being among the top four countries to establish initiatives for the recruitment and retention of women in military service, Norway is among the least successful of the NATO member countries in securing female personnel to the armed forces. Not only does this small percentage fail to reflect the composition of the Norwegian society at large,³ but the skewed gender representation in the NAF prevents Norway from becoming a leading force in implementing Resolution 1325 among NATO countries (Brestrup et al. 2007).⁴ Many states share similar difficulties in implementing political ambitions with respect to integrating women in national forces, which places limitations on female participation in international operations.

The main aim of this report is to look specifically at how the Norwegian armed forces (NAF) can attract more women nationally as a way to increase the pool of female personnel for international operations. The assessment for Norway is based on a comparison with experiences from other NATO states. Since Norway is a member of NATO, and its military activity abroad mainly takes place through the alliance, female military representation within NATO is a relevant framework for the issues raised in this project. Since the mandate for NATO's active military engagements is largely determined by the UN, implementing UN recommendations for the armed forces is appropriate. The report underscores that successful recruitment of women nationally is necessary, but not sufficient, to reduce the gender gap in international missions. It argues that recruitment and retention strategies must be gender sensitive, mission specific, and based on the unique Scandinavian context.

Even when a reasonable number of women have been recruited to the national armed forces, a further hurdle exists to attract women to international operations. Numbers from the UN gender statistics show that there were 1.8 percent military female personnel in UN peacekeeping missions in 2006, and the number had increased by only 0.6 percent in 2009 (see Table 5). An auxiliary goal of this report is, therefore, to examine the association between national recruitment

¹ Currently, the NAF has mandatory military enlistment ('tvungen sesjon') for men and women, but practices mandatory draft only for men. Although the Norwegian Parliament has concluded that a gender neutral draft ('kjønnsnøytral verneplikt') is not currently relevant, strong political and military actors in Norway favor such an approach to increase female representation in the NAF.

² The number was quoted by the former Minister of Defence, Anne Grete Strøm-Erichsen during a speech about implementation of Resolution 1325 in Afghanistan to the Norwegian Atlantic Committee, Oslo, March 8, 2010.

³ This point was made by the then Norwegian Minister of Defence, Anne-Grete Strøm-Erichsen in her speech in the Oslo Military Society, January 8, 2007.

⁴ Through the Norwegian Government's Action Plan for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325, the Ministry of Defence is committed to increasing female representation in the NAF, which is a prerequisite for higher female participation in military operations abroad. This is in line with NATO goals and commitments for implementing UNSCR 1325 (Committee on Women in the NATO Forces (CWINF) Report, 2007; De Hoop, 2007).

of women and participation of female personnel in international operations. Based on numbers from Norway, the report concludes that there is no automatic correspondence between the numbers of women serving nationally and internationally.

The conclusions and suggestions of the report are based on the following:

- NATO's formal incentives for the recruitment of women to the armed forces and assessment of how they are implemented in the member states.
- NATO's records of female representation in national forces after 2001.
- Records from the National Service Administration in Norway about female representation in the NAF, in international operations, and the regional distribution of military personnel in Norway.
- Formal documents about national strategies for military recruitment and retention in a selected number of NATO members.
- UN records of female personnel in UN peacekeeping missions.

Given that Norway continues to uphold its commitment to participation in international operations and that the NAF is striving to maintain a modern profile of equality and operational effectiveness, the conclusions of this report imply that further attention and efforts are needed to motivate women for military service nationally as well as internationally. Given the NAF's increasing role as a professional force (Matlary, 2009:92), competing for labor in a market characterized by low unemployment rates, both recruitment strategies and retention efforts must present the NAF as an attractive employer for women.

Perspective on the Gender Gap

Within NATO, there is no consensus about the primary reason for having women in the military forces: some emphasize the implementation of Resolution 1325, while others focus on the specific role women can play in contemporary military operations. These views result largely from the differences in the types of engagement: For example, Norwegian operations emphasize the coordination of military and civil contributions when responding to complex conflicts (FFOD, 2007:7) and, thus, need more women in the field to interact with female civilians; the United States, on the other hand, primarily focuses on military force, and needs women for operational effectiveness and force protection.

Resolution 1325

The end of the Cold War and the increased focus on human security made the roles that gender plays in conflict resolution and peacekeeping increasingly apparent. The new perspectives were put on the agenda by Resolution 1325. The resolution was adopted in response to the changing characteristics of today's conflicts in which the civilian population is increasingly targeted, and it emphasizes the different roles of women and men during and after conflict (De Hoop, 2007). Based on the changing notions of security and warfare, Resolution 1325 requires that gender mainstreaming be implemented at all levels of conflict resolution and peacekeeping. This implies internalizing ways in which women and men are affected differently in policies and actions at three levels: systemwide, national, and local. The systemwide and national levels together form a top-down incentive structure for reducing the gender gap in the armed forces. From this perspective, reducing the gender gap in the armed forces is a means for implementing Resolution 1325 at the national level.

At the systemwide level, the United Nations and the different resolutions pertaining to issues about gender and conflict (UN Security Council, 2000; UN Security Council, 2008; UN Security Council, 2009a; UN Security Council, 2009b) provide important general guidelines for national governments and non-governmental actors with respect to identifying gender issues that are highly relevant to sustainable peace. Increasingly, gender awareness is growing among other system level actors (CWINF, 2007; European Union News, 2010; NATO, 2009). For example, the July 2001 meeting among the G-8 countries recognized both the rights of women and the importance of female representation in the prevention and resolution of conflict and for peacekeeping operations. Embracing the principles of the UNSCR 1325 and the G-8 statements, a NATO report on gender mainstreaming stated explicitly that the complementary skills of men and women are essential to NATO's effectiveness in international military operations (CWINF, 2007:12). Based on this reasoning, NATO encourages member states to implement gender perspectives at all levels in its armed forces and improve the gender balance in the armed forces in order to effectively respond to both current and future challenges to peace and security (NATO, 2008; NATO, 2009:29-30; NATO, 2010). Although numbers provided by NATO show that the level of female personnel has increased in most member states during the past decade, the growth has been very slow. As of today, however, the general guidelines specified by the UN and NATO are neither binding nor specify accountability.

Various local actors follow up the guidelines provided at the systemwide level and play essential parts in increasing women's participation and visualizing gender issues during peace processes. Typically, these actors are NGOs or local women's groups that work to increase the number of women and raise awareness of women's issues in peace accords, political institutions, the police force, and in the judicial system. For example, women's organizations have mobilized against the persistent discrimination against gender discrimination in Burundi's legal framework, and a wave of women's political participation during a peaceful mass protest in Nepal in 2006 played a strong role in initiating the peace process (Falch, 2010). Despite the common goals and perspectives among actors at both the system and the local levels, the efforts are not coordinated, and there is no legitimate authority to hold actors accountable.

Therefore, responsibility for implementing Resolution 1325 largely rests on measures taken at the national level through contributions to UN (or NATO) operations and through bilateral peace initiatives. A growing number of states have developed National Action Plans (NAPs) for the effective implementation since the adoption of Resolution 1325 in October 2000; seventeen states have already established NAPs and several others are in the process of following.⁵ The Action Plans respond to the requests by Resolution 1325 by specifying issues, actors, and indicators to varying degrees.

Recognition of the role gender plays in international operations has led to some states specifying the recruitment of women to the armed forces as a strategy in National Action Plans (NAPs) for the implementation of Resolution 1325. Of NATO's 28 members-states, eight have so far developed NAPs (Belgium, Denmark, Iceland, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom) (see Table 1). Only three of them specify increasing the number of women in the armed forces as a strategy towards implementation of Resolution 1325 (Belgium, Denmark and Norway).

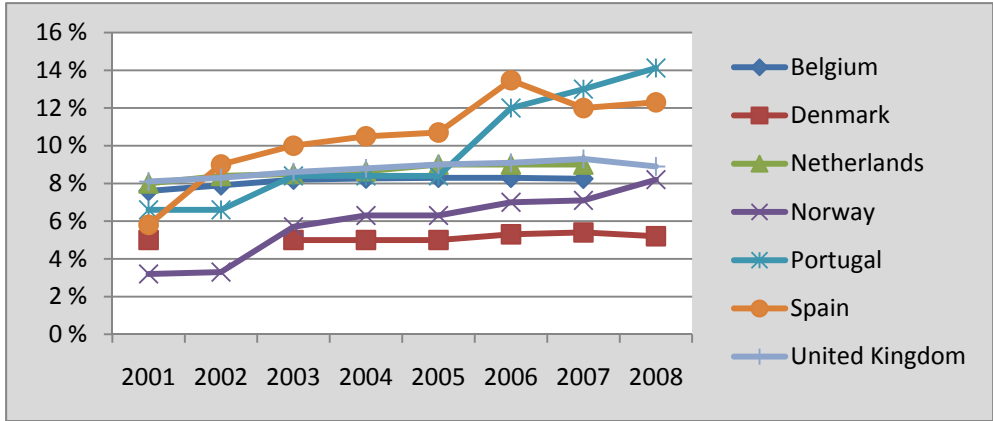
⁵ States that have adopted NAPs for Resolution 1325 as of May 1, 2010, are: Austria, Belgium, Chile, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, the Ivory Coast, Liberia, the Netherlands, Norway, the Philippines, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Uganda and the United Kingdom. Examples of states that are in the process of developing NAPs are: Argentina, Australia, Burundi, East Timor, France, Ireland, Nepal and New Zealand.

Table 1: NATO Countries with National Action Plans

Country	Year of National Action Plan	Focus on Female Recruitment to the Armed Forces?
Belgium	2009	Yes
Denmark	2005	Yes
Iceland	2008	No
Netherlands	2007	No
Norway	2006	Yes
Portugal	2009	-
Spain	2008	No
United Kingdom	2006	No

States’ efforts to develop NAPs suggest a strong awareness of the roles women may play in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Furthermore, explicit emphasis on recruitment of women to the armed forces indicates an even stronger awareness of the link between gender sensitivity at the national level and the implementation of gender perspectives at the international level. Although states’ national action plans indicate political willingness to emphasize the provisions of Resolution 1325, it does not guarantee the ability to transform political goals into action.

Women in the armed forces provide one indicator of states’ success in implementing Resolution 1325. A closer look at the level of female military personnel among NATO members with National Action Plans for implementation of Resolution 1325 (see Figure 1) suggests that political goals may still be far from reality. The same three states that specified female recruitment in the armed forces as a strategy for implementing Resolution 1325 (Belgium, Denmark and Norway) have been the least successful in actually recruiting women (see Figure 1) – and only Norway experienced an increase in the number of women during 2001-2008.



Source: http://www.nato.int/issues/women_nato/index.html

Figure 1: Female Personnel in NATO Countries with National Action Plans, 2001-2008 (Percentages)

These numbers suggest that recruiting more women to the armed forces has not been a successful strategy for implementing Resolution 1325 so far. However, the overall trend is positive and the impact of political strategies may take time to take effect.

At both national and international levels, recruitment of women is believed to be strategically important both with respect to increasing military capacity to manage commitments relevant to defense and security, and with respect to exporting national identity abroad. In Norway, recruiting and retaining female military personnel is considered necessary for maintaining a sustainable force, for successfully carrying out missions, and for reinforcing Norwegian interests in promoting gender equality and peace abroad.

Despite political motivation and the apparent relevance of increasing the number of women in the armed forces in Norway as well as in other NATO countries, women are not utilizing their opportunity to serve in the military in great numbers. Understanding which factors motivate women to seek a military career and the reasons why they may leave is essential for reformation of the recruitment and retention strategies needed to maintain operational effectiveness.

Recruitment and Retention of Female Military Personnel

Strategies for closing the gender gap in the armed forces focus on recruiting and retaining women. Recruitment refers to the initial motivation for military service, and retention strategies are concerned with the decision to pursue a military career upon completing the initial appointment. Closing the gender gap in international operations involves recruitment and retention at two different levels: recruitment and completion of national service and subsequent motivation of women to pursue and maintain a military career abroad. The dependency on successfully maintaining a high level of female military personnel in the national force for diminishing the gender gap in international operations is not always made explicit in recruitment and retention strategies. Furthermore, the strategies do generally not consider potential differences in motivation, nor gender variation, for national as opposed to international military service.

Existing Research and Theories

Historically, research and literature on recruitment and retention of military personnel overlook gender as a relevant distinction (Fricker and Fair, 2003; Morrow, 2004; Sumer, 2004),⁶ are generally produced and published by military actors, and tend to target a military audience in North America (NATO, 2007). On the occasions where gender issues were incorporated, concerns regarding women were treated together with minority issues as a concern of diversity (Moore, 2002; Syed and Morrow, 2007). For example, NATO's (2007) recent report on recruitment and retention addresses whether separate strategies are needed to recruit and retain women and minority group members. Research about the impact of gender and race on military *recruitment* has focused on advertising and marketing, applicant attraction and job choice, and selection and classification measures. *Retention* and *attrition*⁷ levels are generally explained by theories about equity and equal opportunity. The NATO research findings suggest that gender and minority issues relate to recruitment and retention of military personnel and must be acknowledged in military practices and procedures (Ibid:3G-2). Although similar mechanisms may affect women and minorities' motivations for serving and ending a military career, treating them as interchangeable ignores the unique properties and challenges of each group. Even though recruitment and retention of women and minorities share the focus on representation domestically, maintaining female military staff also offers unique opportunities to incorporate and address the female half of the civilian population in international operations.

Although past theory and research have approached issues on gender and the military more broadly (Carreiras, 1999, 2006; Iskra et al., 2002; Segal, 1995), an increasing number of efforts investigate female recruitment and retention in the military separately (Brestrup et al., 2007;

⁶ The absence of gender is evident from examining the database on work related to recruitment and retention of military personnel (NATO, 2007), where only 5 out of 164 (3 percent) entries put main emphasis on gender or female recruitment.

⁷ Attrition studies seek to explain why military recruits fail to complete their initial appointment (Mehmood and Vanié, 2008; Otis and Straver, 2008) whereas retention refers more generally to ending a military career.

Harrel et al. 2002; Kristiansen et al., 2008; Pierce, 1998; Steder, Hellum and Skutlaberg, 2009; Marshall and Brown III, 2004).

In spite of a recent, though slow, increase in the general number of women in the armed forces, female involvement has been context specific and taken place at irregular intervals. Carreiras (1999) pointed out that male labour shortages have historically served as the main argument for increasing the number of women in a given military organization. According to Segal (1995:760), 'the demands for military personnel seem to be the single most important factor in women's military involvement.' Today, at least in the Scandinavian context, the political rhetoric has changed and female military participation is not presented solely as the solution to a resource problem, but also as a response to the need for recruiting people with qualities and experiences which will better meet new security challenges.

What makes a military career attractive for women depends on individual goals and wishes, as well as cultural and structural factors in a given social and political setting. An emerging scholarly literature (Carreiras, 2006; Segal, 1995; Skjelsbæk and Tryggestad, 2009) tries to identify how social and cultural factors seem to influence women's motivation and willingness to serve within military organizations at national and international levels. This new scholarly interest has largely been prompted by the recognition that new types of military preparedness and responses are necessary to address the changed security situation that emerged after the end of the Cold War (Olsson and Tryggestad, 2001; Skjelsbæk, 2007).

Segal (1995) argues that we cannot consider the recruitment of women into military organizations without considering the internal workings of the military itself, the social structures in which it is located, and the gendered underpinnings of the given cultural context. Segal (1995: 766-767) also notes, however, that in situations where women take a more active part in the labour force, their representation in the armed forces will be larger. This happens because the increasing representation of women in the workplace changes social and cultural perceptions of women.

At the level of family politics, it appears that the greater the family responsibilities are for the average woman living in the country in question, the lower women's representation is in the armed forces. Women's participation in the military is positively associated with later age at first marriage, later age of birth of first child and fewer children (Segal, 1995: 768). The level of security threat interacts with gender roles: the less traditional gender roles at home and the higher the security threats, the more we should expect an increase in female military participation. To some extent, the division of labour at home between men and women overrides the security factor. However, in cases with a low level of national security threats, but with more equal sharing of domestic work between men and women, the number of women within a military organization might still increase (Segal 1995: 762).

Recruitment and Retention Strategies in NATO

Common to all NATO members is the continued dominance of men at all levels of the armed forces (see for example Table 3). The increasing focus on women's contributions for handling security issues in international operations prompts the question of how the military can attract more women. In a 2007 report on recruitment and retention of military personnel by Research

Task Group HFM-107, NATO concluded that strategies for recruiting and retaining military personnel had to acknowledge demographic differences such as gender and race (NATO, 2007). From this perspective, closing the gender gap in the armed forces requires gender-sensitive strategies. Combined with recognition of the contribution of women in handling security issues in international operations, this prompted NATO to produce a list of recommendations for on how each member-state could attract more women to their national forces (NATO, 2008). These strategies specify incentives for integrating of gender perspectives in four main areas: recruitment, employment, operational planning and operations, and quality of life. Although incentives towards this goal have been put forth by NATO,⁸ responsibility for recruiting women rests within each state.

Although all these incentives relate differently to recruitment and retention of female personnel, the varying relevance is not made explicit. Whereas recruitment strategies deal with generating opportunities for women and motivating them to seek a military career, retention strategies handle concerns at a later stage and target women who are already enrolled in service. With respect to NATO's incentives, retention concerns employment, operational planning and operation as well as quality of life. Generally, most strategies seek to guarantee equal opportunities and rights between women and men, whereas less attention is given to female personnel as providers of expertise and to specification of the areas in which their contribution are in demand. The general content of the NATO best practices for improving the gender balance in national forces and international operations are described in the following sections.

Recruitment Initiatives

The recruitment initiatives recognize that women and men have different physical capabilities, women are often under-informed about military career opportunities, and women's contributions are often disregarded. To mitigate these types of obstacles for female recruitment, NATO encourages member states to do the following:

1. Regulate physical fitness tests for women, but maintain equal criteria for all other selection tests.
2. Employ information campaigns that specify military career options for women and indicate how it can be combined with family life.
3. Promote equal opportunities between women and men.
4. Reserve available positions for qualified women.
5. Pay special consideration to women as a target group.
6. Invite all eligible women to an information day in a letter outlining the value of military service.
7. Postpone physical tests in the enlistment call due to pregnancy or childbirth.
8. Ensure equal number of women and men in recruitment and selection boards.

⁸ The NATO report (2008:6) includes an emphasis on the dynamic nature of the best practices, encouraging continuous evaluation and expansion of the current list. In addition to the four main groups of incentives examined here, the report incorporates gender aspects of education and training and career development. I do not examine these separately because they are either not central enough or they are already discussed as part of the employment and quality of life initiatives. NATO treats gender training and education separately in a recent report on 'Recommendations on Implementation of UNSCR 1325' (NATO, 2010).

Employment Initiatives

NATO's employment initiatives recognize that women face unique challenges related to child-bearing and child-rearing responsibilities, and that these and other gender-specific challenges may provide obstacles for a military career and are not always understood, nor considered, in the military workplace. To facilitate the integration of gender perspectives in the military workplace, NATO proposes that member states:

1. Establish legal equality of men and women's rights and duties.
2. Implement a moderate quota system which gives priority to the under-represented gender.
3. Establish an institution or committee responsible for issues regarding military and civilian women.
4. Establish the right to have assignment or duty modified during pregnancy or period of breast feeding.
5. Create a gender advisor for gender issues within the force.
6. Evaluate annually the measures and indicators utilized.
7. Guarantee equal opportunities for female and male personnel through national legislation.
8. Provide gender awareness training, with special attention to sexual harassment⁹ and equal opportunity issues.
9. Ensure high level recognition of significant contributions to the promotion of gender equality

Operational Planning and Operations Initiatives

The initiatives specified as important to integrating gender perspectives in operational planning and operations are heavily influenced by NATO and its member states' responsibility and commitment to implement Resolution 1325 at all levels. These incentives further recognize that women hold expertise that is unique and needed to increase the effectiveness of operations. For example, the CWINF guidelines for gender mainstreaming state that 'gender mainstreaming should become routine with full regard to operational requirements in order to improve operational effectiveness' (NATO, 2007:15). The specified practices for gender mainstreaming in operational planning and operations in the member states are:

1. Creation of national action plans for the implementation of Resolution 1325.
2. Generation of checklists for how gender is incorporated in operational planning and operations.
3. Incorporation of gender issues and Resolution 1325 in pre-deployment training for international operations.
4. Incorporation of sex as a dimension when using statistics for operational evaluation.
5. Implementation of a gender advisor in all operations.

⁹ On March 15, 2010, the US Department of Defense released the 2009 annual report on sexual harassment in the armed forces. The report concludes that reports of sexual harassment increased by 11 percent during the past year, including a 16 percent increase in reported assaults occurring in combat areas, mainly Iraq and Afghanistan (US Department of Defense, 2010; New York Times, 2010). It is not clear from the report whether the increase is due to a growing number of assaults or whether the numbers are accounted for by new routines for reporting and prosecuting.

6. Encouragement of women to participate in international operations by giving them priority in cases of equal qualifications.
7. Increasing recruitment of female personnel nationally in order to secure more women internationally.
8. Guarantees that female personnel will not be assigned to all-male groups and that junior female personnel are assigned to groups with senior female personnel.
9. Promotion of mixed composition teams.
10. Provision of equipment and clothing that fit women's bodies and needs.
11. Separate sanitary facilities and accommodations for women and men.

Quality of Life Initiatives

Initiatives that target quality of life issues acknowledge that women often face career constraints associated with balancing commitments between family and work. Furthermore, they recognize that a work environment dominated by men and based on a strong masculine culture poses challenges for female personnel that may affect their ability to carry out their assignment. Many of these suggestions also assume that female and minority representation relate to diversity concerns in similar ways. NATO proposes that member states ensure the following:

1. Existence of national legislation providing support for families, such as leave of absence related to child care or financial and organizational assistance during emergency deployment.
2. Existence of national legislation providing initiatives to aid the combination of competing priorities between work and personal life, such as flexible working arrangements and options to temporarily modify a military career to meet demands at home.
3. Recruitment and assignment of women in reasonably large numbers in order to make female personnel feel comfortable.
4. Maintenance of a diversity policy where everybody is equally encouraged and given professional opportunities.
5. Provision by managers of material fitted for the female physique and separate accommodations for female personnel is set up.

These strategies demonstrate NATO's emphasis on reducing the gender gap in the armed forces as essential to its conduct of operations. On International Women's Day, March 8, 2010, the relevance of women to NATO and the armed forces was reiterated by NATO's Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, placing strong emphasis on the need to incorporate more women in NATO's work for peace and stability in Afghanistan (Rasmussen, 2010). Similarly, Fogh Rasmussen's Deputy Assistant, Stefanie Babst, argued that the guidelines for integrating gender issues demonstrate NATO's commitment to this issue (Babst, 2010). However, these guidelines are not binding, and actual implementation takes place within each state. At this point, NATO's role is to communicate expectations and provide guidelines for this process. To what extent have these initiatives been formally adopted? Comparing the varying success of recruitment and retention strategies in NATO indicates a political and military willingness to put gender issues in the armed forces on the formal agenda.

The Varying Success of Recruitment and Retention Strategies in NATO

A comparison of the total number of strategies to recruit women that are implemented by NATO member states (see Figure 2) shows that the most frequently implemented strategies deal with employment issues. The fewest number of strategies implemented target quality of life issues for female personnel. NATO’s records do not assess states’ rationale for emphasizing some types of strategies over others. However, the different nature of employment and quality of life issues may suggest that the former involve formal rights and are easier to implement, whereas the latter affect people’s fundamental considerations for how to lead their life.

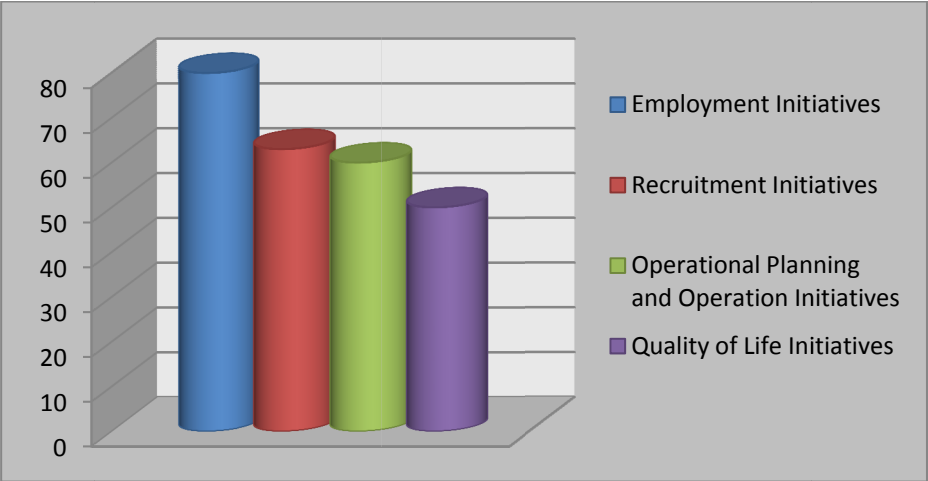


Figure 2: Total Number of Implemented Strategies Across NATO States, 2008¹⁰

The degree to which incentives to reduce the gender gap in the armed forces have been implemented varies within NATO, largely due to the member states still being in the middle of the gender mainstreaming process. Comparing which efforts are partly implemented and recommended, therefore, may provide an indication of where the efforts will appear in the future.

Figure 3 shows the total number of partly implemented initiatives among states in NATO. Just like the implemented initiatives, those that are partly implemented target most frequently employment issues and least frequently quality of life concerns. However, states that only partly emphasize gender integration place strong emphasis on mainstreaming gender in operational planning and operation. In practice, this may suggest that some states recognize the importance of incorporating gender issues in the conduct of operation, without regarding female personnel as central to achieving this goal. The numbers provided in this report are not sufficient to determine the level to which gender issues can be mainstreamed without the active participation of female personnel, but it is reasonable to argue that the full benefit of gender mainstreaming cannot take place without women.

¹⁰ In the Appendix, tables list the status of states’ level of implementation of recruitment, employment, operational planning and operations, and quality of life strategies (Tables i-iv).

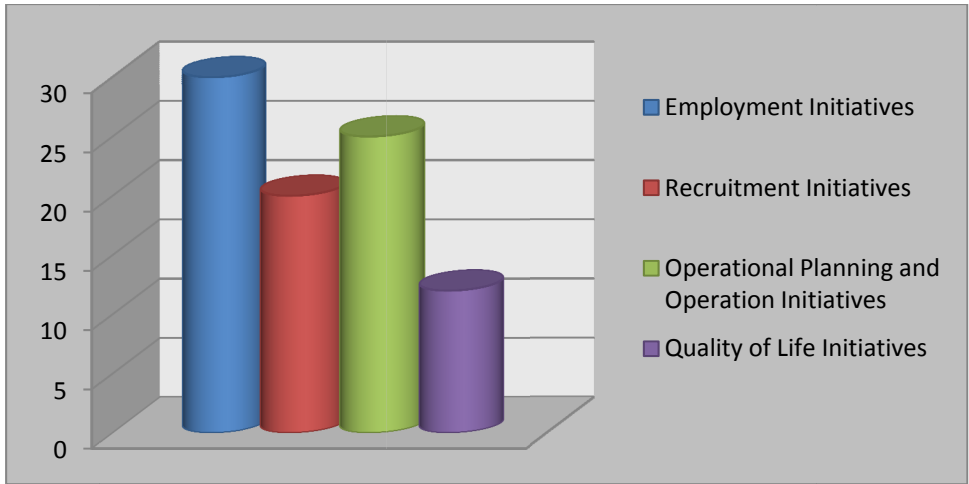


Figure 3: Total Number of Partly Implemented Strategies Across NATO States, 2008¹¹

The emphasis on gender mainstreaming in operational planning and operations is even stronger among the states that have not implemented specific strategies yet, but recommend that it take place (see Figure 4). Strikingly few states recommend future implementation of strategies that help women balance competing demands between work in the military and personal life.

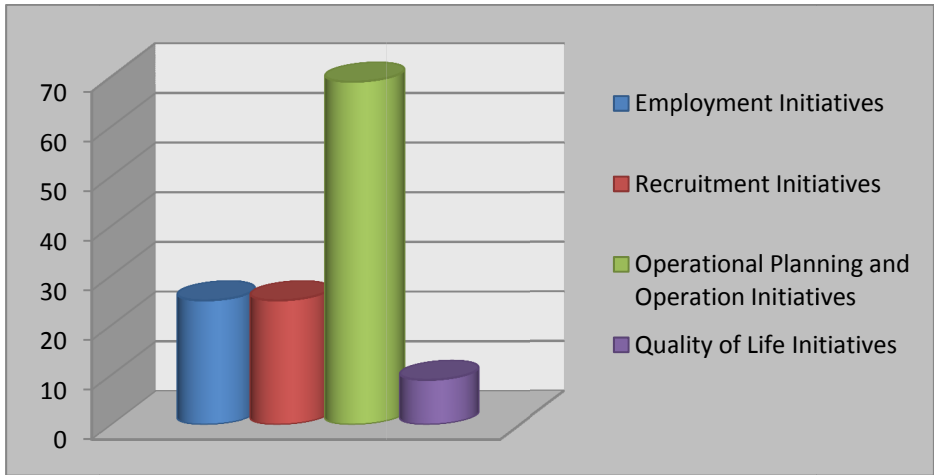


Figure 4: Total Number of Recommended Strategies Across NATO States, 2008¹²

These results suggest that there may be a growing recognition within NATO that gender issues influence international operations. At the same time, many states seem to fail to acknowledge the role recruitment of women plays for the ability to incorporate gender issues in missions.

The NATO alliance is made up of a heterogeneous group of states which have different traditions and histories with respect to women in the armed forces. Consequently, NATO’s recommendations for reducing the gender gap in the armed forces have been implemented by member-states to varying degrees. Figure 5 shows the total number of initiatives implemented and confirms great variation in the degree to which each state has implemented NATO’s

¹¹ Cross country elaboration of these initiatives are listed in the Appendix (see Tables i-iv).
¹² Cross country elaboration of these initiatives are listed in the Appendix (see Tables i-iv).

initiatives to reduce the gender gap, the United States, Spain, Canada and Norway having implemented the greatest number of initiatives.

When adding a line showing each state's 2007 level of female personnel to Figure 5, the relevant question becomes whether the number of recruitment and retention initiatives have resulted in a higher number of women in the forces. The left half of Figure 5 shows that among states in Western Europe and North America,¹³ a strong emphasis on strategies for reducing the gender gap in the armed forces coincides with higher levels of female personnel. Canada stands out with strong emphasis on gender initiatives as well as successfully maintaining a relatively high number of women in the Canadian Armed Forces, which suggests that Canada's strategies for reducing the gender gap are particularly interesting.

However, political efforts do not automatically lead to practical success and, conversely, favourable numbers are not always preceded by distinct recruitment and retention strategies. Some states have successfully maintained a high number of female personnel with only a weak emphasis on formal incentives. The United Kingdom, for example, achieved over 9 percent female representation solely by focusing on strategies aimed at retaining the women already serving. The British Ministry of Defence is currently reviewing the exclusion of women from ground combat roles, which, if revised, may affect future female participation in the British armed forces. By replacing quotas for women with a mandatory one-day course preparing them for national defence (CWINF, 2001:20), France has been able to maintain a relatively high percentage of women in its armed forces (14 percent in 2007) without necessarily giving priority to other recruitment and retention initiatives. The French force's success in attracting women without strong emphasis on separate treatment stands in stark contrast to the Norwegian failure to meet recruitment goals despite the utmost efforts to accommodate female personnel. For comparison, the Norwegian Armed Forces only employed 7.1 percent women the same year, the growth has been slow, and Norway is falling behind compared with other NATO countries.

¹³ In some years, apparently at random, some Eastern European states reported approximately 20 percent women in their national armed forces. Because of the inconsistency and often dramatic variation in the numbers provided, this report keeps main focus on the more consistent results from the Western Europe and North American states.

Despite being among the top four countries to establish initiatives for the recruitment and retention of women in military service, Norway is among the least successful of the NATO member countries in recruiting and retaining female personnel in its armed forces.

'It seems like the good intentions in the documents have been put aside and neglected in the Norwegian Armed Forces [...]

'Being a man, he cannot serve as a 'Gender Advisor' [...]

Lieutenant Colonel, Rune Solberg
(Dagbladet, March 10, 2010)

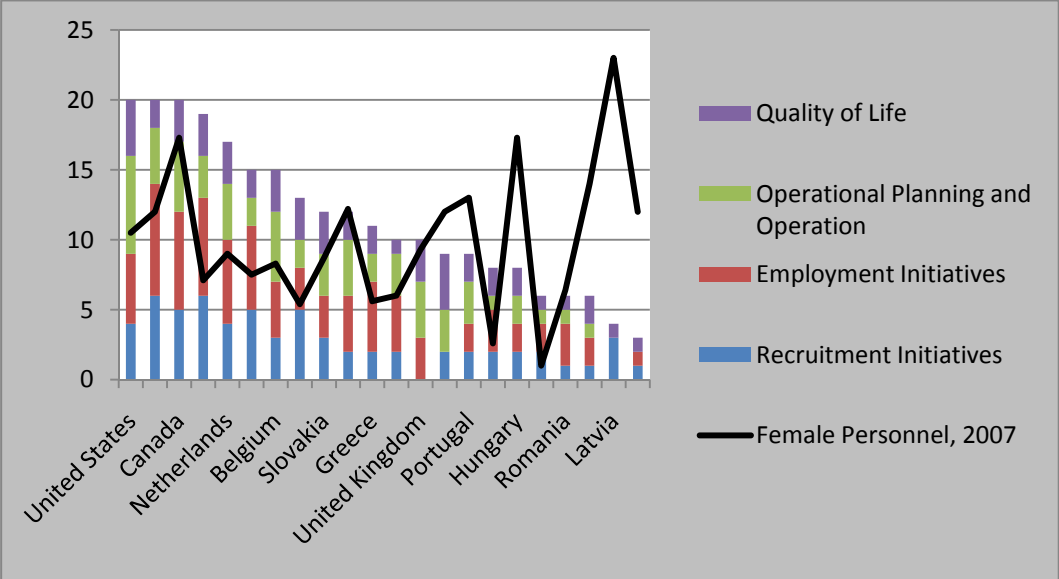


Figure 5: Total Recruitment and Retention Initiatives and Female Personnel in NATO (N)

The numbers available do not provide a sufficient basis for explaining the successes and failures of the different strategies in each state. However, exploring which types of strategies have been most prominent in states with the highest percentage of female participation may provide indications. In Figure 6, therefore, NATO’s initiatives for reducing the gender gap are disaggregated in order to show which priorities are most emphasized among states in Western Europe and North America. The country-level comparison of different recruitment and retention initiatives in Figure 6 confirms the strong emphasis on employment initiatives, especially evident in Canada, Spain and Norway. Despite strong emphasis on employment in addition to stressing recruitment initiatives targeting women in both Spain and Norway, the states have varying success with closing the gender gap in their forces. Given the assumption that political willingness to put gender issues on the agenda has a positive impact on the armed forces’ ability to recruit and retain female personnel, Spain’s remarkable success compared to the relatively unsuccessful political efforts in Norway is puzzling.

As discussed earlier, states like France and Portugal have been successfully maintaining a high number of female personnel with only a weak emphasis on formal incentives. Figure 6 further suggests that none of the types of strategies actually initiated are adapted more frequently. This may suggest that the success of reducing the gender gap in France and Portugal cannot be accounted for by political incentives.



Figure 6: Comparison of Recruitment and Retention Strategies (N) and Female Personnel (Percentages) in NATO Countries

A summary of the most frequently adapted incentives among the NATO member states shows that some incentives are more readily implemented than others (see Table 2).¹⁴ Characteristic for many of the most common incentives is their facilitative rather than instrumental function. Concretely, legal guarantees of equal opportunities for women and men combined with special conditions for female personnel make military service available to women at the same level as men. The disproportionate focus on equal rights and opportunities for women suggest that strategies for closing the gender gap may be politically motivated and treat women as victims of discrimination, rather than as providers of skills relevant to the armed forces. This is an interesting contrast to the recent public debate in which the main focus has been on women’s importance for increased operational effectiveness (CCOE, 2008; Olsson and Tejpar, 2009; Rasmussen, 2010; Schjølset, 2009; Solberg, 2010).

On the other hand, countries that overall pay less attention to providing opportunities for women seem to place greatest emphasis on the gender aspects during operational planning and operations. In other words, they attract and treat women as providers of essential and demanded expertise.

One interpretation of the status of gender in NATO is that despite growing recognition of how gender influences international operations, many states fail to acknowledge the role that

¹⁴ The implementation status of all incentives is provided in the Appendix (Tables i-iv).

recruiting and retaining women plays for the ability to fully incorporate gender issues in missions. The clear tendency among NATO member states to recommend strategies for incorporating gender into operational planning and operations (see Figure 4) may suggest that the debate, as well as the practical implementation of gender in the armed forces, is changing focus from securing equal rights to considering female personnel as instrumental for operational success. In other words, the armed forces may be beginning to see female personnel as important actors rather than merely victims subject to discrimination by a male-oriented military system and culture. The next chapter will show a continued domination of men across all NATO countries' armed forces, which suggests that providing women with equal opportunities is not enough to motivate them for military service.

Common to the implementation of these incentives is that they are part of an ongoing process of recognizing the relevance of gender to conflict resolution and peace-keeping. Although the 10th anniversary of Resolution 1325 is being celebrated this year, awareness of the role that gender integration in the armed forces plays in the success of international operations is a much more recent development. Rendering theory into practice therefore takes time.

This discussion shows that NATO member states are facing heavy pressure from both NATO and the UN to integrate gender aspects in the armed forces as a means to implement Resolution 1325 and to protect troops and increase operational effectiveness of international missions. Despite these strong directives from above, interpretation and implementation of incentives to reduce the gender gap in the armed forces lie within each state. The status of the implementation of these incentives at the national level varies greatly among the member states with respect to the total number and the types of initiatives chosen. Most states in North America and Western Europe have been able to reduce the gender gap in the armed forces at the same time as placing strong emphasis on incentives related to recruiting and retaining female personnel. The next section takes a closer look at the actual participation of women in the national armed forces of NATO countries after the UN adopted Resolution 1325.

Table 2: Summary of the Most Frequently Adapted Incentives across NATO Member States, 2008¹⁵

Main Category	Most Frequently Adapted Incentives to Reduce the Gender Gap
Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulation of physical fitness tests for women, but maintain equal criteria for all other selection tests. • Information campaigns that specify military career options for women and indicate how it can be combined with family life. • Promotion of equal opportunities between women and men.
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal equality of men and women’s rights and duties. • Establishment of an institution or committee responsible for issues regarding military and civilian women. • Rights to have assignment or duty modified during pregnancy or period of breast feeding. • National legislative guarantee of equal opportunities for female and male personnel. • Provision of gender awareness training, with special attention to sexual harassment and equal opportunity issues.
Operational Planning and Operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporation of sex as a dimension when using statistics for operational evaluation. • Insurance of separate sanitary facilities and accommodations for women and men.
Quality of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of national legislation providing support for families, such as leave of absence related to child care or financial and organizational assistance during emergency deployment. • Existence of national legislation providing initiatives to aid the combination of competing priorities between work and personal life, such as flexible working arrangements and options to temporarily modify your military career to meet demands at home. • Maintenance of a diversity policy where everybody is equally encouraged and given professional opportunities.

¹⁵ The most frequently adapted incentives were initiatives implemented by 10 or more states.

The Gender Gap in NATO and UN Peacekeeping Operations

The previous section argued that the integration of gender concerns in the armed forces is an on-going process in most NATO states. A closer look at this process after the adoption of Resolution 1325 in 2000 shows that states vary in their success in closing the gender gap in the armed forces. Numbers provided by NATO suggest that most states have increased the number of women in the national armed forces during 2001-2008 (see Table 3). Notably, some Southern and Eastern European states have randomly reported a relatively high percentage of female military personnel (for example Greece in 2005, Hungary in 2006 and 2007 and Latvia in 2005 and 2008), some of which may relate to national military mobilization and employment strategies after the breakup of the communist bloc. States with the most consistent and highest percentage of female personnel within the alliance are Canada, France and the United States, whereas Spain and Portugal have experienced the most rapid changes and more than doubled their percentage within the time period reported.

Table 3: Female Personnel in NATO Countries` Armed Forces, 2001-2008 (Percentages)

Country	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 ¹⁶
Albania	na ¹⁷	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
Belgium	7.6	7.9	8.2	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	
Bulgaria	na	na	na	4.2	6	6		13
Canada	11.4	11.8	12.4	12.3	12.6	12.8	17.3	15.1
Croatia	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
Czech Republic	3.7	10	10	12.3	12.2	12.2		13
Denmark	5		5	5	5	5.3	5.4	5.2
Estonia	na	na	na					
France	8.5	10.8	11.2	12.8	12.8	13.3	14	
Germany	2.8	3.7	4.4	5.2	6	6	7.5	
Greece	3.8	3.8	3.8	4.2	16	5.4	5.6	13.3
Hungary	9.6	16	10	10	4.3	17.6	17.3	
Iceland ¹⁸	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
Italy	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.5	1	1.6	2.6	
Latvia	na	na	na	13.5	20		23	
Lithuania	na	na	na	6.4	9.1	12.5	12	
Luxembourg						5.7		
Netherlands	8	8.4	8.5	8.7	9	9	9	
Norway	3.2	3.3	5.7	6.3	6.3	7	7.1	8.3
Poland	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	1.5
Portugal	6.6	6.6	8.4	8.4	8.4	12	13	14.1
Romania	na	na	na	4	5	5	6.4	3.2
Slovakia	na	na	na	6.1	7.1	7.7	8.7	
Slovenia	na	na	na	19.2	15.4		15.3	16
Spain	5.8	9	10	10.5	10.7	13.5	12	12.3
Turkey	0.1	0.1	0.1	4	4	3.1	12	
United Kingdom	8.1	8.3	8.6	8.8	9	9.1	9.3	8.9
United States	14	14	15	15	15.5	10.5		

Source: NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives
[\[http://www.nato.int/issues/women_nato/index.html\]](http://www.nato.int/issues/women_nato/index.html)

Although Resolution 1325 explicitly recognizes the relevance of women in peacekeeping operations and encourages their increased participation, female participation in peacekeeping missions is still minor. According to recent numbers from the UN, men hold the majority of positions across all UN peacekeeping missions (see Table 4). The only exception to this trend is

¹⁶ Missing information for 2008, and other years, is due to insufficient reporting by the NATO member states.

¹⁷ Except for Iceland, 'na' (not applicable) indicates that a state was not yet a NATO member.

¹⁸ Iceland maintains no armed forces, but has an air force surveillance unit, a coast guard and a small peacekeeping force.

the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), in which there was an equal number of women and men police officers and almost as many female as male personnel among the contingent troops as of September 2009.

Table 4: Number of Female Personnel in UN Peacekeeping Missions, September 2009

Gender Statistics by Mission - 30 Sep 2009																		
Mission	Military Component									Police			Grand Total					
	Military Observers			Staff Officers			Contingent Troops			Military Total			M	F	Total	M	F	Total
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total						
BINUB	5	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	5	12	0	12	17	0	17
MINURCAT	17	0	17	137	6	143	2422	110	2532	2576	116	2692	222	26	248	2798	142	2940
MINURSO	201	4	205	0	0	0	11	9	20	212	13	225	3	3	6	215	16	231
MINUSTAH	0	0	0	101	1	102	6826	123	6949	6927	124	7051	1972	94	2066	8899	218	9117
MONUC	497	28	525	166	1	167	16443	383	16826	17106	412	17518	1044	44	1088	18150	456	18606
UNAMA	14	1	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	1	15	8	0	8	22	1	23
UNAMI	12	1	13	0	0	0	206	15	221	218	15	233	0	0	0	218	15	233
UNAMID	186	10	196	420	20	440	13890	308	14198	14496	338	14834	3584	357	3941	18080	695	18775
UNDOF	0	0	0	38	3	41	982	22	1004	1020	25	1045	0	0	0	1020	25	1045
UNFICYP	0	0	0	49	0	49	756	37	793	805	37	842	53	14	67	858	51	909
UNIFIL	0	0	0	202	4	206	11768	451	12219	11970	455	12425	0	0	0	11970	455	12425
UNMIK	9	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	9	8	0	8	17	0	17
UNMIL	120	11	131	84	3	87	9717	229	9946	9921	243	10164	1164	191	1355	11085	434	11519
UNMIN	68	3	71	0	0	0	0	0	0	68	3	71	0	0	0	68	3	71
UNMIS	474	12	486	188	7	195	8482	116	8598	9144	135	9279	595	87	682	9739	222	9961
UNMIT	28	0	28	5	0	5	0	0	0	33	0	33	1498	59	1557	1531	59	1590
UNMOGIP	42	1	43	0	0	0	0	0	0	42	1	43	0	0	0	42	1	43
UNOCI	181	11	192	91	3	94	6851	81	6932	7123	95	7218	1161	23	1184	8284	118	8402
UNTSO	142	9	151	0	0	0	0	0	0	142	9	151	0	0	0	142	9	151
Total	1996	91	2087	1481	48	1529	78354	1884	80238	81831	2022	83853	11324	898	12222	93155	2920	96075

Sources: <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/gender/2009gender/sept09.pdf>

Similar to the national armed forces, the gender division in the UN peacekeeping missions presented in Table 4 suggests a failure to put political intentions into practice at the system level. Despite apparent problems of implementing Resolution 1325 through increasing the number of women, it is important to look at trends over time. Table 5 shows the overall changes in the number of female personnel in UN peacekeeping operations from September 2006 to September 2009. The numbers further support the assertion that there is a continuous shortage of women and that the increase taking place during the past three years is minor. Among the UN peacekeeping personnel, the troops have the lowest percentage of women in September 2009, whereas the number of females in the police is three times higher.

Table 5: Change in the Number of Female Personnel in UN Peacekeeping Missions: September 2006 – September 2009 (Percentages)

Year	Military Observers	Staff Officers	Troops	Military Total	Police	Grand Total
2006	2.4	2.3	1.8	1.8		
2009	4.4	3.1	2.3	2.4	7.3	3.0
Change	2.0	0.8	0.5	0.6		

Sources: <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/contributors/gender/2009gender/sept09.pdf>

The number of women in the national armed forces across NATO compared with the number of female personnel in UN peacekeeping operations suggests a great discrepancy between the gender gaps at the different levels. This means, on the one hand, that recruiting and retaining

women for national versus international military service are two distinct, albeit related, processes. On the other hand, it points at the importance of paying further attention to which states are the major contributors of personnel to UN peacekeeping operations (see for example IRIN, 2010). The main troop contributors to UN peacekeeping operations are currently developing states with major societal gender inequalities and few – if any – women serving in their military forces.

As of 28 February, 2010, the top three contributors of military personnel to UN peacekeeping operations were Bangladesh, Pakistan and India (UN Fact Sheet, 2010). Although the first all-women contingent to serve in a peacekeeping mission, a Formed Police Unit from India, deployed in 2007 to the UN operation in Liberia, is an example to be followed, this is far from the norm. Thus, if the number of female peacekeepers is to be substantially increased in the short to medium term the UN will have to rely on a

reengagement of states in Europe and North America.

‘Why should Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC), as a force capability within NATO, incorporate gender awareness (GA) into NATO missions? Simply because from previous peace operations we have learned that it contributes greatly to the success of the mission.’

CIMIC Centre of Excellence (CCOE, 2008:5)

Can the National Force Serve as Recruitment Basis for International Operations?

The national armed forces provide the basis for the recruitment of female personnel for international missions, but there is no automatic correspondence between the numbers of women nationally and internationally. This reservation was emphasized in a policy dialogue between the UN and troop- and police-contributing countries about gender balance in UN peacekeeping mission in 2006 (UN Report, 2006:3): ‘even where there has been success in increasing the recruitment of women to national armed forces and police services, there remains real challenges to expanded deployment to peacekeeping.’ Numbers from Norway illustrate that that successful recruitment at the national level serves mainly as a necessary first step when securing female personnel to international operations. The second step involves motivating women for service abroad upon completing their initial appointment with the national forces, or retaining female military personnel who have already served internationally.

The Norwegian Case

In the Norwegian context, the aim of recruiting more women to the Norwegian Armed Forces (NAF) is motivated by both gender equality and representation domestically and military efficiency internationally (Skjelsbæk and Tryggstad, 2009). These two goals are closely interconnected in that women in the national armed forces serve as a recruitment pool for international missions. In other words, increasing the number of women in the NAF is a prerequisite for Norway’s ability to draft female personnel to NATO or UN-led operations. In countries like Norway and Sweden, debates about decreasing the gender gap in the armed forces have been closely linked to arguments about introducing conscription for women. Whereas Sweden rejected this approach almost a decade ago and is transitioning to a professional force in 2010, the Norwegian government has moved in the opposite direction and still considers conscripting women as a way to increase their numbers in the armed forces.

Updates from February 2010 show that the number of women in the NAF is approximately 9 percent, which according to NATO statistics is only half that of states like Canada, the United States, France and Portugal. Not only does this small fraction make the military forces incompatible with the Norwegian society at large,¹⁹ but the skewed gender representation in the NAF prevents Norway from becoming a leading force in implementing UNSCR 1325 among NATO countries (Brestrup et al. 2007).²⁰ Furthermore, increasing female representation in the NAF provides an opportunity for Norway to not only maintain its prominence as a promoter of gender equality and peace commitments, but also to prove itself as a leading nation in handling the new global security challenges by combining these two goals.

Implementation of Resolution 1325 is a high priority for Norwegian military and political authorities, and it has been put on the agenda through a series of studies and reports. Most importantly, the government Action Plan (2006) and the Soria-Moria Declaration (2007) for promoting gender equality at home and abroad defines the objectives for Norwegian efforts to maintain a leading position as an exporter of gender equality and of peace. These political commitments were further underscored by the Norwegian Government White Paper in 2007 (Stortingsmelding nr. 36, 2007). Similarly, a report by the Norwegian Armed Forces stated that recognizing women's distinctive role in conflict resolution and international peacekeeping requires giving priority to increasing the participation of women in the military (Forsvarsstudien, 2007). The same conclusion was reached in a report about recruiting women to the armed forces directed by Major Britt Brestrup (Brestrup et al. 2007). In sum, there is great political and military will in Norway to increase female participation in the NAF, especially as a means to implement Resolution 1325. However, numbers from NATO demonstrate that the political intentions do not correspond with military reality in Norway.

The current debate in Norway is centered on whether a mandatory draft will be the best way to increase the proportion of women serving in the NAF. This approach stands in contrast to other NATO countries, where the successful increase in the number of women in many cases coincided with moving away from a conscripted force to a professional force (such as Canada, France, Portugal, Spain and the United States). Relevant to the Norwegian debate about conscription for women is experiences from neighboring Sweden. As of July 1, 2010, Sweden is moving from conscription to an all-volunteer force.²¹ The Swedish Armed Forces (SAF) had 10.6 percent female military personnel in 2008²² and they have proven successful in implementing gender perspectives in international missions, for example with the Swedish women's military observer's

¹⁹ This point was made by the Norwegian Minister of Defence, Anne-Grete Strøm-Erichsen in her speech in the Oslo Military Society, January 8, 2007.

²⁰ Through the Norwegian Government's Action Plan for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325, the Ministry of Defence is committed to increasing female representation in the NAF, which is a prerequisite for higher female participation in military operations abroad. This is in line with NATO goals and commitments for implementing UNSCR 1325 (Committee on Women in the NATO Forces (CWINF) Report, 2007; De Hoop, 2007).

²¹ Information provided by the Swedish National Service Administration [Pliktverket:].

²² This number is provided by the Swedish National Service Administration [Pliktverket: <http://www.pliktverket.se/sv/Statistik/Sammanställningar/Inryckta-och-avgångar-2000-2008/#>]. According to Pettersson et al. (2008:200), the 'majority of the women in the Swedish Armed Forces are still found outside the military profession, working as secretaries, technicians, cooks and managers.'

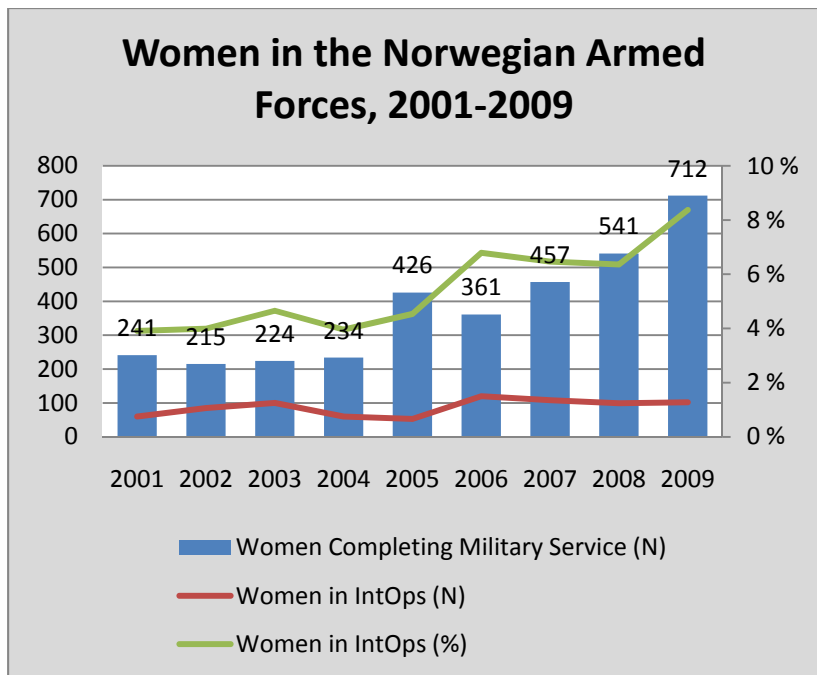
team, MOT Juliet, in Afghanistan.²³ Similar to the current debate in Norway, the Swedish government proposed military conscription for women nearly a decade ago. Public surveys conducted in 2000 and 2002 suggested that there was substantial opposition to female conscription and that women themselves were the least supportive (Kronsell and Svedberg, 2006:145). The Swedish decision to move away from conscription illustrates the observation made by Carreiras (1999:50) that ‘nations considering a transition from conscription to a volunteer system tend to include plans to expand women’s military participation’.

In the Norwegian context, conscription as a strategy to increase the number of women in the NAF is premature as long as the motivation for women’s participation and maintenance of a military career is not well understood. Closing the gender gap starts with understanding it, which implies understanding what has created the differences in the first place, how they are upheld and maintained. Although female participation has been formally placed on the agenda, research has yet to thoroughly explore questions on this matter.²⁴ Since the Norwegian debate is under-informed on this topic, it is unclear whether installing a mandatory draft to increase female participation in NAF is the best strategy. Given today’s low female representation, it seems likely that what the Norwegian Armed Forces offers today is not what is required to maintain participation and sustained interest of women. In the worst case, installing mandatory draft will provide a short-lived increase in female representation, with women exiting as soon as they have served the term required.

In addition, the need-based low budget allocations to the Norwegian Armed Forces seem incompatible with maintaining the costly principle of conscription. This discrepancy would grow even larger with conscription for women. Recent surveys by People and Defence [Folk og Forsvar] (Eid, 2009; Strømmen, 2009) suggest that there is public support in favor of security based on NATO membership and favoring a military service based on conscription for women and men. Concretely, 82 percent were in favor of maintaining conscription, and 60 percent agreed that it should be gender neutral. It is also not clear what the association between female participation nationally and internationally is, and whether conscripting women nationally increases their numbers abroad. The national armed forces provide the basis for the recruitment of female personnel for international missions, but there is no automatic correspondence between the numbers of women nationally and internationally. In Norway, three important trends illustrate this (see Figure 7):

²³ In Afghanistan, MOT Juliet served to engage in a security dialogue with civilians in order to assess their needs and concerns (Genderforce, 2007).

²⁴ Much of the most coordinated research efforts on this topic are currently taking place in non-NATO member Sweden, for example at the Swedish National Defense College, the Folke Bernadotte Academy, and the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University.



Source: The National Service Administration in Norway [Vernepliktsverket], 2010.

Figure 7: Women Serving Nationally and in International Missions, Norway, 2001-2009

Figure 7 suggests that the number of women completing military service in Norway has slowly increased since 2001. However, the political goal of 15 percent female military personnel by 2008 has still not been reached, and the *increase in the number of women completing military service* has been slow and minor. This suggests that the long and strong focus on recruitment of women to the Norwegian Armed Forces has largely failed. Although modest, the growing number of women nationally suggests that the pool for recruiting women to international service is increasing.

When comparing the percentages of women nationally and internationally, it looks as if the trends are corresponding. The *increasing percentage of women in Norway's international operations* may suggest that the gender composition of the units is improving. This is important for unit cohesion and capability, but depends on an even distribution of women across missions and units.

However, the optimistic outlook created by looking at percentages must be modified. At the same time as the percentage is increasing, *the actual number of women serving internationally is relatively stable*, i.e. the increasing percentage of women in international missions is a result of an overall lower number of personnel. This means that the gender balance may be improving, but that women are not serving in international missions in greater numbers – a situation that may have implications for the ability of Norwegian troops to handle military responsibilities abroad. If Norway chooses to maintain involvement at today's level, the stagnated involvement of women is less problematic, but if it seeks to expand the number of troops abroad, these trends suggest that there will be a greater deficit of female personnel in the future.

This suggests that women's motivation for serving nationally may differ from women's reasons to serve internationally. Although increasing the number of women in the national armed forces

enlarges the recruitment pool for international missions, these numbers suggest that this is a necessary step, but not sufficient, to increase the actual number of women participating in international operations. Consequently, recruitment and retention policies must differentiate between the types of engagement they are seeking to fill (national vs. international) and the different skills sought for these missions. In addition, these policies must consider the variation in women's motivation for serving home versus abroad.

Lessons from Canada

Given the national armed force's role as a recruitment pool for international service, Canada's success in reducing the gender gap nationally may provide valuable insight for Norway. Canada and Norway share many of the same features, including the high priority given to the recruitment of women for military service. Both states are relatively small in terms of military capability; they maintain a strong focus on the humanitarian aspects of their military operations abroad, and have employed women extensively during crises and war (Bourgon, 2007; Skjelsbæk and Tryggstad, 2009). Similarly, Norway and Canada both have a strong social system and low unemployment rates. In spite of these similarities, Canada has pursued gender integration in the armed forces in ways that may provide lessons for Norway.

The origin of the Canadian emphasis on recruitment to the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) was personnel shortages during the early 1990s (Syed and Morrow, 2007), out of which female recruitment was a conscious effort towards diverse representation. Although staff shortages have not been the driving force in Norway, the motivation behind opening up the armed forces to women shares the focus on equal rights and representation. In Canada, this prompted a strong focus on gender differences related to recruitment and retention, and a report pointed out that the attrition²⁵ rate was higher among female than for male personnel, at the same time as few retention initiatives were targeting female personnel (Canadian Auditor General, 2002:14). Today, Canada has an extensive focus on increasing the number of women in the Canadian Force (Burgeon, 2007) and has been addressing the issue as focused recruiting of under-represented groups (Syed and Morrow, 2007). The 2007/2008 Annual Report on Regular Force Attrition, an internal document published by the Canadian Department of National Defence, concluded that: 'Currently, there does not appear to be a correlation between gender and attrition. The attrition rates for FY 2007/2008 were nearly equal for men and women for both officers and NCMs' (Canadian Department of National Defence, 2007-2008b).

Despite having met overall recruitment goals during the past years, high attrition rates in the past have hindered the goals of expanding the armed forces in Canada (Canada Department of National Defence, 2008-2009b:42). Research suggests that a complex web of factors prompt military personnel to reconsider their careers (Mehmood and Vanie, 2008). For some military branches, such as medical and technical, general military recruitment has fallen short in the competition with the civilian sector. The report suggests that inadequate recruitment can be attributed to societal factors in Canada such as record high levels of employment, increased level of education, low birth rates, an aging work force, and labor growth driven primarily by immigrants. Despite inadequacies in integrating gender issues in the armed forces, Canada stands out as the best example of successfully recruiting and retaining female personnel in the armed forces in NATO. The many demographic similarities make Canada a useful learning ground for future work to reduce the gender gap in the Norwegian Armed Forces.

Comparison of recruitment and retention initiatives implemented in Canada and Norway shows that these countries have a similar focus on recruitment strategies. Typical for many of these

²⁵ The attrition rate indicates the number of personnel leaving the armed forces before their initial appointment is served.

recruitment strategies is their goal to provide equal opportunities for women and men. Although securing equal opportunities is a necessary first step, it alone will not close the gender gap in the armed forces. Canadian incentives suggest that removing barriers to women's recruitment is the critical factor, many of which are informational or perceptual (UN Report, 2006:9), which apply to the recruitment process, as well as strategies for retaining female military personnel. The top five reasons for why women in the Canadian Force leave illustrate challenges related to motivating female personnel for continued military service: family separation, return to school, stay home and raise family, more challenging work, and conflict with spouse's career (Bourgon, 2007:12).

Several Canadian initiatives are particularly relevant to retaining female personnel and are lacking, or are less emphasized, in Norway:

1. A gender adviser is responsible for handling gender issues within the Canadian Force.
2. Measures and indicators utilized are evaluated annually.
3. Sex-aggregated statistics are used for operational evaluation.
4. A policy of increasing the number of women in the national force is pursued as a way of increasing the recruitment pool for international service.
5. Equipment and clothing that fits the female body and needs are provided.
6. Material managers ensure that separate accommodations for female personnel are provided.
7. Education of all military personnel about the meaning, rights and responsibilities of gender equality is compulsory.

In addition to these gender specific strategies, Canada's successful recruitment of female military personnel may be related to the short time period between enrollment and application. According to the 2008-2009 plans, the Chief of Defence Staff demands that 70 percent of applicants must be enrolled within 30 days (Canadian Department of National Defence, 2008-2009b). As a consequence, potential recruits can be pursued to choose a military career early on, without wasting time waiting or terminating an already started a civilian education.

Also unique to Canada's success in maintaining a high level of female participation in the armed forces is the way recruitment and retention strategies operate in an increasingly competitive labour market. Rather than relying on conscription, researchers have suggested that the Canadian Force's pursuit of being an 'employer of choice' has been essential in the successful integration of gender. The 'employer of choice' strategy was stated by the Canadian Department of National Defence in the report *Military HR Strategy 2020 – Facing the People Challenges of the Future* in 2002 (referred to in Bourgon, 2007). 'Employer of choice' refers to regarding the employees as the most valuable asset of a workplace and to developing strategies for accommodating personnel challenges. In other words, with this strategy it is assumed that practices which support the development of all employees and improve their quality of life will, in turn, bring about success in the recruitment and retention of women.

These reflections demonstrate the benefit of further comparison between Norway and Canada with respect to recruitment and retention strategies and facilitating conditions within the armed forces and in the civil society. For example, deciding whether a mandatory draft for women is the best strategy for reducing the gender gap in the NAF requires a discussion in which the factors within the military and features of the unique Scandinavian civil society are incorporated. Recruiting

women through a drafting process may increase the number of women in the NAF short-term, but is no guarantee for increasing the number of women choosing international missions, nor does it ensure implementation of gender perspectives in these missions.

An Employer of Choice (EOC)

“...any employer of any size in the public, private or not for profit sector that attracts, optimises and holds talent for long tenure because employees choose to be there.”

Stoneman (2001)

Conclusion and Recommendations

Closing the gender gap in the armed forces is a means to integrate gender perspectives in international operations, and is more and more regarded as essential for operational effectiveness and force protection. Both concerns are rooted in the changing definition and scope of security issues facing NATO countries and missions (CWINF Report, 2007, De Hoop, 2007), which have increased the focus on the roles women play in conflict resolution and sustainable peace. Although increasing the number of women in the Norwegian Armed Forces has been a political goal since the late 1980s, the growth has been slow and Norway is falling behind in comparison with other NATO countries. Despite being among the top four NATO countries in the number of initiatives taken to recruit and retain women to the armed forces, Norway is one of the least successful in securing female personnel across the NATO community; the slow growth in the number of women nationally has not resulted in a corresponding increase in the actual number of women serving in international operations. If these trends continue, Norway may face problems of maintaining its image as a promoter of gender equality and peace abroad, and it may be poorly equipped to meet challenges to peace and security in international missions.

Increasing the number of women in the national armed forces provides a pool from which recruitment of women to international service largely depends. Successful recruitment and retention of female military personnel nationally is a necessary facilitator, but not sufficient, to increase the number of women serving internationally. Historically, even when women were no longer restricted from holding certain positions in the military, political goals to integrate women did not always result in increasing numbers of female military personnel (see Harrell et al. 2002). The current debate in Norway is centered on whether a mandatory draft will be the best way to increase the proportion of women serving in the NAF. However, this strategy is premature as long as the motivation for women's participation and maintenance of a military career is not well understood. Trends in Norway suggest that different strategies must be used to target female candidates for international military service. This report has suggested that strategies for recruiting and retaining personnel must not only differentiate between women and men, they must also distinguish between national and international service.

Closing the gender gap starts with understanding it. This implies understanding what has created the differences in the first place and how they are upheld and maintained. Although female participation has been formally placed on the agenda, research has yet to thoroughly explore questions on this matter.²⁶ Since the Norwegian debate is under-informed on this topic, it is unclear whether installing a mandatory draft to increase female participation in NAF is the best strategy. Given today's low female representation, it seems likely that what the Norwegian Armed Forces offers today is not what is required to maintain the participation of women. In the worst case, installing mandatory draft will provide a short-lived increase in female representation, with women exiting as soon as they have served the term required.

²⁶ Much of the most coordinated research efforts on this topic are currently taking place in non-NATO member Sweden, for example at the Swedish National Defense College and the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University.

As Skjelsbæk and Tryggestad (2009) note, the Scandinavian social and political setting appears to be particularly conducive to a considerable increase in the number of women within its armed forces for several reasons: The level of female participation in public and political life is high; the social discourse about gender is based on equal opportunities; and the discourse on family life emphasizes equal duties between men and women. In other words, we should expect to see more women serving in the Norwegian military. However, the percentage of women in the NAF stagnated at around 7 percent for many years. It is clear that we must look at both the nature of the military (incentives, culture, mission profile etc.) and at the features of contemporary Norwegian society to determine what makes military careers attractive to women.

If the gender gap is to be reduced in the Norwegian Armed Forces, policy-makers and the military forces have to acknowledge the important role women play in Norway's ability to implement directives from the UN and NATO and in the success of international operations. The following recommendations might further help address the problematic gender gap:

- Initiate a learning exchange programme with Canada. Although Canada and Norway have encountered many similar experiences relevant to the question of how to increase the number of women in the armed forces, Canada's recruitment and retention of female personnel has been much more successful than Norway's. This programme should include a comparison of women across ranks and assignments.
- Initiate a Nordic cooperation and exchange programme that systematically analyses the military in the Scandinavian/Nordic context. The programme could focus attention on how the Scandinavian context provides unique challenges to military recruitment and retention related to a high level of gender equality domestically and in the labour market, level of education and low unemployment rates.
- Initiate internal examination and facilitate research on the increasing inconsistency between the Norwegian Armed Forces and civilian society with respect to gender inequality and masculine culture. The examination could focus on how such a masculine military culture affects the recruitment and retention of women.
- Examine the role gender plays in increasing operational effectiveness. Although recruiting more women to the armed forces has been referred to as a strategy for increasing operational effectiveness in Norway, other states are motivated by personnel shortages. The examination should assess the effects of mixed-gender teams and of all-female units for team cohesion and operational effectiveness.
- Examine how women's experiences during national military service affect their motivation to serve internationally.
- Develop a best-practice report for Norway based on evaluation of NATO's incentives for reducing the gender gap, assess their relevance to Norway and reformulate them to specify tasks and responsibilities.

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Appendix

Table i: Status of Best Practices in NATO's Recruitment Incentives

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VII
Country	Fitness Criteria	Information Campaigns	Equal Opportunities	Min. Targets	Targeting Women	Info. Day	Physical Tests	Gender Balanced Boards
Albania								
Belgium	X	X	X		**	**		*
Bulgaria		X	X					**
Canada	X	X	X	X	X	**		*
Croatia								
Czech Republic	X	*	X			**		**
Denmark	X	X	X		X	X		**
Estonia								
France	X	*	*					
Germany	X	X	X		X	**	X	**
Greece		X	X		**			
Hungary	X	*	X				**	
Iceland								
Italy	X	*	X			**		**
Latvia	X	X	X					
Lithuania	X	*	*					**
Luxembourg								
Netherlands	X	X	X		X			**
Norway	X	X	X	X	X	X		*
Poland	**	X	X			**		**
Portugal	X	*	*			X		**
Romania	X	*	*					**
Slovakia (SLV)	X	X	X		**	**		**
Slovenia								
Spain	X	X	X		X	**	X	X
Turkey	X	*	*					X
United Kingdom	*	*	*				**	*
United States	X	X	X					X

Source: NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives

[http://www.nato.int/issues/women_nato/index.html]

*Partly implemented.

**Recommended.

Table ii: Status of Best Practices in NATO's Employment Incentives, 2008

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VII	VIII
Country	Legal Equality	Quota System	Committee for Women's Concerns	Restricted Duty Options	Gender Adviser	Evaluation	National Legislation	Gender Awareness Training	Gender Awards
Albania									
Belgium	X	*	*	X	*	*	X	*	X
Bulgaria	X	*				X	X	X	
Canada	X	*	X	X	X	X	X	X	**
Croatia									
Czech Republic	X		X	X	**	X		**	
Denmark	X		X	X	**	*		**	**
Estonia									
France	X						X		
Germany	X	X	X	X		X	X		
Greece	X		X	X		X		X	
Hungary	X	**	*	*	**	*	X	**	
Iceland									
Italy	X			X	**	*	X	**	
Latvia	X							**	
Lithuania	X	*			**	*		**	
Luxembourg									
Netherlands	X	*	X	X	X	*	X	X	
Norway	X	X	X	X	**	*	X	X	X
Poland	*		*	X		*	*	X	**
Portugal	X		*	*	*	*	X	**	**
Romania	X			*	**		X	X	**
Slovakia (SLV)	X			X	**	*	X	**	
Slovenia									
Spain	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Turkey	X		**	*				**	
United Kingdom	X			*	**			X	X
United States	X		X	X	*		X	X	

Source: NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives

[http://www.nato.int/issues/women_nato/index.html]

*Partly implemented.

**Recommended.

Table iii: Status of Best Practices in NATO's Operational Planning and Operation Incentives, 2008

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI
Country	Action Plan ²⁷	Gender Main-streaming Checklist	Pre-deployment Training	Sex Disagg. Stats.	Gender Adviser in Ops.	IntOps Incentives	Increase Female Recruitment	Female Assign-ment	Mixed Teams Focus	Fitted Clothing/Equipment	Accomoda-tions
Albania											
Belgium	X	X	*	*	**	X	**	**	X	**	X
Bulgaria	**			X			X	**	X	*	
Canada	**	**	X	X	**		X		X	X	*
Croatia											
Czech Republic	X		X	X					*	**	X
Denmark	X	**	**	X	**				**	*	**
Estonia											
France										X	*
Germany		**	**	X	**				*	**	X
Greece	*		**	**						X	X
Hungary	**	**	**	X	**				**	*	X
Iceland											
Italy	**	**	*	**	**		**	*	**	**	X
Latvia										**	
Lithuania		**					**		**		*
Luxembourg											
Netherlands	X	X	X	**	*			**	*	**	X
Norway	X		X		**	**			X	*	*
Poland	**	**	**	X			**		**	**	**
Portugal	X	**	**	X	**		**		**	*	X
Romania			X				**			**	
Slovakia	**	**	**	X	**		X			**	X
Slovenia											
Spain	X	**	X	X	*		X		**	*	*
Turkey	**		X	X			**	*	**	*	X
United Kingdom	X		**	X			X		**	X	*
United States	**	X	X	X			X	*	X	X	X

Source: NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives
[\[http://www.nato.int/issues/women_nato/index.html\]](http://www.nato.int/issues/women_nato/index.html)

*Partly implemented.

**Recommended.

²⁷ Since the publication of the NATO Report on best practices (2008), National Action Plans have been implemented by the following states: the United Kingdom, Belgium, Denmark and Portugal.

Table iv: Status of Best Practices in NATO's Quality of Life Incentives, 2008

	I	II	III	IV	V
Country	Family Support	Work-life Support	Female Representation	Diversity Policy	Material/ Infrastructure
Albania					
Belgium	X	X	**	X	*
Bulgaria	X				
Canada		X		X	X
Croatia					
Czech Republic	X	X			
Denmark	X	X		X	
Estonia					
France	X			X	
Germany	X	X			
Greece	X			X	
Hungary	X	X		**	*
Iceland					
Italy	X		*	X	*
Latvia	X				
Lithuania	X	**			
Luxembourg					
Netherlands	X	X	**	X	*
Norway	X	X		X	*
Poland	X	**		**	**
Portugal	X			X	*
Romania	X				
Slovakia (SLV)	X	X		X	*
Slovenia					
Spain	X	X	*	**	*
Turkey	X	X	**	X	X
United Kingdom	X	X		X	*
United States	X	X	*	X	X

Source: NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives

[http://www.nato.int/issues/women_nato/index.html]

*Partly implemented.

**Recommended.

NATO and the Women: Exploring the Gender Gap in the Armed Forces

Since the late 1980s, a political goal of the Norwegian government has been to increase the number of women in the Norwegian Armed Forces (NAF). Nevertheless, growth has been slow and Norway is falling behind compared with other NATO countries. Despite being among the top four countries to establish initiatives for the recruitment and retention of women in military service, Norway is among the least successful of the NATO member countries in securing female personnel in its armed forces. Recruiting women at the national level serves to enlarge the pool from which

female personnel are drawn for international operations. Thus, learning from countries that have been successful in maintaining a high number of women in their national force is essential if Norway is to secure a national pool of female personnel. Success in recruiting and retaining women in the national force, however, does not automatically reduce the gender gap in international missions. Trends in Norway suggest that different strategies must be used to target female candidates for international military service.