

RECRUITMENT OF WOMEN FOR MILITARY INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract: *This article was finished at the end of January 2022, with no idea of what was to come. We are faced with an unforeseeable war with no rules, with a deep impact on civilians. We are dealing with refugees escaping from war, women, girls, boys and elderly people, in their most vulnerable period of life. It is important to recognize that men and women are affected differently by the crises and we need to learn how to offer help according to their needs. Once more, these crises show us the importance of women in military environment and their presence in the peace negotiation process. I observed the complete absence of women from the negotiation table. Neither Russia nor Ukraine has any in their negotiation teams. Both teams are discussing issues with tremendous importance for women's lives, but they are not present there. I want to give you an example: I volunteer in this crisis at the Bucharest North Railway. We offered food, drinks and hygienic products to the Ukrainian refugees. We try our best to provide them with the goods they need. The need for the participation of women with full rights and obligations in the military system was a topic that gave birth to passions, in the debate of which energy was consumed and which is still contested. The subject is still very topical because the factors that were taken into account in its debate have changed. Nowadays we no longer face a classical war, in which there is a front line or the relief of the rear. There have been studies that have proven the different influence of armed conflicts on women and girls. In this article, I will look at how the military institution is prepared to address women for recruitment.*

Keywords: *participation; women; military system; recruitment*

1. INTRODUCTION

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 recognized, for the first time, the impact of war on women and women's contribution to conflict resolution and the achievement of a stable peace. Subsequent resolutions related to this topic represented the commitments of the Member States to take all necessary measures to build resilient societies, where human security and social inclusion will contribute to the development of the capacity to withstand emerging threats. Is legislative adaptation enough, though? Does the passing of the law guarantee its implementation? The plan of the Romanian Ministry of National Defence for the implementation of Resolution 1325 has been approved since 2014. From 2020, under the coordination of the Ministry of National Defence, the National Strategy and the National Action Plan on the implementation of Resolution 1325 (2000) of the United Nations Security Council on women, peace and security for the period 2020-2023 were adopted.

In 2014, for the first time, the Republic of Moldova has undertaken to implement UN Resolution No. 1325, when the two-year Program of Action within the Individual NATO Partnership for 2014-2016 was approved. In the next program,

approved for 2017-2019, Moldova reiterated its intention to implement Resolution 1325. Thus, with the National Program of the Republic of Moldova for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on the role of women in ensuring peace and security, for the period 2018-2021, it was developed with NATO support and implemented by the Institute for Inclusive Security (ISI) and the NATO Information and Documentation Centre (CID NATO), in partnership with the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Moldova and with the financial support of the NATO Program "Science for Peace and Security".

2. FROM EXPECTATIONS TO MESSAGES

2.1. Methodology. Results. In order to understand the degree of acceptance of female military personnel in the Romanian Ministry of National Defence, I conducted a study on the perception of men on women in the military institution. As a methodology, I realized a series of eight interviews, with colleagues of mine, with the ages between 40-57 years old, with university studies, six of them being in the military system from the age of 14.

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The research questions were: (1) How do you perceive the presence of women in the Armed Forces? (2) Do you consider women to be valuable to the military system? (3) Are mixed teams more efficient? (4) Are women started with the same chance in life as men?

Overall, the responses have been positive about the presence of women in the military, but some believe that women are not being used to their full potential, given that the Army is seen as an institution where physical strength prevails.

Women are more valuable. The army is seen in terms of force. There still is reluctance from the perspective of strength, the lack of physical strength of the woman. A woman cannot do what a man can do. Tasks should be divided according to one's abilities and training. A woman is valuable for her perspective and does not have to do what a man does. A group is valuable with a woman in it. Tasks should be assigned to the benefit of the group. Women do not have the same chances as men in life. I think the solution would be to educate children. (CR, 40 years old)

It simply came to our notice then. I don't see them in the special operations forces. There are some physical limitations, they are the weak link. A strong woman has lost her femininity. Comparing the femininity of the female soldier with a skater or ballerina who does pirouettes with their skirts... in my opinion, the skater/ ballerina always wins. (DR, 42)

Standard conditions also appear.

Women are valuable, as long as the standards are the same for women and men. Some women can cope with physical effort, but some cannot. However, the female psyche is even better than most men. Certain conditions of women need to be taken into account and it is not yet clear whether they are used properly. They must be used very well. (TB, 49)

A woman (in the Armed Forces, author's note) must impose herself as a leader. Enforcement is not good. The career of women in the army is different from that of men. They filled the offices and they agreed with too, but they were taken out of the military. Men protected the military male environment by eliminating women from that environment. When it doesn't suit them and they want to get some benefits, they use the fact that they are women. They have not yet got rid of this victim attitude. (MZ, 56)

My comment on this colleague's opinion was that, from the point of view of the environment in which they live, men do the same. They have even begun to construct a victim-like attitude in relation to the feminist movements on equal opportunities.

The interviews also revealed the idealization of the kindness and sensitivity of the woman, who does not have in her nature to kill in cold blood.

Women and men leave with the same chance in life. It's about being in the right place at the right time and that's it. I don't think the woman's place is in combat. It may be okay to pass the same standards of physical fitness and (there is, A/N) the ability to kill. It's a man's nature to be able to kill what's not a woman's nature. It's about most women and men. The scales should be the same, ready to do the same.

Regarding how long a female military officer can perform, in the context of interrupting childbirth and parenting services, he considers that the military invests resources in training women and does not benefit from them because they interrupt their careers for childbirth and raising children.

You have to train people to use them when you need them. In a few years I will not do my job as I do now (when they are active, A/N) (AC, 49).

I had a counter-argument with the large number of soldiers retiring from the activity, before reaching the retirement age, benefiting from the provisions of law 223/2015, with subsequent amendments and completions.

Women are more emotional than men. They have this in their intrinsic nature. At the age of 18, I used to say that women have a 'red fibre' inside them from head to toe, a vein related to motherhood, the fact that they can procreate, which increases their state of emotion. Women, subconsciously, feel the need for protection, they feel the need for stability and protection. From the beginning, everyone leaves life equally. (And yet, A/N) Women are viewed with a second chance at life. It's a philosophical fact. They are attracted to more liberal occupations that require less physical strength. I had young female colleagues who were better professionally than men. There are few trades where only physical qualities are required. In any community it is good to have mixed teams. Women bring balance to the group. Within the Romanian Army, the perspective of equal opportunities is respected. I don't think that the presence of women in the Special Operations Forces, in ship's crew or infantry brings added value, but everyone finds their place in the institution depending on their training. Only 5-10% of women who complete a form of military training continue their careers in the classic way. Many girls want a military career, but few pursue a command line career. Many go to support areas, to office jobs. They have been prepared for a military career, and they prefer positions in the military administration and not in the actual fighting zone. (TF, 57)

Two discussion partners took a progressive approach in favour of women.

Women in the military are important and not a vulnerability. They bring an advantageous through

their simple presence. They decrease the level of aggression and vulgarity in a system that does not have to be aggressive because it's very high power. (Women A/N) They adapted better in units. They do what their male colleagues do. The central structures have several women but are mistresses or family members. Women who have attended the same schools as their male colleagues are perceived in the same way. (IM, 53)

Women are justified in their efforts to gain a place in public life. We are born equal and then there must be absolute equality. In the army, (women, A/N) are very valuable because they have more balance. They are not appreciated now, but they are very important. The reason may be the lack of education of men, the church. Women do not leave with equal chances in life. In the army, the subject of gender is well aware, for the leaders, minister, secretary of state, secretary general. It's not enough, but I don't think there can be more in the near future. The entry of women (into the military system A/N) is relatively recent. I agree with the differentiated scales for admission to the military system, given the morphophysiological differences. Women are more analytical and somehow see the solution of problems different from men. Women and men train together to create cohesion. (CN, 50)

In conclusion, the value of women in the military is recognized, they are analytical and they bring balance to a very strong institution. However, they are not suitable in all areas because they cannot sustain the same physical effort. If they claim equality, then they should start with the moment of entering in the military system, namely sports scales equal to those of men. They (men) don't understand the benefits of affirmative policy and consider themselves discriminated.

As for the "positive discriminations" regarding the testing of the candidates' sports skills, on the Ministry of National Defence website, created to promote the recruitment process and on the social network Facebook, the sports scales for physical tests are presented. I find that all candidates perform the same utilitarian-application route, tests with differentiated scales are on the spot, and some elements are performed only by men (fixed bar pulls) and others only by women (push-ups) (MApN, 2020a,b).

2.2. Aim up, be the best! In order to observe the way in which the communication to the public was influenced by the Ministry of National Defence Plan for the implementation of Resolution no. 1325, in 2020, I made an analysis of the recruitment campaign 'Aim up, be the best!'.

The Romanian Ministry of National Defence built the campaign for the virtual space and

developed three official websites and two Facebook accounts, the last two websites being affiliated with www.mapn.ro.

I want to note that all sites have been changed. After a content analysis, I observed that two websites contain legislation, job postings, vacancies and their results. The form and language used are official, specific to the topics presented. To create a more friendly approach, the institution builds two platforms dedicated to promoting the military career, with more friendly messages, close to the public and with the possibility to receive feedback. Therefore, the campaign 'Aim up, be the best!' was promoted on both platforms. The presence of such a large number of platforms has confused me; I found certain materials, and later it was hard to remember where I had seen them for the first time. I performed the content analysis of what is loaded on both platforms, paying special attention to materials such as photos, posters and videos.

When accessing the "recrutare.mapn.ro website" (MApN, 2021), we are greeted by a page with a dynamic and friendly architecture, clearly structured, from where we can obtain the necessary information on the military recruitment process. It consists of a frontispiece, a horizontal and two vertical menu bars, one to the left and one to the right of the contents.

In order to have a complete image, I went through the entire content of the site and I noticed professional messages, strictly related to its purpose. As I scrolled through the horizontal bar, I discovered the 11th question on the FAQ page (frequently asked questions and answers):

11. Is the military profession suitable for a woman?

There are no professions reserved exclusively for men. There are only professions that are not available to all women because they require the existence of special skills, vocation, special capacity for effort, physical endurance, a strong motivation and special personality traits, usually attributed to men. One such profession is the military profession. There are many requests from women, most of them seeing the military profession as a chance for personal and professional affirmation, a way to highlight their personality and to capitalize on the qualities and knowledge they have. However, women who want to pursue this profession must know that their work will not be an office job, that it will not be easy at all, that they will not benefit from standards other than those applied to men or from special conditions. Positive discrimination is not accepted. In other words, we encourage women to pursue a military career, but we want them to make this informed choice, because the military means more than just a job and a secure income, the opportunity to have a prestigious career, but also rigor, discipline, some personal sacrifices, intense and sustained

physical effort, the observance of strict rules of conduct and dress, of the military hierarchy and the adaptation to the barrack life, very different, often, from the civil one. Being able to have a military career, as a woman, in a field 'reserved', traditionally, for men, can only be a reason for pride for any woman. In addition, there are even things that a woman can often do even better than a man - to command a platoon of soldiers, to fly a plane, to take care of a wounded, etc., because from the point of view of perseverance, ambition, perseverance, conscientiousness, intuition and courage, women regularly manage to take precedence over men.

I may confess that this answer surprised me for the highlighted stereotypes, the expired language and the inconsistency of everything that the institution officially transmits. The discourse is that the issue of women's right to be included in the military is more about equality between women and men than about national security (Herbert, 1994:25-48). At the end of the gender-sensitive analysis, I tried to demonstrate whether the message sent through the recruitment campaign highlights these opinions and expectations that the institution has from women. Somehow, they are automatically fulfilled by men. The fight is in the job description of all soldiers, men and women, even more today when we are facing with the transformation of warfare in the 21st century, where the front line is no longer physically perceptible, as there is no calm and security behind the front. Today we are talking more and more about hybrid warfare, cyber threats and space forces. How does the Romanian Armed Forces recruiting its personnel, bearing in mind all these notions?

To have some answers, I performed a content analysis of images, posters and video materials from the "recrutare.mapn.ro site", a quantitative one to the photos. I paid attention to the women presence (single or in groups, how they are dressed and equipped, and whether we can identify if he holds a position in the office or in combat).

From those analysed, it emerged that 24.56% of the pictures represents a man as a character, compared to 3.5% where the character is a woman. 29.82% of the pictures contain mixed images and 10.52% are images with objects and landscapes. Of all the images, none have a female character or more female characters in a dynamic posture. Only 10.52% of the images, representing mixed groups, are dynamic. There are seven times as many images of men as women in the main shot and 13 times more images of men than women as central characters. Looking at the uniform, there is no image of women in uniform like any man in civilian clothes as the

main characters. Most are images of men in combat (12) and mixed groups (11) in gala uniforms.

As for the roles they play, the images with men, alone or in groups, as well as in a safe picture, with a mixed group, play active roles, they wear combat uniform and they are carrying weapons, in two images the female characters are at the office, and most are with mixed groups with inconclusive attitudes. No inclusive language was identified for women in any of the images. In the vertical bars of the recrutare.mapn.ro website as well as the menu button, four campaign posters are included.

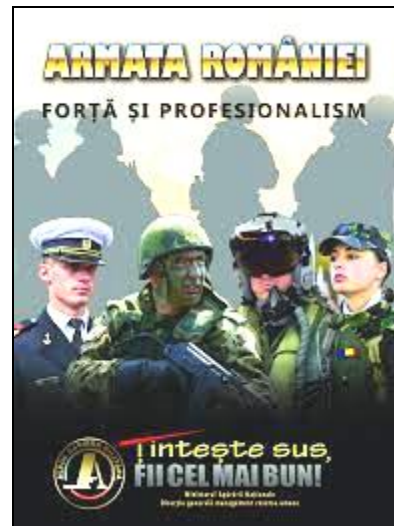


Fig.1. Advertising poster of MoND (MApN, 2021; offline online source, site under construction)

Two of them are collages with male figures in all poses, static and dynamic, on display and with weapons on them. In one is also introduced the image of a woman, wearing camouflage uniform (non-commissioned officer) (fig. 1), with a static posture, placed in the third plane, marginal. Although there is a woman in the poster, the language of presentation is exclusively masculine, 'the best'.

In the Figure 2, there are three women out of the total of the ten figures included in the collage, portrait-type pictures, in static positions (one is represented at the office and two are in a basic unit formation). In comparison, six male colleagues are presented in dynamic positions, armed, camouflaged, and only one is presented in a static position. In addition, the message in this poster seems to be addressed only to men being used only the masculine gender in the Romanian language (e.g. officer, military foreman, non-commissioned officer, soldier / professional rank, student). The fact that the message also addresses to women may be implied by their presence in posters.



Fig.2. Advertising poster of MoND (MAPN, 2021; offline online source, site under construction)

As video materials, in the platform are uploaded 28 short presentation videos (in which 11 are women), two materials to support the military career of some national famous tv and radio personalities (Dan Negru and Daniel Buzdugan) and a video presentation of the process of to recruit until the moment of becoming a professional soldier. We meet the same policy of masculinizing employments. All are presented as belonging to men, even if the speakers are women, who have succeeded professionally. As a general observation, women are not portrayed as carrying weapons or in action. Even when they are talking about being a female soldier. There are two small exceptions, in the category of non-commissioned officers and in the presentation film, at 7:50 (2 sec). In the first example, a military woman presents herself as an armoured amphibious transport mechanic and leaves it, and in the second, a female aspirant for military career performs push up, an element required only of them during the recruitment process. The boys do fix bar traction.

The presentation film was created in accordance with the same policy of using the masculine form of nouns of the Romanian language. The background voice is that of a woman, there is a young female who is interested in this job, but the “candidate” (the masculine form) is introduced, she talks to a female recruiter, we only hear the word “recruiter”, and the examples can go on (<https://www.recrutaremapn.ro/foto.php>). Even if we see young females coming to give Physical Fitness tests, they are not shown how they actually test. Women are represented in offices, learning, filling out forms or taking tests. They are part of the test teams but none of them have physical activities. Instead, when it comes to the medical examination, we hear ‘nurse’ and ‘physician’ (the masculine form), even though both are women. So, it was more convenient to give the female ‘nurse’ and the natural ‘physician’ to the male.

As for how military or civilian women share their experiences gained and argue their choices during their careers in the MoND, I’ve only heard romantic, ‘pink’ stories that seem easy to get into without explaining the challenges they pose. they exceeded. The places where they were filmed are idyllic, without highlighting those weights and stereotypes specific to the field. In fact, in any material on this website, female personnel do not wear weapons, do not perform military training, do not sweat, are not get dirty, do not wear combat uniform and generally do not move much. Currently, the website is completely changed, with very few pictures and the video materials are not there anymore accessible.

Regarding the Recruitment Campaign analysis on the social network Facebook, I present a content analysis with a smaller number of items, given the reduce amount of information on the platform, with the style close to viewers, target audience or people who can influence the target audience. As described by authors, the mission of the page is to show to those who want to embrace the military profession what should do, to provide them with updates on the professional and educational opportunities in the Ministry of National Defence, to motivate them and help them choose the path. the most suitable for them. This page was created on February 1, 2016. Until June 12, 2020, 100,993 people have rated this page and 114,249 have viewed it.

In this analysis, I was interested in the way the women are presented (images the young female appears alone, in a group of girls and in a mixed group, in how many they carry weapons). It turned out that: 26.88% of all images contain women; 6.39% of all female pictures (1.72% of total pictures) contain pictures of women carrying guns. Women are generally presented statically. They pose, look straight into the lens, smile. They are very present in March, for the International Women's Day, in fact, a day dedicated to the civic awareness of women and the fight against sexism.

Young females and women are also the subject of the image on the occasion of other national or ‘imported’ holidays (Easter, Valentine's Day, Christmas) or in activities related to them (carolling, checking boots for bunnies, on the occasion of onomastics. This habit of making women invisible is also seen in messages of encouragement. There are images that include girls/ women and the message is addressed only to boys/ men: ‘Are you determined?’ ‘Do you want to be our colleague?’ (in Romanian the masculine gender is used.) (Recrutare MAPN, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/RecrutareMAPN/photos/>). As I said before, in 90 percent of the images that

contain women, they sit, pose, look at the camera, smiling and playful, or looking sideways. I noticed a few images of women standing with hands folded in front, imitating (Pease, 1997:133) the position of male colleagues but not being like them. It is a dominant position, of authority but also closed at the same time, it does not leave room for communications and negotiations (Pease, 1997:77).

In very few occurrences military females are presented in action, running, marching, with boots full of mud or equipped for a mission. The most 'appropriate' occasions when women can be photographed are official ceremonies and representation activities. For the most part, women appear in idyllic images, on a field with the gun next to them, with their feet in the sea water, with the sun at sunset or sunrise, smiling that the weekend is coming. Although the mission of the page is to convey informed information about entering the military career, I noticed that its editors want to highlight the humanity behind the uniform, people with various concerns, complex, with their families. I noticed the presence of the family with the young graduates of the different military schools or academies, a message that conveys the fact that the parents are proud and support the career chosen by the child. I also noticed the civilian partner with the military (man) from whom we understand that the family supports the constraints of the barracks life, I noticed the couples both soldiers, in which they understand and support each other. I noticed only one image with a couple in which the military is a woman and the partner is a civilian, from which I conclude that there are few such couples. What caught my attention was the fact that, regardless of gender, the military partner protects the civilian one (Recrutare MApN, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/RecrutareMApN/photos/>).

Even if the tone on this socializing page is relaxed, I have encountered cases in which stereotypical messages appear under the pretext of jokes. Thus, in highly impactful images of professionalism, military women think only of fashion and the way they look, giving their followers the opportunity to make superfluous comments. They are also annoying, so mentally unstable, they get upset with jokes (Recrutare MApN, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/RecrutareMApN/photos/>).

But in my opinion the most confusing are the images in which couples, in military outfit, express to each other intimate behaviours, such as kisses, hugs, looks, intimate gestures inappropriate to the professional dimension, there is a risk of creating false habits or impressions and slipping into

inappropriate behaviours (Salome, 2015:36). As Jacques Salome rightly pointed out, it is important to admit that the relationship between professional and personal life, as a couple or as a family, is based on the principle of communicating vessels. If there are slips, tensions, conflict situations on a professional level, they will also affect the personal life - and vice versa.

From most of the images in which women/ girls are present, the message emerges that for them, military rigor is somehow more relaxed. I followed two aspects: the hairstyle and the uniform. I consulted with the colleagues of mine, women in uniform, and they confirmed to me that there are regulations for wearing hair when they are wearing the uniform. Long hair should be braided and not dyed in bright colours. If the second condition, from my point of view, is unclear, the first one is unequivocal. And yet there are many images of the female military personnel, in official situations, when they do not comply with this regulation. Also, according to the Regulation on the description, composition and wearing, in peacetime, of military uniforms of the personnel of the Ministry of National Defence (published in the Official Gazette no. 307 bis of April 5, 2018) the length of the skirt must be 3-4 cm below the knee joint. The two have an eloquent effect (Recrutare MApN, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/RecrutareMApN/photos/>).



Fig.3 MoND Facebook's account (MApN, 2021; online source: <https://www.facebook.com/RecrutareMApN/posts/1194785580541981/>)

I think it is important for the women in uniform to take themselves seriously, because that is one of the areas that require seriousness. It does not mean that military personnel cannot be funny and to show love but in civilian clothes, because in the army, events with irreparable effects can take place, those around them must understand that they are trustworthy. I want to end this analysis of the Facebook page with an image that I consider appropriate to reward the work of women in uniform: cheerful, hardworking, strong and with a team spirit.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Criticisms of sexist behaviour and military rituals in the military turn 'male behaviour' into crime. All this time, women are taking up more space in the discourse of war and peace as speakers and subjects, changing policies. Digitization and new weapon systems are changing the face of war from face-to-face physical combat to distant and hybrid forms. "Women in war disrupt the order of things," says Kinsella (2011), and yet it seems that the order of things is constantly being rebuilt, as are the concepts of 'war,' 'peace,' 'man,' and 'woman.'

My belief is that in this high-risk area, we need to take into consideration the cohesion and functionality of the group, its members need to be trained to deal with various challenges, and diversity is an advantage. It is very important to overcome obstacles and missions to be carried out successfully, without human or material losses, if possible. For these reasons delivering a correct, ethical and open-minded message is very important in the recruitment process. In my opinion, gender advisers are very important in military units. I believe that, in addition to advising the leadership to include a gender perspective in all aspects of military life, he/she can be a good mediator between commanders and subordinated personnel on particular occasions. In some situations, the communication may be unfortunate, the messages may not be correctly understood or they may be interpreted in a different register from the one expressing them. Invest in their training!

The process of continuous training is imperative to include training modules for relational hygiene, to develop campaigns suitable for both, candidates and institution. Confusion is useless and bring anything good.

Obliged by our country membership to international organizations and in accordance with our foreign policy, we have to transform ourself, as we have done before, and this journey is not easy to achieve, but we know what it looks like (Fernbach, 2018). My recommendations to the leadership of the Ministry of National Defence, but also to commanders and military personnel at all levels, are: (1) to set up recruitment campaigns in which to be included messages addressed to women, using images with female military personnel in dynamic postures, wearing battle dress uniform, carrying guns, in command posts; (2) to reflect the expectations of the institution regarding its personnel and to point out what are the specific challenges of the military career; (3) to invest in staff training and in areas that are not only specialized but are important for the development and performance of the team such as

hygienic relational; (4) to include women in the working groups for the areas that concern them (the wearing of military uniforms, rules on the hairstyle, make-up, jewellery and manicure) and to amend these regulations in order to be fashionable. In the same time, any deviation to be punished; (5) and last but not least, to use all the human resources at disposal. Invest in the logical and useful implementation of existing legislation.

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