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ESDP Gender Advisors and Focal Points¹ Meeting, 9-10 November 2009, Brussels

Summary

This was a constructive and useful pilot meeting, allowing for the first time for the ESDP gender advisors and focal points to exchange experiences and lessons identified across the different missions and operations. The participation of NATO, the African Union and OSCE was also very useful (UN DPKO could unfortunately not be present due to practical reasons), and kick-started a very practically oriented exchange of information between the organisations, worthwhile to be continued.

The meeting was highly appreciated by the participants, who suggested that another such an event could take place in six months (instead of 12 as initially planned). It was proposed that the next meeting could be combined with a training element, seeking to further enhance existing knowledge and capacity. One idea that came up was to combine one of the next meetings with the gender training of Heads of Missions and Commanders that the Council Secretariat is planning for 2010. Future meetings should also be opened to EU Member State participation.

Main outcomes

The main outcomes of the meeting were as follows:

Lessons learned and cross-learning

- There is a very large potential for cross-learning between people and missions/operations, as well as organisations, that were in different phases of their work, and focusing on different aspects.

Staffing

- Gender aspects were relevant in all situations, and gender advisors should systematically be appointed to all missions and operations. ‘Double-hatting’ human rights and gender is not the most efficient solution.
- ‘Double-hatting’ gender advisors between missions or operations should be avoided.

¹ In this document referred to as GA/FP

Planning and pre-deployment

- Presidencies and chairmanships were key in bringing the gender agenda forward, and there is a need to target the top, including Heads of States.
- Gender aspects must be considered right from the start in the planning of a new mission or operation.
- Gender advisors need an operating budget, included in the implementation review.
- More emphasis needs to be put on recruitment of more women at all levels.
- Adherence to Codes of conduct remains a problem, and this aspect needs additional attention.
- There is a need to have clear language in mission mandates on gender aspects.
- We need to better communicate on the gender work conducted by missions.

Monitoring

- Even though documents that govern gender work often were not legally binding, it is important to foresee a review process.
- Internal action plans could enhance efficiency.
- It is useful to look for opportunities to work on gender aspects in field operations through 'pioneer projects' and offer incentives including showcasing the activity. It is a good strategy to promote cost sharing and to seek to make of gender work a 'win-win situation'.

Training and coaching

- Pre-deployment training must happen and be complemented by in-theatre training.
- It is often useful to combine gender training with other topics, particularly the cultural aspects (train first on gender and then on culture in order to understand how to apply gender in a given context).
- The link between training offered and deployment should be strengthened (people who were trained should be those who were deployed as well).
- Staff exercises should be used as an efficient instrument to bring home the message.
- Gender coaching is a useful tool, and could be implemented between different organisations.

Practical aspects of the work

- It is important to use female interpreters where possible, in order to have better access to local women.
- Gender reporting should be integrated, to the maximum extent, into the regular mission and operation reporting. It is a good idea to add interviews and comments to add substance to the issues dealt with.
- Visible reporting on gender aspects would also be useful.
- It is instrumental to sensitise the Commanders and Heads of Missions.
- Some tasks need to be broken down at technical level in order to be implemented.
- It is often necessary to use all the assets at hand, even if this would mean 'reshuffling the cards' or flying in personnel from another country (like a female interpreter).
- Cooperation between different organisations is essential.
- The best place for the gender adviser is in the field, not in the OHQ.

In its co-operation with/support to other organisations, the EU should

- Build on what the other(s) were already doing on the ground (for example the AU);
- Make sure that gender aspects were incorporated in its support to other organisations' peace operations.

Welcome and introduction to the meeting

The participants were welcomed by **Ms Riina Kionka, Personal Representative of the SG/HR for Human Rights**. Ms Kionka underlined that the GA/FP meeting was a milestone for the further mainstreaming of gender in the ESDP. Given that the GA/FP's work was crucial for the mainstreaming of gender aspects in the field, the underlying objectives of the meeting were the following:

- to explore ways to enhance the Secretariat's support for the GA/FP's work;
- to share experiences among the GA/FP.
- to liaise and learn from the experiences of other organisations.

Session I. Introduction to EU policy on gender and ESDP

Mr Mika-Markus Leinonen, Director of DGE9 (Civilian Crisis Management) outlined the EU policy on gender and ESDP. He underlined that even if the ESDP was a young policy field we had already launched 22 ESDP missions and operations. This was a time of learning by doing - on the basis of the experiences gained so far, the implementation of the UNSCRs 1325 and 1820 by the ESDP missions/operations was an important tool enhancing the missions' effectiveness on the ground.

Gender mainstreaming was not a new issue in the context of ESDP - in 2005 the Council established the principles of mainstreaming followed by a "Check list to ensure gender mainstreaming and implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the planning and conduct of ESDP Operations" and the "Council conclusions on promoting gender equality and gender mainstreaming in crisis management". In 2008 the Council agreed a core policy document in this field - the "Comprehensive Approach to the EU implementation of the UNSCRs 1325 and 1820 on Women Peace and Security" as well as a document on "Implementation of UNSCR 1325 as reinforced by UNSCR 1820 in the context of ESDP" constituting a guide for gender mainstreaming in the planning, conduct and evaluation of ESDP missions and operations.

Mr Leinonen referred to the discussion during the recent Athens Symposium on the "Gender perspective to enhance the effectiveness of the ESDP missions and operations" and emphasised the link between applying a gender perspective in mission/operation activities and their effectiveness on the ground: increasing our credibility, information gathering opportunities, and further contacts with target population and other actors (e.g. NGOs) present on the ground, and increasing the security and the level of protection for our missions/operations.

To ensure proper gender mainstreaming in ESDP missions and operations it was also vital to examine the existing practices especially in planning, recruitment and training of personnel (including high-level Mission personnel - as a top-down approach was crucial for the effectiveness of mainstreaming).

Among the concrete actions to be taken forward, Mr Leinonen pointed out:

- lessons identified - collection of gender-specific lessons identified for all the ESDP missions and operations that would allow for the creation/development of a compendium of lessons-identified on gender mainstreaming;

- training of personnel/civilian experts - one of the biggest challenges so far (e.g. fragmentation, lack of consistency between pre-deployment training of mission personnel coming from different MS). In October 2009, taking into consideration findings of a seminar organised by the Swedish Presidency, MS agreed a number of recommendations, in the development of common/standard

elements for a training curriculum on gender, to continue to ensure that relevant training activities were made available also to nationals from other EU MS and EU institutions, and gender mainstreaming and the content of the UNSCRs 1325 and 1820 should be included as an integral part of existing standard courses and relevant training planning;

- resources/budget - we need to have stronger "gender" mandates in Joint Actions and more concrete gender references in planning from the earliest stages and we should also include specific budget lines dedicated to gender mainstreaming activities.

OSCE Policy on gender, equality and security

The **Senior Gender Adviser of OSCE, Ms Jamila Seftaoui**, presented the OSCE gender policy and its implementation. The OSCE considers gender as one of its core values. In 2004 56 Member States agreed the first Action Plan on gender, which constituted a milestone.

According to this Action Plan, gender was mainstreamed at three levels:

- in the organisational structures (eg. paying attention to an appropriate gender balance);
- in all OSCE policies and practices (operations, programmes, projects, code of conduct);
- in promoting the rights, interests and concerns of women in 6 priority areas.

The priority areas were the following:

- non-discriminatory legal and policy framework;
- combating violence against women;
- participation of women in political and public life;
- participation of women in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation;
- equal opportunities in the economic sphere;
- national mechanisms for the advancement of women.

The Gender unit (6 officials and 2 contract agents) had a strategic position in the director's office. Its working methods include weekly **briefings with key staff** and review of key documents, involvement in capacity building, in collaboration with the training unit, specific technical **support to field actions**, e.g. gender assessment and synergies with regard to gender with other implementing actors.

Lessons learned (what works):

- Lobbying and co-operation with the chairmanships who could provide i.a. visibility and funds;
- Mobilising core supporters;
- Round tables and meetings;
- Mainstreaming in big, visible projects, that give tangible results on concrete cases;
- Budgeting, resources (allocation was necessary).

Among major challenges to gender mainstreaming, Ms Seftaoui enumerated still existing resistance, especially with regard to issues like gender balance, the distinguishing between “hard” and “soft” security where gender was considered a “soft security” issue by decision-makers focusing primarily on “hard” security, and that gender often was mainstreamed through small, isolated projects.

African Union Policy on gender, equality and security

Ms Litha Musyimi-Ogana, Director of the Women and Gender Development Directorate outlined the role of gender in the African Union's Peace and Security Architecture. AU Member

States acknowledged the importance of gender mainstreaming, which was demonstrated by the fact that 70% of them had gender policies. However the implementation and lack of donor support remained challenges. Another challenge was the difficulty to use the development aid funds for gender purposes.

To target Heads of State directly, as well as bringing gender aspects to the AU Assembly seemed to bring good results. Currently, the Gender directorate was located in the Chairperson's office, which gave the gender experts direct access to the highest decision-makers. The Chairperson was obliged to report annually i.a. on gender equality.

The gender balance in the AU was slowly improving (32% of the AU Commission professional staff were women). Job descriptions aimed to encourage female candidates to apply and one of the AU gender policy objectives was to achieve 50/50 parity in all AU structures, operational policies and practices.

The importance of gender aspects (a gender policy) was highlighted already in the Constitutive Act of the AU (art 4 L), followed in 2003 by the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (27 MS had adhered to it) and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDEGA) adopted in 2004.

Currently the AU gender policy was developed around policy commitments focusing on eight areas:

- to create an enabling and stable political environment;
- legalisation and legal protection actions against discrimination, to ensure gender equality;
- to mobilise stakeholders to implement the AU Gender Policy;
- rationalisation and harmonisation of Regional Economic Communities' gender policies and programmes;
- to mobilise resources to implement the AU Gender Policy;
- capacity building for gender mainstreaming;
- to implement gender mainstreaming in all sectors;
- maintaining peace, security, settlement of conflicts, reconstruction and promoting the effective participation of women in peacekeeping and security, including efforts aimed at reconciliation in post-conflict reconstruction and development.

An important step to facilitate further advancement of the AU Gender Policy and its commitments would be the establishment of the African Women Trust Fund (to be launched in January 2010).

NATO policy on gender and peacekeeping

The NATO policy on gender was outlined by **NATO Gender Adviser Ms Laurie E. Muir**. The NATO gender commitment was formed in 2007. Since then, some resources had been gathered for the implementation of gender mainstreaming and the main focus was on practical implementation of gender aspects in military operations.

The main body responsible for gender mainstreaming in NATO used to be the Committee on Women in the NATO Forces (CWINF). In May 2009, the Committee was renamed the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives, and its mandate extended to support the integration of a gender perspective into NATO's military operations, specifically the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and 1820. Currently NATO had two gender advisors. In the near future gender expertise would be available also on the ground (in Afghanistan).

Gender mainstreaming was included in NATO's "Comprehensive approach" to crisis management. The bottom-line of this policy was to coordinate, consult and interact with all actors involved in a

given area of operation. In this context, the gender dimension was important not least for the work of the civilian-military inter-service task force.

The NATO gender policy include:

- a focus on the practical implementation of the policy (i.a. in such areas as gender perspectives for peace and security, combating human trafficking, proliferation of SALW, etc);
- that the integration of UNSCR 1325 was multi-dimensional;
- that the political and military leadership plays a key role and need to bear the responsibility;
- the importance of expert functions;
- that mission effectiveness was the key argument.

Training (especially pre-deployment training) was one of the priorities (a training curriculum on gender should be developed), as well as gender mainstreaming in the planning documents. It was also crucial to identify synergies with other international organisations and to encourage the sharing of experiences and co-operation. Consultations with civil society and public diplomacy were important tools. To this end, a web page dedicated to gender mainstreaming would be created on the NATO web site, and an information fair in the NATO HQ could serve as a showcase of what NATO states were doing with regard to the implementation of UNSCR 1325. The 10th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 would provide a good momentum for further development of the NATO gender policy.

Session II. Sharing of best practices and experiences from the field

EUFOR TCHAD/RCA

The former **Gender Advisor to the OpCdr/FCdr, Monica Larsson**, underlined the importance of clear mandates, and that missions/operations were to perform according to these. Furthermore, training, particularly predeployment in a benign environment (preferably combined with a targeted cultural briefing), was crucial. Once in mission there were many tasks to be carried out, boundaries to stay within, etc, and there was therefore a clear need for personnel to be trained/informed earlier, when still in a receiving, open-minded mood.

Moreover, her experiences included lessons on the apprehension of the language(s) spoken in the area of mission. With interpretation, particularly through a third language (Monica Larsson's experience), messages could be somewhat transformed. There were clear needs for male as well as female interpreters, depending on the context where an operation/mission was deployed.

As for reporting, it was recommended to integrate gender aspects in the regular overall reporting, and interviews with CIMIC teams and other "outreach" patrols could reinforce the information included in written reports (information that do not fit the regular reporting format(s) could be detected via interviews).

Monica Larsson reiterated the fact that the Commanders/Heads of Mission were the key people for gender advisors, in order to adequately get their message(s) across within the whole structure of an operation/mission.

In sum, reflections from the EUFOR TCHAD/RCA case encompassed the need to stick to tasks assigned and break down these to the tactical level, using all assets at hand. This included that when there were no female officers in a specific area of mission, other female personnel could also be used, even if slightly outside their normal assigned tasks or responsibilities (for example fly in a female translator from HQ if not locally available). Every branch/part of a mission should do their

part and Code of Conduct issues should be handled by the personnel side). Furthermore, co-operation with NGOs and IOs was important, not least to share information in order to avoid duplication. Finally, gender advisors were needed in the field, not least taking into account that there was still some way to go until practical mainstreaming of gender aspects was more complete.

Lunch briefing

During lunch, **Brigadier General Esa Pulkkinen**, Director of the Operations Directorate of the EU Military Staff (EUMS) spoke about the roles of Gender Advisors in EU-led military operations. He emphasised that gender perspectives were to be considered as an important and useful tool to improve operational success, whilst indicating that gender aspects might play a lesser role in some operations/missions (e.g. in Operation ATALANTA). Furthermore, the inclusion of a gender advisor in the Nordic Battle Group was a new development that has been encouraged by the EUMS, especially in view of the very different environments and condensed timelines that EU battlegroups need to prepare for.

EULEX Kosovo

Sylvie Kormoss, Gender Expert of EULEX Kosovo, emphasised the importance of the content of mandates and referred to the actual mandate of EULEX (monitoring mission, principle of local ownership, free from political interference, not working on capacity building). One of the mission tasks encompassed mainstreaming of Human Rights and gender within the mission. The mission had a Human Rights office dealing with horizontal (HR and gender) issues (providing expertise and advice).

The HR office was conducting a 30 minutes induction training for all personnel, as well as research. Focal points had been appointed in other components of the mission and the HR office was giving advice in the Kosovo drafting process concerning a law on domestic violence. HR/gender work also included monitoring and reporting. Mission counterparts included the Kosovo police, women's networks and international organisations/agencies.

Some of the challenges for the mission were the transitional justice system, issues regarding freedom of movement and personal security. The more specific challenges regarding gender included the patriarchal structure in Kosovo, where few women participated in public life and had important positions, the inheritance system, gender-based violence (including domestic violence) and trafficking of human beings. There was also a clear lack of female police officers, compromising the justice and gender perspective (with different access for women and men to the justice system). With regard to internal mission challenges, there was a need for further senior management training and increased visibility of the gender perspective.

The HR office was currently working on an improved training plan, with focus on concrete examples. Gender related co-operation included a round table of the EULEX senior management with local female personalities, a seminar on domestic violence co-organised with Finland and co-ordination with UNIFEM.

Among the first lessons identified was the fact that EULEX had a very strong Rule of Law mandate, but a weak HR and gender mandate. With regard to its mentoring, monitoring and advisory role, the HR office had a very good co-operation with Kosovo institutions, civil society and NGOs.

EUPM BiH

The **EUPM Gender Advisor, Aleksandra Miletic-Santic**, underlined the importance of mandates,

as well as the role of the mission with regard to the local police taking into account a gender balance (strategy) and gender aspects of policing.

The Gender Advisor and Human Rights Advisor provided analysis, advice and reports. A gender perspective was included in some projects of the mission. Reporting on gender based violence was provided when relevant, as well as gender disaggregated data concerning the mission. Here the importance of further gender related co-operation with the mission's inspections department, as well as with international organisations was emphasised.

Training of mission personnel was seen as a challenge, where not all (and the main bulk of the police) personnel had had any previous training.

Primary lessons include the necessity of senior management level commitment and support and that advisors need to work closely with the senior management. There was a need for a clear gender related action plan and improved training sessions.

EUMM Georgia

Elca Stiegler, EUMM Focal Point, pointed at the fact that EUMM was a monitoring mission, only monitoring one party to the conflict, without having any executive powers. The mission OPLAN includes a Gender Advisor and focal points, working with internal and external actions, including staffing and reporting. Mission field offices had also appointed focal points. EUMM sought to promote gender aspects in national legislation. With regard to the gender balance in the mission, there were not many women on the decision making level.

Lessons so far were limited, but it could primarily be noted that there were no female monitors in patrol teams and that monitors often had limited understanding of gender aspects. Furthermore, local men were often accessible for EUMM personnel, while women mostly were busy working, or otherwise less accessible. The gender related work of the EUMM included reporting and analysis; a special report on gender in armed conflict had been prepared and sent to HQ. There was no consistent approach to reporting and gender sensitive tools were limited. However, project ideas and other lessons showed that there was scope for moving forward. There was a responsibility of chiefs of field offices to optimise the use of female monitor capacity and a need to further improve the understanding of the gender concept, as well as to enhance the reporting and analysis practices (good practices were to be continued and capitalised from).

In the Question and Answer session some of the following issues were discussed:

- The clear need for an increased number of women in operations and the important value added they brought;
- Adherence to Standards of Behaviour and Code of Conduct should be further looked at;
- Pre-deployment/in-mission training: general training should take place prior to the deployment. Member States should send properly trained personnel and part of the targeted training could take place within the mission (importance of additional in-mission training). Creativity was needed with regard to mission training plans, in order to find ways to improve this area.

Ms. Jamila Seftaoui/OSCE pointed out the main aspects limiting the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming in OSCE's work:

- There were no full fledged gender advisors in OSCE field operations;
- Budgets reserved for gender issues were very limited;

- In some cases the political will of the host country was lacking;
- The mandates were very short term, e.g. 3-12 months;
- The nature of operations were often hybrid.

In order to overcome these hurdles, the OSCE strategy was to focus on projects with potential for multiplier effects, and on experiences that could be spread and replicated. A good example was the Azerbaijan project on gender assessment in community policing. Through this project it had been possible to obtain important information on problems in the community by using a gender-sensitive approach.

Ms. Litha Musyimi-Ogana/AU said that among the most important elements of the AU Peace and Security architecture were the African stand-by force, which would be operational by July 2010, and the Panel of the wise. The Gender Directorate was going to focus on gender sensitisation in the other directorates. Ideally, gender experts/focal points should be in place in all 'AU hotspots', including in the Peace and Security Department, and gender experts preferably be recruited before the African Standby Force becomes operational. Emphasis should not be put only on soldiers, but also on other AU staff. Ms Musyimi-Ogana expressed a wish that EU support to the AU peace and security policy/architecture should include (reserve) some funding to gender mainstreaming.

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