

What is it?

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda has made significant progress in the Balkans since Yugoslavia's disintegration. However, difficulties remain, including cultural stereotypes, a lack of women in leadership roles and the persistence of gender-based harassment and discrimination. This underlines the importance of building trust and knowledge sharing among individuals and institutions for advancing WPS in the region.

Balkans Countries' Progress in Implementing the WPS

The WPS agenda has made significant progress in the region. This is demonstrated by increased female involvement in the security sector, availability of training modules, implementation of gender advisors and considerable efforts in regional cooperation on WPS. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia have all **adopted National Action Plans (NAPs) on WPS**. As a result, representation of women in the defence system has improved significantly.

However, the widespread human rights violations, as well as the weaponisation of violence and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) occurred during wartime still has a legacy in Balkans' contemporary societies. The rise of gender-based violence is a manifestation of these wartime dynamics in the post-war period. As a result, **Kosovo's NAP includes comprehensive CRSV-related actions** and a **gender-sensitive approach** to the country's post-conflict recovery process for CRSV survivors.

WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN BALKANS' ARMED FORCES

Albania: **14.98%**
Montenegro: **10.77%**
North Macedonia: **10.66%**
Serbia: **10.59%**
Bosnia and Herzegovina: **8.2%**

Advancing the Gender Perspective: Lessons from NATO KFOR Efforts

The KFOR's GENAD reports directly to the KFOR commander, allowing for the integration of the Gender Perspective at the highest strategic level. The comprehensive approach based on the Gender Perspective is drawn from KFOR mandate of UNSCR 1244. KFOR GENAD conducts several **internal** and **external** projects. Internally, gender awareness training for troops, as well as monthly reports and workshops on the Gender Perspective were held. Externally, she collaborated in different projects aimed to **develop capacities** of numerous actors involved in the fight against domestic violence, **strengthen** youth democratic values, **empower** female students, and **provide a safe venue for victims** of gender-based violence.



KFOR GENAD'S CORE TASKS



1. **Advice** and **support** to the commander
2. **Situational awareness** and **security needs** by monitoring the operational picture
3. Operational effectiveness by **assisting** Gender Focal Points (GFPs) and staff branches

Regional Cooperation on the WPS

The implementation of the gender perspective within the Armed Forces was facilitated by the **regional cooperation project for security sector reform**. This has permitted the introduction of gender mechanisms, such as advisors, coordinators, trainers and GFPs, as well as increased representation of women in the Armed Forces and peacekeeping operations. The Ministries of Defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia signed a Joint Ministerial Declaration pledging their commitment to **gender-responsive security** in the Western Balkans.

NATO's armed forces need to understand the progress of WPS in the Balkans in order to better understand and work more effectively with Partner Nations in the region.