

THE REPORT ON WOMEN'S SERVICE IN THE POLISH ARMED FORCES – 2003

In Poland women's military service is based on provisions of:

- The Constitution of the Republic of Poland and international conventions ratified by Poland.

The elements which in the past few years have had crucial influence on social awareness about women's role in a public life, including their role in the country's defense system are:

- New possibilities of professional development resulting from Poland's accession to NATO, and in the close perspective, to the European Union,
- Transformation and a change in the Armed Forces character
- Good economic and social conditions guaranteed by the Armed Forces, in contrast with the rising unemployment among university graduates
- High activity of women who are interested in social and professional advancement and equal chances in all spheres of social life,
- Appointment of a Government's Representative for Equal Status of Men and Women, who actively supports all forms of initiatives aimed at equalization of social and professional situation of men and women in Poland.

1. ORGANISATION OF WOMEN'S MILITARY SERVICE

Detailed allocation of women in the Armed Forces – by type of forces, military rank and corps is presented in an enclosure.

As of 1st January 2003, there were 357 women professional soldiers and 183 women candidates for professional soldiers.

2. EMPLOYMENT

There is an ongoing tendency to employ women mainly in the medical corps. (283 women out of a total number of 357 women in voluntary service). At present there are 183 female students, candidates for professional soldiers at military academies. In a few years' time women should hold a wider range of posts than it is at present.

Women serve mainly as officers and warrant officers. During the last few years women began to serve also as NCOs. Besides medical units women serve also in other corps: land forces combat arms (armoured, airborne, mechanized, special units), signal, administration, artillery and missiles, anti-aircraft, electronic warfare, engineering, chemical defence, air forces, navy, logistics and housing, counter-intelligence, military police, justice and legal service, meteorology and hydrology.

3. RECRUITMENT

Since 1999 women and men have been drafted on the same grounds. Women do not participate in conscript service . Untill 1999 military academies were closed to women. At present such barrier no longer exists.

As a result of restructuring of the Armed Forces, the number of students at the military academies has been limited. The new strategy assumes draft of civil universities' graduates who have qualifications which can be of use in the armed forces. The new solution which shall be in force since 2004 gives a possibility of a military voluntary training for students of civil universities.

4. TRAINING

Requirements for women in military service are no different from the requirements for men. In the case of persons drafted under special circumstances (university graduates without any military training) their training is the sole responsibility of a unit commander.

Differences between women's and men's training, both at military academies and during service concern physical fitness requirements. Untill now the physical fitness test was not obligatory for women. However there is a plan that since this year such a test shall become obligatory (untill now appropriate evaluation criteria were prepared).

5. CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Within the Polish Armed Forces there are no career development programs designed especially for women. However, there are some identical programs both to men and women:

- Post-graduate studies
- Graduate studies (as a second faculty)
- University career – a PhD degree (both at civil and military academies)
- Military studies at National Defense University
- Participation in all kinds of courses, trainings, workshops, etc

6. THE MOST PRESSING PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED

Due to current social conditions (mainly reduction of Armed Forces) a rapid growth of number of women in the Polish Army is not possible. However it is necessary to extend the range of posts hold by women. **The key problem – in view with the European and NATO standards – is to create legal, organizational and other regulations which will guarantee women normal professional service (career) conditions, just as it is in other spheres of social life.**

On the 13th February this year the issue of women's military service was the subject of the Ministry of Defense officials' meeting. The following conclusions were accepted:

The problem of women's military service should be taken into consideration upon updating regulations, such as: acts (the Act on Common Defense Duty, the Act on

Professional Service, the Act on Accommodation of the Armed Forces), orders, and decisions of the National Defense Minister. Therefore the following steps should be taken:

- a) to prepare a catalogue of posts: available, not available and preferred for women;
- b) to update regulations on military discipline (in view to a sexual harassment issue);
- c) to improvement of clothing and uniforms supply
- d) to create legal possibility for women to join conscript services
- e) to prepare social programs enabling women to harmonize military service with motherhood (special cases of marriages between soldiers, flexible working hours instead of a maternity leave, etc).

7. INTERESTING EVENTS

The Chairwoman of the Council for Women in the Polish Armed Forces was a member of a governmental delegation which participated in the 5th Ministerial Conference on Equality of Men and Women. The conference took place in Macedonia (Skopje) in January 2003.

There is a conference planned for October this year, under patronage of the Polish Government's Representative for Equal Status of Men and Women – Ms Izabela Jaruga-Nowacka entitled "Women's participation in the national security system".

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Number of women by type of service

Force type	Officers	Warrant officers	NCOs	Total
Army	76	80	12	168
Air Forces	26	18	5	49
Navy	18	11	0	29
Medical	46	1	0	47
Ministry of National Defense	49	15	0	64
Total	215	125	17	357

Number of women by rank

RANK	major	captain	lieutenant	Second lieutenant	Warrant officer	NCOs	Total
Regular service	10	83	20	7	45		165
Contract service			43	52	80	17	192
Total	10	83	63	59	3	16	357

Number of women by corps

Corps				Total
	Officers	Warrant officers	NCOs	
Land forces combat units	15	2	6	23
Artillery	1	3		4
Anti-aircraft		5		5
Signals	2	16	4	22
Electronic warfare	14			14
Engineering		4		4
Chemical defense		1		1
Air forces	2	4		6
Navy	2	1		3
Logistics	4	5	2	11
Housing and building		3		3
Medical	151	62	9	222
Counter-intelligence	3	3		6
Military police	4	1		5
Justice and legal services	7			7
Meteorology and hydrology		2		2
Administration	13	5		18
Non-defined	1			1
Total	219	117	21	357