



DIPLOMACY IN UNIFORM

Charting a feminist course for
Military Diplomacy in North Macedonia

Policy Study

How does military diplomacy shape international relations?
What changes did NATO Membership bring?
How does North Macedonia integrate gender equality in its military diplomacy?

Authors: Nikola Donev, Liljana Jonoski M.Sc., Angela Kukushev M.Sc., and Vesna Shapkoski M.Sc.
Mentor: professor Julija Brsakoska-Bazerkoska Ph.D.

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An informative study

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Nikola Donev,

Liljana Jonoski, M.Sc., Member of the Working Group of Female Experts on Foreign and Security Policy

Authors:

Angela Kukushev M.Sc.

Vesna Shapkoski M.Sc., Member of the Working Group of Female Experts on Foreign and Security Policy

Mentor:

prof. Julia Brsakoska-Bazerkoska Ph.D., Member of the Working Group of Female Experts on Foreign and Security Policy

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I. INTRODUCTION

Diplomacy and its sphere of action is in constant development in accordance with the changing nature of international relations. The globalization of international society and technological progress have had a huge impact on redefining the concept of state security. The inherent changeability of security concepts has forced states to cooperate more closely by including in diplomatic relations additional structures, such as the security and defence (**military**) sector, which traditionally were not part of classic diplomatic activities. The inclusion of military-security structures in the framework of diplomatic activities introduced a new aspect in this sphere - so today military diplomacy is also included in the framework of diplomacy.

The purpose of this study is to analyse the diplomatic activities of the Republic of North Macedonia in the context of military diplomacy. The scope of this study is the analysis of the current state of military diplomacy in international relations, with special reference to the significance of military diplomacy for small states. The study provides an overview of the basic goals, tasks, and functions of the military diplomacy of the Republic of North Macedonia, the legal framework that enables its functioning, as well as its organizational structure and gender equality in that context, with special reference to the impact of NATO membership on the development of military diplomacy. Recommendations for further development of the military diplomacy of the Republic of North Macedonia will emerge as a product of this analysis.



II. CONCEPT AND DEFINITION OF MILITARY DIPLOMACY

Before discussing the functions, tasks, and activities of military diplomacy, we should first define the term military diplomacy. In the literature, two terms run through: **defence diplomacy** (*Defence Diplomacy*) and **military diplomacy** (*Military Diplomacy*). Both concepts are used as synonyms in literature and practice, considering the changed context of security after the fall of the Soviet Union, and especially after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the start of the “war against terrorism”.¹ For these reasons, the study uses the term military diplomacy as an accepted term in the Macedonian and regional scientific literature.

Military diplomacy is a relatively new term, which stems from the need to explain the cooperation between states and international organizations after the end of the Cold War through a new political terminology. The first attempts to define military diplomacy originated in the United Kingdom from the 1998 Ministry of Defence documents. Different states add content to the definition of the term to suit their security policy needs. Depending on the practice of the states, narrower or broader definitions of the term military diplomacy may differ, but there is a trend of expanding the concept as an adaptation to new challenges and situations in the security sector and in the development of international military organizations, especially NATO.²

When defining the concept of military diplomacy, the actors who participate in the conduct of this type of diplomacy, what goals this diplomacy achieves and what is the nature of the activities stand out as characteristics. The main actors of military diplomacy are members of the military forces or civilians within the ministries of defence who, with their activities, aim to achieve the foreign policy goals of the state. At the same time, the activities to achieve these goals are non-violent, that is, without the use of military force. Within these frameworks, the definition of Eric Pajtinka, which will be used for the purposes of this study, seems to be the most appropriate. According to Pyatinka: “[**Military diplomacy** is] a set of activities that are mainly carried out by the representatives of the state defence bodies, as well as other state institutions, aimed at realizing the foreign policy interests of the state in the field of security and defence policy and whose action is based on the use of negotiations and other diplomatic instruments.”³

¹ Lech Drab, “Defence diplomacy – an important tool for the implementation of foreign policy and security of the state”, *Security and Defence Quarterly* 20 no. 3 (2018), pp. 57–71. doi:10.5604/01.3001.0012.5152.

² Davor Ćutić, “Defence Diplomacy and International Relations,” *Strategos* 6, no. 2 (2022), pp. 59–75.

³ Erik Pjatinka, “Military Diplomacy and its Present Functions” *Security Dimensions*, no.20 (2016), p. 179.

III. FUNCTIONS AND TASKS OF MILITARY DIPLOMACY

The functions and tasks of military diplomacy cannot be considered outside the framework of the functions and tasks of general diplomacy. *The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations* from 1961⁴, determines the functions of the diplomatic mission, which consist of: representation of the state; protection in the state; negotiation with the government of the state in which it is accredited; reporting on the development and conditions in the country in which it is accredited; promotion of friendly relations between countries. Military diplomacy is a part of overall diplomacy that deals with the specific aspects of the armed forces in the context of international relations. The functions of military diplomacy coincide with the basic functions of diplomacy placed in the context of the specificities of the military.⁵

The functions of military diplomacy have changed significantly in different historical contexts, but 5 basic functions can be distinguished nowadays:

- 1) Collection and analysis of information about the armed forces and the security situation in the country in which it is accredited;
- 2) Promotion of cooperation, communication, and mutual relations between the armed forces of the accrediting state and the state in which it is accredited;
- 3) Organization of working visits of the representatives of the defence authorities and peaceful stay of the military units of the accrediting state and the state in which it is accredited;
- 4) Support of business contracts with weapons and military equipment between the accrediting state and the state to which it is being accredited; and
- 5) Representation of the sending state and its armed forces at official ceremonies and other official events in the receiving state.⁶

Starting from the functions of military diplomacy, we can determine its goals, which consist in:

- Focusing on minimizing hostility and building trust between states (in this sense, it is “anchored” in the general tasks of diplomacy);
- Regional and global involvement of states, through the “peaceful use of military personnel for conflict prevention” is to create stable and long-term cooperation and promote transparency in the field of defence;
- To serve in the implementation of common supranational goals;
- Designing policies that will serve to change the position of partners;
- Support in the implementation of legal regulations on broad security issues;
- Maintaining a dialogue with partners, which can be the goal of actions, as well as an instrument that leads to the implementation of its specific interests. As a result, it directly contributes to strengthening trust and understanding in international relations.⁷

⁴ Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, Vienna, April 18 1961, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 500, p. 95, available at: https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/9_1_1961.pdf

⁵ Zoran Jovanovski, *Military Diplomacy*, Skopje, 2018), <https://eprints.ugd.edu.mk/29616/>

⁶ According to: Erik Pjatinka, “Military Diplomacy and its Present Functions” *Security Dimensions*, no.20 (2016), p. 179–194.

⁷ Lech Drab, “Defence diplomacy – an important tool for the implementation of foreign policy and security of the state”, *Security and Defence Quarterly* 20 no. 3 (2018), pp. 57–71. doi:10.5604/01.3001.0012.5152.

Due to the specific actors involved in military diplomacy and its nature, as an example of tasks and activities undertaken within the framework of military diplomacy, we can cite:

- ✚ High-level strategic security dialogues;
- ✚ Cooperation in non-traditional security areas;
- ✚ Regional defence and security cooperation;
- ✚ Military Educational Exchange Programs;
- ✚ Representation of several states by one deputy;
- ✚ Representation of a state by the defence representative of an ally or partner state in some activities;
- ✚ Joint relief actions;
- ✚ Cooperation of partner countries for assistance to third countries through defence representatives;
- ✚ Employment of specialists from partner countries for assistance and consultation on a specific issue;
- ✚ Employing specialists from partner countries to assist in security sector reforms;
- ✚ Embedding military personnel;
- ✚ Trust and security measures;
- ✚ Joint assistance in the reconstruction of fallen states;
- ✚ Joint preparation and implementation of construction projects (facilities needed by the local population, such as schools, hospitals, bridges, roads, wells, etc.);
- ✚ Military-industrial cooperation;
- ✚ Procurement of weapons and equipment as well as development of new technologies;
- ✚ Joint exercises;
- ✚ Participation in missions and operations, as well as military exercises to develop joint capabilities and compatibility;
- ✚ Building a military organization;
- ✚ Military Training Assistance Program.⁸

⁸ Davor Čutić, "Defence Diplomacy and International Relations," *Strategos* 6, no. 2 (2022), pp. 59–75.

IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF MILITARY DIPLOMACY FOR SMALL STATES

When it comes to diplomacy at the global level, as a tool of international relations and international politics, the diplomacy of the great states is the one that receives the most attention and is considered a key driver at the international level. However, the diplomacy of small states, which has enough of its own specifics, can be considered as a topic worthy of a separate analysis. At the same time, the analysis of small state diplomacy can make a particular contribution in providing insight into the wider themes, aims and methods of diplomacy in general.

Small states are an integral part of the international order, and it is of particular importance to note that this is an unofficial category that is not fully and precisely defined. Most often, in the attempt to classify small states, population size is used as the clearest definition. However, even population-based definitions vary. Thus, the **World Bank** and **The Commonwealth** tend to use a threshold of 1.5 million people to count in the category of small states, of which there are an estimated forty-five in total within the UN.⁹ **The Forum of Small States (Forum of Small States - FOSS)**, a voluntary and informal group within the UN, defines small states as those with a population of less than 10 million people. A total of 105 countries are members of the Forum, although the population of some members has exceeded that level since joining the group.¹⁰

Small states pursue the same goals of security, prosperity, and well-being of their citizens as large states, and conduct their diplomacy using the same diplomatic tools. However, small states have a limited set of human and material resources that they can devote to the tasks of diplomacy, so this often means that they cannot advocate at the international level with the necessary capacity for the problems they face, which even smaller in scope, may be extremely important or urgent to them. Due to a more limited range of human and material resources that small states can devote to security, they usually have smaller diplomatic missions and if they have their own representations within their frameworks, they generally have one military attaché and his deputy, while larger states have representatives for all the important branches of the army.¹¹ They often have limited ability to use military force, whether defensively or as a preventive measure. Therefore, the diplomatic process, that is, military diplomacy, becomes a critically important aspect of their approach to security, sometimes more so than it may be for larger states.

Considering the definition of military diplomacy as a means of realizing the goals of a country's foreign policy through the peaceful engagement of defence resources and capacities, and bearing in mind the challenges that their limitations bring, the military diplomacy of small states faces many shortcomings and obstacles that can limit it. However, with a strategically structured approach, these limitations and challenges can be used to the advantage of the small state. Among the main weaknesses of small states are their small military-diplomatic forces and resources. But small states have that advantage and the opportunity to turn the special characteristics of having small administrative capacities and foreign services into an advantage. They should develop administrative competence based on the special characteristics of small administrations such as informality, flexibility, and greater autonomy of officials, compared to large administrations.¹² Small states can also successfully implement strategies of prioritization, coalition building, and image building to exert influence.¹³

⁹ A. Ó Súilleabháin, "Small States at the UN" Small States at the United Nations: Diverse Perspectives, Shared Opportunities, *International Peace Institute*, (2014), JSTOR: pp.3-4, Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep09619_6

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Military attachés usually have their customary military ranks - general, colonel, major, captain, depending on whether they represent the armed forces of the accrediting state, or some of its branches.

¹² S. Steinsson and B. Thorhallsson, "Small State Foreign Policy", *The Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Politics*, Oxford University Press (2017) DOI: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.484.

¹³ Ibid.

V. MILITARY DIPLOMACY IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

For the exercise of sovereignty and the preservation of the territorial integrity of a state, it is necessary to establish an effective and efficient security and defence-protection system. Our country has faced this challenge since independence in 1991. In the complex constellation of international relations, the state must find the adequate mode as a small state to revive and develop international cooperation to further integrate the state into the existing collective security and defence systems. Together with the process of recognizing the state in the international community, the security and defence system is being structured. For this purpose, the first military diplomatic activities are taking place, starting with the creation of the legal framework for military diplomacy.

Then follow the processes of: institutionalizing military diplomacy; determination of priorities; personnel and material-technical training of military diplomacy; setting up our representative offices and training them for work; intensification of cooperation with collective defence systems, and especially with NATO; establishment of inter-army cooperation between the ARM and the armies of several EU member states; as well as establishing cooperation between educational institutions and military academies that train personnel for the needs of defence.¹⁴

V. 1. LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The principle of political, i.e., civilian, control over the armed forces is central in modern democratic states. In this sense, in North Macedonia, the functions and tasks of the armed forces are legally framed in the Constitution, laws and by-laws, and institutionally through the President of the Republic, the Parliament and the Government, i.e., the Ministry of Defence.

The legal framework of military diplomacy in North Macedonia is given in **the Law on Defense**¹⁵ and the **Law on Service in the Army of the Republic of North Macedonia**¹⁶, as well as in the by-laws adopted in accordance with these laws.

The **Defence Law** prescribes the role of the President of the Republic of North Macedonia, who has the authority to “appoint and dismiss defence attachés and military representatives at the proposal of the Minister of Defence”.¹⁷ This is in accordance with the constitutional role of the President as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of North Macedonia¹⁸ and the competences regarding the appointment and recall by decree of the ambassadors and deputies of the Republic of North Macedonia abroad, as well as the receipt of letters of credence and recall of foreign diplomatic representatives.¹⁹ The law prescribes the adoption of decrees as the competences of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia for “coordination of work, relations and organization in diplomatic missions, commands, headquarters and military units of international organizations abroad and on the territory of the Republic”.²⁰ Additionally, the General Staff of the Army proposes to the Ministry of Defence “persons serving in the Army for assignment to duties in NATO command structures, diplomatic missions, defence attachés, military attachés and military representatives and to duties in commands, headquarters and military units of international organizations abroad and in the territory of the Republic”.²¹ Within the framework of the Law on Defence, the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia has a function in realizing the defence by exercising supervision over the Government, adopting the budget, deciding on sending members of the Army outside the territory of the Republic to participate in international operations and other functions prescribed by law.²²

¹⁴ T. Petreski, “The role of military diplomacy in the accession of the Republic of Macedonia to NATO” *Contemporary Macedonian Defence*, no. 21 (2011): p. 87–103.

¹⁵ Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia number 42/2001 with all subsequent amendments, available at the link: <https://mod.gov.mk/%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BD-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B1%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%BO/>

¹⁶ Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia number 36/2010 with all subsequent amendments, available at the link: <https://morm.gov.mk/inc/uploads/2017/02/Zakon-za-sluzba-vo-ARM-precisten-tekst-fev-2017.pdf>

¹⁷ Article 18 of the Defence Law, Official Gazette No. 42/2001, No. 5/2003, No. 58/2006, No. 110/2008, No. 51/2011, No. 151/2011, No. 251/2015, no. 42/2020.

¹⁸ Article 79 of the Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia, Official Gazette No. 52 of November 22, 1991.

¹⁹ Article 84 of the Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia, Official Gazette No. 52 of November 22, 1991.

²⁰ Article 19 paragraph 10 of the Defence Law, Official Gazette No. 42/2001, No. 5/2003, No. 58/2006, No. 110/2008, No. 51/2011, No. 151/2011, No. 251/2015, No. 42/2020.

²¹ Article 25 paragraph 8–a of the Defence Law, Official Gazette No. 42/2001, No. 5/2003, No. 58/2006, No. 110/2008, No. 51/2011, No. 151/2011, No. 251/2015, No. 42/2020.

²² Article 17 of the Defence Law, Official Gazette No. 42/2001, No. 5/2003, No. 58/2006, No. 110/2008, No. 51/2011, No. 151/2011, No. 251/2015, no. 42/2020.

The **Law on Service in the Army of the Republic of North Macedonia** regulates the status, rights, obligations, duties, and responsibilities of personnel serving in the Army of the Republic of North Macedonia, as well as the system of wages and salary allowances and other issues related to service in the Army. The law stipulates that service in the Army is performed by military and civilian personnel.²³ Article 199 of the Law on Service in the Army of the Republic of North Macedonia stipulates that *military representatives* of the Republic of North Macedonia are: **defence attachés**, **military attachés** and **military and civilian personnel serving in the Army** assigned to duties in NATO command structures, diplomatic missions of the Republic, commands and headquarters of international organizations abroad and on the territory of the Republic.²⁴ These military representatives have diplomatic status. The special tasks of these representatives are not further differentiated within the law.

The *Ministry of Defence* specifies the method of selection, conditions and tasks of the civilian and military personnel of the Army and the Ministry of Defence through **the Rulebook on the method of selection and training of military and civilian personnel of the Army of the Republic of North Macedonia and employees of the Ministry of Defence, for assignment of duties in NATO command structures, diplomatic missions of the Republic, commands, headquarters and military units of international organizations outside the territory of the Republic and on the territory of the Republic**, adopted on March 11, 2021, and last amended on February 14, 2023.²⁵ Prescribed conditions which must be met by the candidate according to Article 6 are:

- To be a citizen of the Republic of North Macedonia,
- That he has not been convicted of crimes for which a prison sentence of at least six months is prescribed, that is, for a crime related to official duty, or for another crime that makes him unfit to represent the Republic,
- That no disciplinary measure has been imposed against him for a disciplinary offense in the last three years of the performance of the service,
- If he has not been sentenced to a fine, ban on performing a profession, activity, or duty,
- If the person - the candidate is an administrative officer, has been officially evaluated with at least grade "B", i.e., the second highest grade in the last two years before the referral,
- If the candidate is a person serving in the Army, to be rated at least with an official rating of "excellent" according to the four criteria and a positive rating from the physical checks in the last two years before the referral (if subject to the same),
- To have general health and psychophysical ability, which is confirmed by a medical certificate no older than one year, issued by an authorized medical institution, i.e., by a finding and evaluation from the medical support unit in the Army,
- On the day of the referral to possess an appropriate security certificate,
- To actively know the English language and to prove it with an appropriate certificate at the time of application, and persons who do not possess a valid **STANAG 6001** certificate, will be referred for testing to verify the degree of knowledge of the English language according to the specified standard. For the duties that do not require knowledge of the English language according to STANAG 6001, to possess one of the following internationally recognized certificates of knowledge of the English language: STANAG 6001, CAE (**SAE**), IELTS (**IELTS**), TOEFL (**TOEFL**), TOEFL CET (**TOEFL CBT**), TOEFL IBT **or** another internationally recognized certificate of knowledge of the English language issued by a European or global language tester, with a level of knowledge equivalent to C1 (**C1**) level of CEFR (**CEFR**)
- To fulfil the general and special conditions determined by the Internal Announcement depending on the international duty to which it refers,
- On the day of the indicative reference, at least 24 months have passed since the end of the previous mandate.

As part of the preparation for assignment to duty in accordance with Article 14 of the Regulations: "*the organizational unit in the Ministry responsible for international cooperation coordinates the activities with other organizational units in the Ministry of Defence and with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in order to issue the necessary letters of credit in a timely manner, consents and notifications, as well as the necessary documentation for determining the diplomatic status of the selected persons for referral to international duty.*"

²³ Article 2 of the Law on Service in the Army of the Republic of Macedonia, Official Gazette no. 36/2010.

²⁴ Article 199 paragraph 1 paragraph 1 of the Law on Service in the Army of the Republic of Macedonia, Official Gazette no. 36/2010.

²⁵ The regulation is available on the website of the Ministry of Defence - <https://mod.gov.mk/%d0%bb%d0%b5%d0%b3%d0%b8%d1%81%d0%b-%d0%b0%d1%82%d0%b8%d0%b2%d0%b0/#1631176294821ca1cbdebc3>

V. 2. TASKS, OBJECTIVES AND FUNCTIONS OF MILITARY DIPLOMACY

The tasks of military diplomacy are divided into **tasks of a protocol nature**, **tasks of a professional-functional nature** that derive from the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and **tasks of a secret (intelligence) nature** that are assigned to military diplomatic missions by the intelligence service and its institutions.²⁶ The tasks of the military diplomacy of the Republic of North Macedonia consist mainly of representing its armed forces, protecting their interests and the interests of their members. One of the goals of military diplomacy is the obligation to contribute to greater mutual trust between states, including between neighbours, as well as common understandings on major security issues. In that direction, military diplomacy also aims to contribute to peace support operations and humanitarian aid, especially in efforts to deal with humanitarian crises and disasters. Military diplomacy should be in the function of protecting the broader interests of the Republic of North Macedonia, while contributing to the resolution of regional conflicts and crises, as well as participating with joint forces in peace operations led by the UN and NATO.

Military diplomacy in the Republic of North Macedonia can be considered through military diplomacy at the top, which represents the highest institution of military diplomacy. *High military diplomacy* is represented by delegations of the Republic of North Macedonia, composed of members of the highest political and military leadership. The members of the military leadership are members of the Ministry of Defence, as well as the Chief of the General Staff and their closest associates. Military diplomacy at the top has a crucial task in establishing basic contacts with foreign political and diplomatic representatives, for further development and shaping of military relations. In that sense, contacts are made with representatives of defence security and military institutions with joint action and understanding of defence security issues.²⁷

V. 3. MILITARY DIPLOMACY AFTER NATO MEMBERSHIP

The Republic of North Macedonia officially became a member of NATO in March 2020 by depositing the instrument of accession.²⁸ However, the Republic of North Macedonia sent its permanent representative to NATO in 2021. The process for the departure of the permanent representative in the NATO mission was delayed, mainly because of the early parliamentary elections, as well as because of the opposition blockade of the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee of the already appointed diplomatic representatives.²⁹ The membership of the Republic of North Macedonia in NATO also meant reforming the defence policy of the country to harmonize it with the general policies and standards of NATO. In this context, most of the efforts and resources for reorganization and reforms are precisely in the direction of integration in NATO.

In the **Defence Strategy** adopted in March 2020, the basic objectives of the defence policy are continuous international cooperation and “*active defence diplomacy, bilateral and multilateral, defence and military cooperation based on the principles of **Pooling&Sharing** and **Smart Defence***.”³⁰ In addition, the defence system “*will develop capabilities for assistance, training, dealing with the effects of humanitarian disasters, cyber-defence, civil-military interaction, as well as military diplomacy*.”³¹ Within the long-term plan for the development of defence capabilities 2019–2028 adopted in 2019, the long-term development goal is defined as “*strengthening of defence diplomacy and appropriate participation with personnel in the command and military structure of NATO, as well as other organizations and structures of the Alliance*.”³²

In the **Strategic Defence Review** of 2018 of the Republic of Macedonia: Towards NATO membership and “Future Armed Forces 2028”, concrete steps of the Ministry of Defense in the field of international defence cooperation and defence diplomacy are noted. Revision of the existing Strategy for Defence Diplomacy and the methodology for selection, selection and training of defence personnel and diplomatic personnel is foreseen; amendments to the relevant laws and regulations such as the Law on Foreign Affairs and to the by-laws in this area in order to define the status of defence personnel.³³ This study and the recommendations it contains can be a mini contribution of the authors to the revision of the strategy, that is, to the future amendments to the Law on Foreign Affairs.

²⁶ T. Petreski, “The role of military diplomacy in the accession of the Republic of Macedonia to NATO” *Modern Macedonian Defence*, no. 21 (2011): p. 41–57; M. Ogorec, *Military diplomatic practice*. Zagreb: Golden marketing-Tehnička knjiga (2005).

²⁷ T. Petreski, “The role of military diplomacy in the accession of the Republic of Macedonia to NATO” *Modern Macedonian Defence*, no. 21 (2011): p. 47–48.

²⁸ NATO, North Macedonia joins NATO as 30th Ally: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_174589.htm

²⁹ 360stepeni, the Macedonian diplomatic representative finally “entered” NATO, 2021 <https://360stepeni.mk/makedonskiot-diplomatski-pretstavnik-konechno-vleze-vo-nato/>

³⁰ Defense Strategy, available at <https://pretsedatel.mk/strategija-za-odbrana-na-republika-se/>

³¹ Ibid.

³² Long-term plan for the development of defence capabilities 2019–2028, available at: <https://mod.gov.mk/storage/2021/05/DPROS-2019-2028-finalna-verzija.pdf>.

³³ Strategic Defence Review 2018 of the Republic of Macedonia: Towards NATO Membership and “Future Armed Forces 2028”, available at <https://mod.gov.mk/storage/2021/06/СОП-мкд-верзија-05-07-2018.pdf>

V. 4 MILITARY DIPLOMACY THROUGH THE LENS OF GENDER EQUALITY

The constitutional principle of prohibition of discrimination on various grounds, including gender discrimination, is also reflected in the defence. At the international level, **Resolution 1325 of the UN Security Council** from 2000 is particularly significant, calling on “member states to ensure increased representation of women at all levels of decision-making in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for prevention, management and resolution of conflicts.”³⁴

To implement this resolution, two national action plans have been adopted. The first action plan was adopted in 2012 for the period 2013 to 2015, while the second was adopted in 2020 for the period 2020 to 2025, which is currently being implemented. The second national action plan of the Republic of North Macedonia for the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 - Women, peace, and security 2020–2025, determines 5 strategic goals: 1) **leadership**; 2) **involvement**; 3) **relief**; 4) **communication**; and 5) **education and training**. Within these strategic goals, mid-term and final effects are determined, as well as work processes in legislation, policies, processes, changes in behaviour and cultural awareness and acceptance.³⁵ The specific activities and indicators are determined in the operational plan for the implementation of the national action plan that was adopted in 2021. In the area of military diplomacy, the operational plan within the first strategic objective, leadership, determines a specific strategic objective to increase the number of women leaders in peacekeeping missions, regional and international organizations and defence diplomatic missions, that is, it foresees that 30% of the total number of representatives sent will be women.³⁶ A *Body for Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation* has been established within the Ministry of Defence as the primary national operational mechanism for ensuring efficient and transparent implementation of the plan. The body was established in January 2021, and in November 2021 it was renamed the **Working Group for Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation for the Implementation of the Second National Action Plan**. According to the annual report on the implementation of the activities of the second action plan for 2021, an increase in the percentage of female military personnel from the Army sent to international missions in 2021 from 1.7% in 2020 to 6.5% is indicated.³⁷ In the Ministry of Defence and the Army of the Republic of North Macedonia there are a total of 21 NATO certified gender trainers, of which 14 are women and 7 are men.³⁸ These trainers are in charge of raising gender awareness by conducting gender training in the Ministry and the Army.

³⁴ S/RES/1325 (2000) <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/720/18/pdf/N0072018.pdf?OpenElement>

³⁵ Second national action plan of the Republic of North Macedonia for the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 - Women, peace and security 2020–2025, available at: http://www.mod.gov.mk/inc/uploads/2021/06/Second-NAP-North-Macedonia_MKD-1.pdf

³⁶ Operational Plan of the Ministry of Defence for the Implementation of the Second National Action Plan of the Republic of North Macedonia for the Implementation of United Nations Resolution 1325 “Women, Peace and Security” (2020 - 2025) - strategic framework, available at: <https://mod.gov.mk/storage/2021/01/OP-na-MO-za-implementacija-na-2-nacionalen-akciski-plan-2020-2025.pdf>

³⁷ Operational Plan of the Ministry of Defense for the Implementation of the Second National Action Plan of the Republic of North Macedonia for the Implementation of United Nations Resolution 1325 “Women, Peace and Security” (2020 - 2025) - strategic framework, available at: <https://mod.gov.mk/storage/2021/01/OP-na-MO-za-implementacija-na-2-nacionalen-akciski-plan-2020-2025.pdf>

³⁸ Integration of Gender Perspective in Military Education and Training of Defense Systems in Western Balkan States - Baseline Study, available at: <https://www.seesac.org/f/docs/Gender-and-Security/---.pdf>, p. 192–220.

VI. MILITARY DIPLOMACY OF NORTH MACEDONIA - THE WAY FORWARD

The membership of the Republic of North Macedonia in NATO adds a new dimension to the concept of state defence and an opportunity for the development of military diplomacy. In this direction, there are several recommendations:

1. Increased inter-ministerial cooperation between the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the field of training and preparation of military-diplomatic representatives for their assignment on missions.

Cooperation between ministries is particularly important for sharing limited resources to use them efficiently and effectively.

2. Detailed regulation of the conditions and process for the selection of military-diplomatic representatives to increase integrity.

Regulating the conditions and the selection process would increase the integrity of the institution itself, insist on selection based on expertise and merit, and reduce the possibility of corruption.

3. Further international cooperation for capacity development.

Cooperation at the bilateral and multilateral level, as well as within the framework of international security organizations, should be used in the direction of building domestic capacity to increase the standard in the field of security. For this purpose, a professional and expert military-diplomatic staff is needed.

4. Consistent implementation of the Second National Action Plan of the Republic of North Macedonia for the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 - Women, Peace, and Security 2020–2025.

The gender aspect in the defence domain is particularly significant in confronting discriminatory practices and behaviour in order to address the diverse needs of people in conflict situations.

5. Involvement of all stakeholders in building the defence.

Constitutional order and civilian control over the armed forces necessarily require the involvement of all stakeholders. In this context, the coordination between the Government, the President and the Parliament is particularly important to harmonize the views regarding security issues. In addition, the Parliament has an important role in supervising the processes within the framework of defence and the determination of budget funds.

