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# STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE SECURITY AND DEFENSE SECTOR:

## BETWEEN STABILITY AND TRANSFORMATION

Cross-sectoral study on the implementation of  
measures to promote gender equality



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**Authors:**

**Vadim VIERU**

**Alexandra ERMOLENCO**

**Alina ANDRONACHE**

**Natalia COVRIG**

**Design:**

**Cristina Cazanji**

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# CONTENT

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<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>WOMEN IN THE SECURITY AND DEFENSE SECTOR</b>	<b>14</b>
Representation and participation	14
Professional and personal development needs	18
Level of satisfaction with the working environment	22
Prevalence of discrimination and harassment/sexual harassment practices	24
Recommendations	28
<b>INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY</b>	<b>34</b>
Normative framework and international standards	34
National regulatory framework	39
<b>APPLICABILITY OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AT THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Ministry of Internal Affairs</b>	<b>41</b>
1.1. Physical requirements	41
1.2. Recruitment and admission	44
1.3. Job promotions and vertical segregation	50
1.4. Working hours	53
1.5. Family responsibilities	55
1.6. Infrastructure	58
<b>Ministry of Defense</b>	<b>84</b>
2.1. Physical requirements	84
2.2. Recruitment and admission	86
2.3. Job promotions and vertical segregation	88
2.4. Working hours	90
2.5. Family responsibilities	93
2.6. Infrastructure	95
<b>National Penitentiary Administration</b>	<b>126</b>
3.1. Physical requirements	126
3.2. Recruitment and admission	128
3.3. Job promotions and vertical segregation	129
3.4. Working hours	131
3.5. Family responsibilities	132
3.6. Infrastructure	134
<b>State Protection and Guard Service</b>	<b>136</b>
4.1. Physical requirements	136
4.2. Recruitment and admission	138
4.3. Job promotions and vertical segregation	140
4.4. Working hours	142
4.5. Family responsibilities	143
4.6. Infrastructure	146
<b>Customs Service</b>	<b>148</b>
5.1. Physical requirements	148
5.2. Recruitment and admission	149
5.3. Job promotions and vertical segregation	151
5.4. Working hours	152
5.5. Family responsibilities	154
5.6. Infrastructure	155
<b>REFERENCE</b>	<b>157</b>

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# INTRODUCTION

**The security and defense sector is a fundamental pillar of any society**, responsible for protecting the sovereignty, stability and security of citizens. In a world undergoing constant transformation, security challenges are becoming increasingly complex, involving factors such as cyber threats, humanitarian crises and regional conflicts. To respond effectively to these challenges, the sector must reflect the diversity of the society it protects, both in its structure and how it operates. Gender mainstreaming in this field is a strategic element that contributes not only to respecting human rights principles but also to increasing the efficiency and legitimacy of institutions. International studies show that diverse teams, which include varied perspectives, are better equipped to deal with crises, improve decision-making and reduce social tensions.

**A major milestone in promoting gender equality in the security and defense sector is Resolution 1325** of the United Nations Security Council, adopted in 2000. Through this document, gender equality was linked to global security, providing a framework for integrating a gender perspective into the security and defense sector. It recognizes the essential contributions of women in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction. The almost 25 years since its adoption have represented a moment of reaffirmation of international commitments to reduce discrimination, combat abuses, and increase women's participation in decision-making processes. Resolution 1325 was followed by the adoption of approximately 10 complementary resolutions, strengthening the agenda's fundamental pillars: representation, prevention, protection and rehabilitation. These international instruments promote the fight against gender-based violence, access to justice for victims and the participation of women in peacekeeping operations. In addition, they emphasize the need to involve women at all levels of the conflict resolution process, from negotiations to post-conflict reconstruction.

**In the Republic of Moldova, gender mainstreaming in the security sector is a priority**, evidenced by the government's commitments to international law, including through its National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. Moldova faces specific challenges, such as gender stereotypes, inadequate infrastructure and institutional policies that limit equal access for women. Lessons learned from implementing the National Programme for the Implementation UNSCR 1325 for the period 2018-2021 highlight the need for a more comprehensive strategic framework. However, progress made in recent years, such as adopting national policies and close collaboration with international partners, reflects the government's determination to transform the security sector into a model of inclusion and professionalism.

**In this regard, the National Action Plan (NAP) 2023-2027 aims to strengthen women's participation, combat discrimination and create effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.** The new National Programme for the period 2023-2027 aims to respond to current challenges, such as security risks and the impact of humanitarian crises, and promote women's participation in decision-making processes in the security sector. Among the priority directions are: (I) increasing the share of women's participation in international peacekeeping missions, (II) improving mechanisms for preventing and combating gender-based violence, (III) facilitating equal access to decision-making processes, and (IV) developing an inclusive and gender-sensitive institutional environment.

**This study aligns with Moldova's NAP 2023-2027**, contributing to the achievement of General Objective 1: increasing the level of participation and representation of women in the security and defense sector. It also responds to several actions provided for under this objective, in particular: **Action 1.5**, which aims to study the level of accomplishment of women's needs in the defense and security sector; **Action 1.6**, which seeks to identify the managerial and leadership skills of women in the security and defense sector; **Action 1.7**, which aims to identify harassment in the workplace; **Action 1.8**, which seeks to identify the professional and personal development needs of women in the security and defense sector; and **Action 1.10**, which requires

a detailed analysis of the compatibility of national legislation with international standards in the field of women, peace and security (WPS), as well as the formulation of proposals for completing or amending the regulatory framework. Through this approach, the document supports the integration of the WPS agenda into national and regional policies.

**This study includes a detailed analysis of barriers and opportunities** related to the representation of women in the security and defense sector in the Republic of Moldova. Its content brings together conclusions drawn from legislative analysis, quantitative and qualitative research results, and international good practices. Additionally, the document includes an exhaustive analysis of specific professional and personal development needs of women employed in the security and defense sector, which were identified through an opinion survey. The survey covered topics related to representation, working conditions, training needs, satisfaction levels, etc. It was conducted within the framework of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Defense, National Penitentiary Administration, State Protection and Guard Service, National Anticorruption Center, Customs Service and Intelligence and Security Service. The survey also includes an individual assessment of the main institutions in the sector (the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the National Penitentiary Administration, the State Protection and Guard Service and the Customs Service) to identify existing gaps and propose solutions adapted to each institutional context. It aims to support the reform process by providing a strategic framework for promoting gender equality, identifying legislative and institutional gaps, formulating concrete recommendations and facilitating their implementation. This study is an essential tool for modernizing Moldova's security and defense sector, transforming it into a more inclusive and efficient space that addresses the real needs of modern society.



*A frontline policewoman providing support to refugees from Ukraine at the "Palanca" border crossing point, February 2022.*

Photo credit: UN Women/Aurel Obreja

# ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ANP</b>	National Penitentiary Administration
<b>CEDAW</b>	UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>CM</b>	Labour Code
<b>CNA</b>	National Anticorruption Center
<b>DoS</b>	Special Purpose Detachment
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>MoD</b>	Ministry of Defense
<b>MIA</b>	Ministry of Internal Affairs
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>OCHA</b>	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNSCR 1325</b>	UN Security Council Resolution on Women, Peace and Security
<b>SAP</b>	Psychosocial Assistance Service
<b>SIS</b>	Intelligence and Security Service
<b>SPPS</b>	State Protection and Guard Service

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Although women continue to be underrepresented in the security and defense sector, gradual progress has been made in recent years.** For example, in 2023, women represented 22.6% of all Ministry of Internal Affairs employees, compared to 19.4% in 2021. On the other hand, women continue to be underrepresented at senior levels. Even so, most women in the system believe that it is not necessary to increase their number. The survey data reflects that 68.3% of respondents believe that the current number of women is sufficient. This can be explained by a low level of awareness about the benefits of gender diversity in this sector and the inequalities generated in its absence.

**Gender stereotypes and difficulties in ensuring a work-life balance remain the main barriers faced by women in the security and defense sector.** The data shows that gender stereotypes and biases are the most significant barriers, mentioned by 66.6% of respondents. Another important barrier is work-life balance, as indicated by 34.4% of women. When women undergo the career promotion process, they most frequently face superiors' lack of confidence in their abilities, as mentioned by 62.2% of respondents, in addition to discriminatory practices, cited by 40.5%.

**Transparency in the promotion process and recognition of professional achievements and contributions are essential needs for women in the sector.** These needs reflect women's desire to have their work and efforts appreciated, an essential element for motivation and professional progress. Furthermore, more than half of the respondents mentioned that more services are needed to encourage women's participation in the security sector and decision-making positions, specifically more support from superiors as well as leadership and management training. At the same time, women in the sector identified that training in communication, leadership and stress management is also essential for their professional development.

**Another necessity identified by women is psychological counseling and support in the workplace.** Over half of the respondents stated that these services are necessary, and employees in institutions with intense workloads and a tense work environment, such as the Customs Service and the National Penitentiary Administration, register the highest demand. Individual counseling and stress management are the main forms of psychological support women in the sector request. The study's findings suggest that women consider individual counseling the most useful form of psychological support, with 45.4% of respondents requesting this type of intervention, highlighting the need for personalized support adapted to the demanding professional context and individual challenges.

**Discrimination manifests in various forms, from limited access to promotions to discouraging comments and professional exclusion.** Although 68% of respondents do not recognize the existence of such practices, a worrying percentage of 19.9% say they have experienced differential treatment, and 12.1% declare that such cases exist in their organizations. Lack of opportunities for promotion in leadership positions, negative attitudes, and discouraging comments from colleagues and superiors are the most common forms of differential treatment reported, which are mentioned by over 40% of participants. From a profile perspective, women at the beginning of their careers, with 0-2 years of experience, feel the most protected from discriminatory practices, with 36.2% stating they are very protected. However, their percentage decreases as experience increases, reaching only 29.5% for employees with over 10 years of experience.

**The share of respondents who consider harassment or sexual harassment a problem in their work institution is 20.2%.** The use of language or jokes with sexual connotations occurs more often than other forms, with its high frequency being noted by 9% of respondents. In the category of medium forms of harassment, the incidence decreases slightly but remains significant. Among the severe forms, the highest incidence level reported was the use of force to have sexual relations: 7.2%. At the same time, only 7% of respondents state that cases of harassment/sexual harassment are reported, while 10.5% state that these cases are reported only when the situation becomes unbearable. It is worrying that over half of the respondents stated that they did not participate in any training activities or discussions on preventing and combating sexual harassment.

The study's findings for each institution are summarized below:

### Findings regarding the Ministry of Internal Affairs

- **Physical requirements:** The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) issued an Order in 2022 that makes the physical requirements for officers and non-commissioned officers uniform across the institution, taking into account age, gender and health. However, unjustified differences between women and men persist. For example, in running, women are required to run 1,000 meters, while men are required to run 3,000 meters, and certain exercises (for example, pull-ups) are reserved exclusively for men. The evaluation committees, almost entirely dominated by men, raise questions about objectivity and the perpetuation of stereotypes. Furthermore, professional guides only show illustrations featuring men, which limits women's perception of their professional potential.
- **Recruitment and admission:** Admission to the Ștefan cel Mare Academy is declared "gender-neutral." However, there are differentiated requirements for age and height without solid justification. Also, the Police Academy regulations impose a maximum quota for women (30-40% of state-funded places), which is considered discriminatory. Pregnant women are excluded from the start, as they are not medically certified, which prevents them from accessing the entrance exams. The ministry's plans to attract more women to the police through information campaigns are frequently undermined by the opacity of the selection process and insufficient support for the professional development of female candidates.
- **Career promotions and vertical segregation:** There are no quotas or other measures to accelerate the representation of women in management positions. According to MIA data, in 2023, only 11% of management positions were held by women, although they constituted about 28% of all employees. Operational subdivisions (e.g., the Special Purpose Brigade "Fulger") are almost exclusively male, while women are concentrated in administrative or support areas. Competition commissions for promotion are predominantly made up of men, which can influence the fairness of the process and perpetuate gender inequalities.
- **Work schedule:** In the absence of clear internal regulations, the effective application of the Labour Code's provisions on flexible working hours is limited. Having a militarized status, the Carabinieri troops are subject to other rules, which do not explicitly include the right to part-time work or other forms of accommodation. Women with family responsibilities face difficulties balancing their personal and professional lives, with many giving up development opportunities or even careers.
- **Family responsibilities:** The MIA regulations do not provide for dedicated policies or programmes (programme adjustments during maternity/paternity leave, support for single parents, or mentoring for women with children). There is also no data on the number of women leaving the system for family reasons, nor is there centralized feedback on the challenges encountered. The lack of such information makes it difficult to assess the degree of discrimination or the extent to which family life affects career paths.
- **Infrastructure:** Necessary adaptations to accommodate the needs of both sexes are not clearly regulated, and equipment and uniforms are designed as unisex. Pregnant or postpartum women experience discomfort while using them. There is no institutional obligation to allocate resources to modernize infrastructure from a gender equality perspective, nor are there special spaces for breastfeeding, individualized changing rooms, or relaxation facilities for female staff.

### Findings regarding the Ministry of Defense

- **Physical requirements:** The Ministry of Defense made several changes to the Military Physical Training Regulations to increase the inclusion of women; however, significant differences in physical requirements between the sexes persist. Women are trained using lower standards, which leads to insufficient physical fitness to perform military duties effectively. Also, pregnant women are not certified by

the Military Medical Expertise Commission upon admission to military educational institutions or upon enlistment in military service under contract, which constitutes discrimination on the basis of maternity.

- **Recruitment and admission:** An evaluation of the Ministry of Defense's recruitment, selection and admission policy for candidates to military educational institutions reveals that the recruitment process is gender neutral, which means that no positive measures have been approved within the institution to promote women in the sector. Also, the representation of women in admission and attestation committees is low.
- **Job promotions and vertical segregation:** Although internal provisions on promotion appear to be gender-neutral, the representation of women in leadership positions is low. According to data provided by the Ministry of Defense in 2024, women represent more than 21% of the total number of military members in the National Army, a significant percentage compared to the average of 13% in the armed forces of Western countries. At the same time, it was noted that the period of childcare leave is included in the general length of service, in the non-contributory period assimilated to the contribution stage, and, according to the latest amendments to Law No. 162/2005, also in the calendar-based length of military service.
- **Working hours:** The internal framework does not allow reasonable accommodation of working hours for military personnel, which disproportionately affects women, as they usually assume care and household responsibilities and, as a result, are most in need of flexibility measures.
- **Family responsibilities:** The current regulations do not provide for specific policies or programmes for reconciling family and professional life, such as: (I) adjustment of working hours during maternity or paternity leave, (II) support for single parents, (III) flexible working programmes for parents, or (IV) mentoring programmes for women with family responsibilities. At this stage, there is also no data collected on the number of women who have quit their jobs due to difficulties in combining work and family life, or feedback from employees on the effectiveness of support programmes, to see the extent of the impact caused by the lack of these support provisions.
- **Infrastructure:** The evaluation process found that, at the institutional level, there are no specific provisions regulating the reasonable accommodation of infrastructure to the needs of both sexes, nor any obligations to allocate financial resources toward modernizing infrastructure from a gender equality perspective. Regarding equipment and uniforms, it is found that, although there are some specific elements for women in military uniforms, these are insufficient to be able to claim that uniforms are universal, because military equipment is currently unisex, used equally by both men and women, which can create inconveniences for women, especially those who are pregnant or in the postpartum period.

### Findings on the National Penitentiary Administration

- **Physical requirements:** The National Penitentiary Administration (ANP) does not apply mandatory physical requirements to most staff, except the Special Purpose Detachment (SPD) "Pantera." Although this approach seems inclusive since it does not discriminate based on gender or other criteria, it poses risks related to the safety of employees and detainees as well as operational risks. Gaps in the physical training of employees are also fueled by deficient infrastructure (only two penitentiaries are equipped with a gym).
- **Recruitment and admission:** At the institutional level, there are no policies or proactive measures to promote the recruitment of women in operational positions, especially in maximum security prisons.
- **Job promotions and vertical segregation:** Half of the management positions within the ANP are held by women, which indicates that the institution has succeeded in promoting women to decision-making positions. However, there is no evidence regarding the promotion of women in maximum security prisons, access to management positions in remote areas, etc.

- **Working hours:** The ANP offers the possibility to request a reduced work schedule, especially for employees who have children under 10 years of age or children with disabilities. Similarly, the work schedule can be modified for women in management positions and those working in maximum security prisons. No measures to adapt the schedule were highlighted for women with family responsibilities who work night shifts or who work in rural or isolated areas.
- **Family responsibilities:** In addition to flexible work schedules, the institution provides breastfeeding breaks for women who have returned from parental leave. However, at the institutional level, the infrastructure and internal policies are not adapted for employees with young children. Women on parental leave are not seconded, and there are no internal provisions to prevent them from being disadvantaged in promotion processes.
- **Infrastructure:** The ANP has created separate sanitary and hygiene facilities for women and men, but other improvements do not currently exist, such as access to separate changing rooms, accommodation facilities, facilities for pregnant women or breastfeeding spaces, rest rooms for night shifts, etc.

### Findings regarding the State Protection and Guard Service

- **Physical requirements:** In the State Protection and Guard Service (SPPS), physical requirements are adapted to take into account biological differences between women and men. Strength tests can have different standards for women and men without reducing the critical requirements necessary for real interventions. For example, different norms for covering distances with a lower weight are provided for women. Physical testing includes measures based on weight and height, and it is less focused on fixed standards that would disadvantage certain groups. Women can benefit from modified physical training.
- **Recruitment and admission:** The SPPS has adjusted recruitment criteria and reassessed job requirements to remove potential discriminatory obstacles or barriers that could prevent women from accessing the service. Gender-balanced representation is ensured within recruitment committees and their members receive training on gender equality. However, these measures are not reflected in internal policies, increasing the risk of not being applied consistently.
- **Job promotions and vertical segregation:** Promotion and performance evaluation is based on objective and transparent criteria, including physical and theoretical training, shooting, foreign language skills and others. Women's access to promotion opportunities is based on need and demand, as well as the gender of the protected persons. This conditionality may limit opportunities for women.
- **Working hours:** Employees with family responsibilities are allowed to change their start and end times of work upon request, but this is only possible with compensation for the lunch break. The institution does not offer part-time or reduced-hour work options.
- **Family responsibilities:** Family responsibilities are reconciled through flexible schedules, negotiations and the possibility of compensation. Upon request, employees can benefit from additional parental leave. There are no childcare facilities at the institutional level.
- **Infrastructure:** The SPPS has arranged and equipped the offices and modernized the sanitary infrastructure (e.g., separate showers and changing rooms for women and men). All shift offices have specially arranged places for storing lunch, bathrooms and changing rooms. However, women do not participate in late-night operational missions or dangerous protection missions, a practice that could be considered discriminatory. Within the SPPS, female employees can access protective equipment and anatomically adapted uniforms.

## Findings regarding the Customs Service

- **Physical requirements:** The Customs Service's activity is regulated by Law No. 302/2017 on the Customs Service. However, this legislative framework does not provide gender-differentiated physical requirements, which suggests the institution has a gender-neutral policy. Customs officers are provided with special uniforms of various sizes and customs control equipment for work in customs posts.
- **Recruitment and admission:** There are no gender differences in the institution's recruitment and promotion process. Women are recruited and promoted to positions without any discriminatory obstacles imposed on them in the process. Transparency and fairness are ensured in the selection process by placing job notices on the institution's official website. However, mentoring programmes are only provided for novice civil servants, thus excluding employees who wish to advance in their careers or occupy operational and management positions.
- **Job promotions and vertical segregation:** Job promotions are based on the results of one's professional performance evaluation, regardless of gender. Representatives of the Customs Service state that promotion is based on professional performance, which is in accordance with non-discrimination standards, without any conditions or criteria differentiated by gender in the promotion process.
- **Working hours:** The Customs Service offers significant support to employees with family responsibilities, including paternity leave for men and flexible working arrangements for both genders. Both women and men in the Customs Service with young children are also offered flexible working arrangements upon request to ensure a work-life balance.
- **Family responsibilities:** The Customs Service offers basic measures to support women with family responsibilities, such as reassigning positions and suspending employment duties during maternity or parental leave, following the legislation in force. Also, if a pregnant woman holds a position within a border crossing point and wishes to work, she is assigned to a customs post with less intense activity and closer to home.
- **Infrastructure:** The Customs Service has implemented basic infrastructural measures to ensure adequate conditions for its employees and workers. Sanitary rooms are equipped with diaper-changing facilities, which are very useful for employees with small children. The infrastructure of Customs Service buildings has several elements that ensure security for the institution's employees, such as lighting in customs posts, video surveillance cameras, parking lots arranged on the perimeter of the customs posts, etc.

# METHODOLOGY

**This study aims to identify the main barriers to ensuring equal opportunities in the security and defense sector, starting from the premise that gender inequalities in these sectors are based on a series of factors.**

In the context of the National Programme for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 on WPS, a specific approach is required to implement interventions among security and defense institutions. This study analyzes specific measures undertaken by key institutions to ensure equal opportunities at both institutional and sectoral levels.

**The analytical framework used in this study started from the identification of barriers in six key areas, namely:** (I) physical requirements, (II) recruitment and admission, (III) job promotions and vertical segregation, (IV) working hours, (V) family responsibilities, and (VI) infrastructure. These areas were selected to elucidate barriers since they concern access, actual activities among women and men in security and defense, and infrastructure.

Key areas that elucidate barriers to gender equality in the security and defense sector	
Physical requirements	Analysis of the standards applied in the recruitment and admission process, evaluating to what extent they influence women's access to the field.
Recruitment and admission	Analysis of practices and criteria applied in the personnel selection process, with an emphasis on transparency and equal opportunities.
Promotion in function	Analysis of organizational structures and promotion mechanisms, to assess gender distribution in leadership positions.
Working hours	Evaluation of policies regarding schedule flexibility and work-life balance.
Family responsibilities	Identifying institutional measures that support employees with family responsibilities, such as maternity, paternity leave or other relevant benefits.
Infrastructure	Examining available facilities to determine the extent to which they meet the needs of women and men equally.

**Several data collection methods were used in the process of developing this study.** The methodology was built on a detailed process of data collection and analysis in order to reflect as accurately as possible the current state of gender inequalities in Moldova's security and defense sectors. Several complementary techniques were used to ensure a comprehensive and representative framework.

**In the first stage, an analysis of the regulatory framework and international standards was carried out.** The analysis of international standards was important for assessing how Moldova's commitments comply with its national legislative framework.

## The documents analyzed include:

- **UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and related resolutions**, which emphasize the importance of women's participation in the security and defense sector.
- **The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**, which provides a general framework for promoting gender equality.
- **The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence.**
- **The European Union's Strategy for Gender Equality 2020-2025**, which sets concrete objectives for mainstreaming gender into public policies.

These documents were used to identify gaps in national legislation and formulate specific recommendations on necessary adjustments. The comparative analysis between international standards and the national legislative framework highlighted areas where legislative and administrative interventions are needed to ensure better alignment with international good practices.

**In the next stage, an exhaustive analysis of the national regulatory framework was carried out to assess its compliance with international standards.** This included examining the legislation, regulations and normative acts governing the activity of the MIA, the Ministry of Defense, the National Penitentiary Administration, the State Protection and Guard Service, the National Anticorruption Center and the Customs Service. Acts such as Law No. 288/2016 on the civil servant with special status within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Law No. 162/2005 on the status of the military and other related regulations were studied in detail to identify provisions that directly or indirectly influence gender equality.

**This regulatory framework analysis was complemented by collecting statistical data disaggregated by gender.** In this regard, official requests for information were initiated to the targeted institutions, covering aspects such as physical requirements, recruitment, promotion in positions, work hours, family responsibilities and infrastructure. Another tool used in the data collection process was a standardized questionnaire. Each institution received a set of specific questions designed to assess the application of the principle of gender equality in all areas of activity. The responses obtained provided essential quantitative and qualitative data for the analysis process.

**Focus groups and semi-structured interviews were also organized with representatives of the institutions targeted by the study.** In parallel with the data collection process, semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives of all the institutions analyzed. These interviews provided an in-depth perspective on current policies and practices, identifying both the progress made and the challenges encountered. Topics related to equal access, recruitment, promotion, infrastructure and institutional measures to support diversity were addressed.

**Additionally, to identify specific professional and personal development needs, a survey was conducted among women employed in the institutions analyzed.** The survey was conducted between October and November 2024, using the Microsoft Forms platform, on a sample of 1,365 women. The survey covered topics related to representation, working conditions, training needs, satisfaction levels, etc. The survey was conducted within the framework of Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Defense, National Penitentiary Administration, State Protection and Guard Service, National Anticorruption Center, Customs Service, Intelligence and Security Service.

The study's methodology ensures the traceability of conclusions and recommendations and provides a replicable framework for future similar analyses, contributing to achieving the objectives set out in the NAP for 2023-2027.

#### Methodology limitations:

- Most of the institutions surveyed do not collect gender-disaggregated information, or they collect it in a limited format. In some cases, the information requested was declared classified, which was a significant barrier to obtaining a complete picture.
- The sample included in the online survey is not statistically representative of the population of women employed in the institutions under analysis. However, the share of women included in the sample was calibrated to the total number of women within each institution analyzed.



*Workshop to strengthen practical intervention and leadership skills of women in the security system, organized by the State Protection and Guard Service, with the support of UN Women and the financial support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, September 2024. Photo credit: UN Women/Anna Galatonova*

## WOMEN IN THE SECURITY AND DEFENSE SECTOR

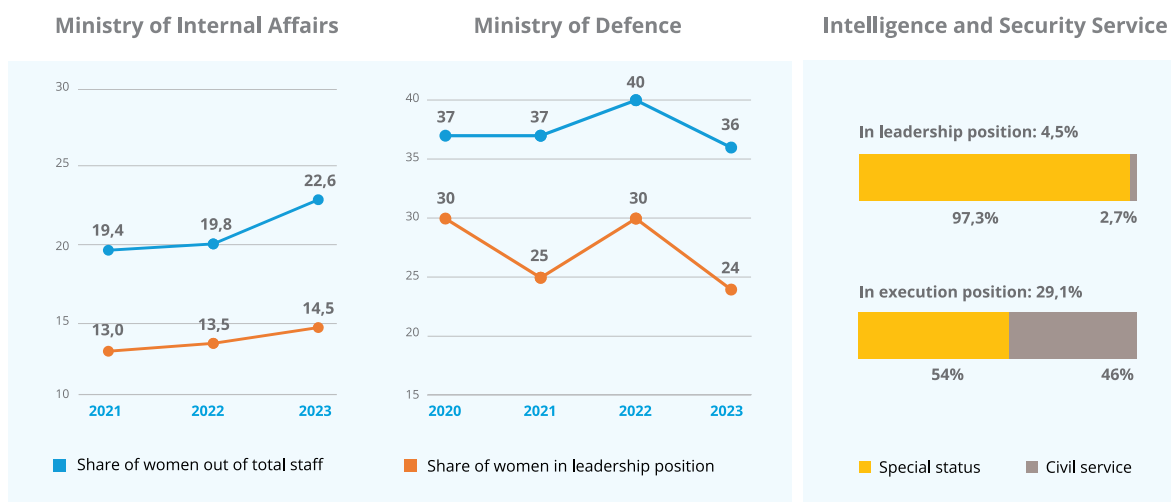
### Representation and participation

**Although women continue to be underrepresented in Moldova's security and defense sector, gradual progress has been made in recent years.** Historically, women have been underrepresented in the country's law enforcement and national security institutions, which have historically been male-dominated sectors. Despite the challenges, efforts to promote gender equality in these areas have resulted in some progress. In 2023, women accounted for 22.6% of the total number of employees in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, compared to 19.4% in 2021. This indicates a clear positive trend, although the pace is still slow. In terms of women's representation in the security sector, their share is reaching higher levels. In recent years, several initiatives have been implemented aimed at promoting gender equality in national security. These include gender-sensitive training programmes for military personnel, as well as policies aimed at improving the recruitment and retention of women in this sector. According to data provided by the Ministry of Defense, women represented 36% of total employees, which has fluctuated over the past four years.

**Women's representation in the security and defense sector is concentrated in executive roles, with more limited access to leadership positions.** Although in recent years there has been a positive dynamic in terms of accessing decision-making positions, women continue to be underrepresented at senior levels. Thus, the share of women in management positions within the Ministry of Internal Affairs was 14.5% in 2023, compared to 13% in 2021, which suggests that efforts to promote women in management positions are yielding results but still limited. Within the Ministry of Defense, the share of women in decision-making positions is higher, constituting 24% in 2023. The representation of women in national security structures has fluctuated in recent years, presenting a relatively constant trend (without substantial changes). As for the Intelligence and Security Service, the share of women in decision-making positions is much lower, constituting only 4.5%, while in executive positions, it is 29.1%. This dynamic reflects the ongoing challenges in overcoming barriers to women's leadership within the ministry.

**FIGURE 1.**

**Level of representation of women in security and defense structures by percentage (%)**

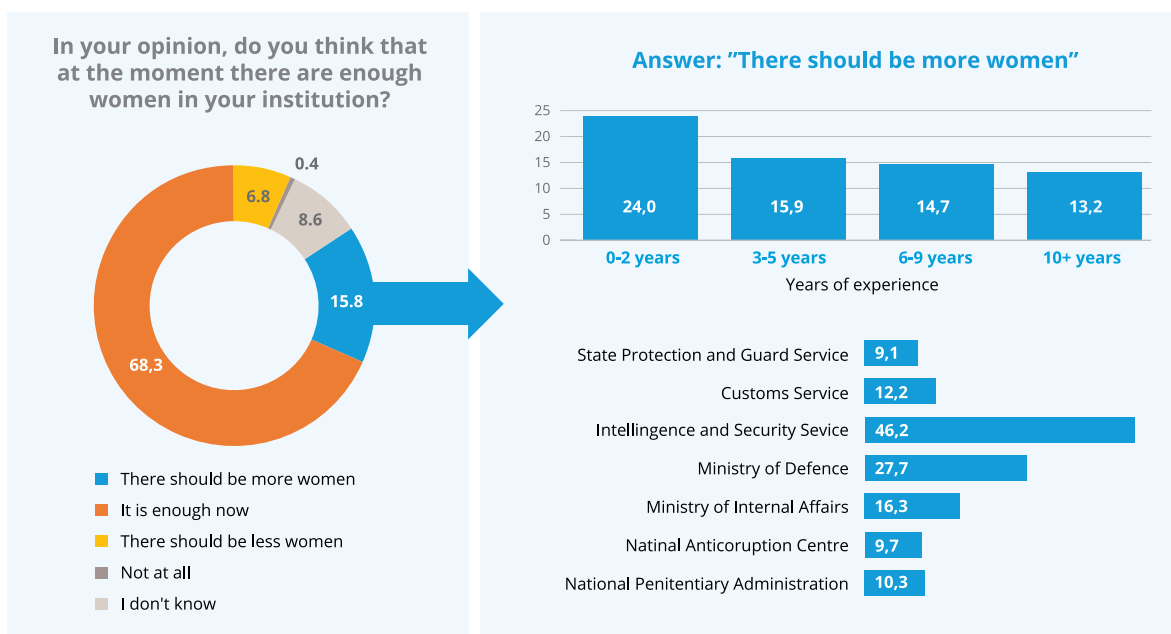


Source: Data provided by the MIA, Ministry of Defense and Intelligence and Security Service

**Although they are underrepresented, most women in the system believe there is no need to increase their numbers.** The survey data reflects that 68.3% of respondents believe that the current number of women is sufficient, which can be explained by a low level of awareness regarding the benefits of gender diversity in this sector and the inequalities that result in its absence. At the same time, only 15.8% of female respondents recognize the need for an increase in the number of women. From a work experience perspective, it is found that as professional experience increases, opinions become more reserved; thus, only 13.2% among those with over 10 years of experience believe that more women should be attracted to the sector. On the other hand, in institutions where the share of women is lower, the share of respondents who agree that the number of women should increase is higher.

**FIGURE 2.**

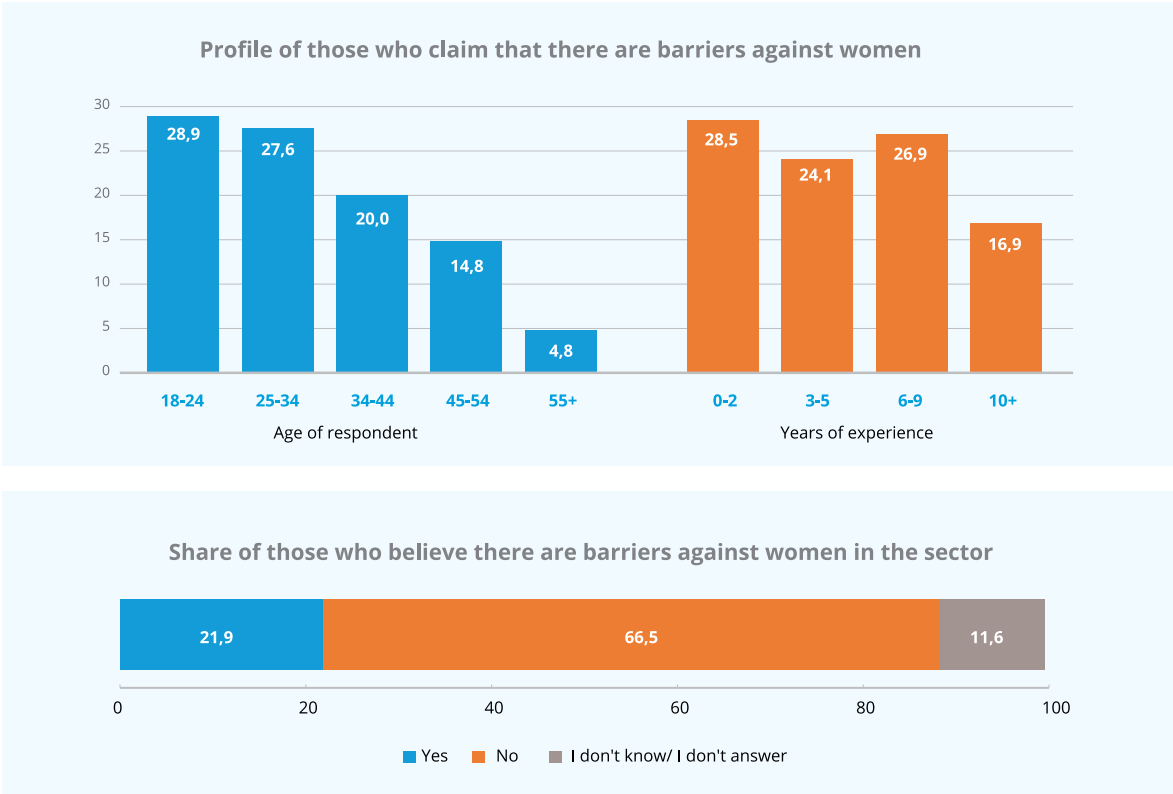
**Perception of women's representation in the sector based on institution and years of experience (%)**



Source: Opinion poll conducted by the Partnership for Development Center and UN Women Moldova, 2024

**One-quarter of women employees say there are specific barriers women face in the security and defense sector.** At the same time, 66.5% of respondents reject the idea that obstacles exist, and 11.6% do not have a clear opinion or did not answer. Approximately one-third (28.9%) of female employees aged 18-24 and 27.6% of those aged 25-34 say that women encounter difficulties in this sector. In contrast, the perception of barriers decreases significantly with age, reaching only 4.8% among women over 55. The same trend is observed when analyzing the respondents' opinions depending on their work experience in the system. Female employees who have recently joined the system more frequently identify specific barriers they face as women in this sector. In contrast, the greater the work experience, the less specific barriers employees perceive, which may be explained by the collegial attitude that develops over the years of gender-neutral activity.

**FIGURE 3.**  
Existing barriers preventing women's participation in the sector by percentage (%)

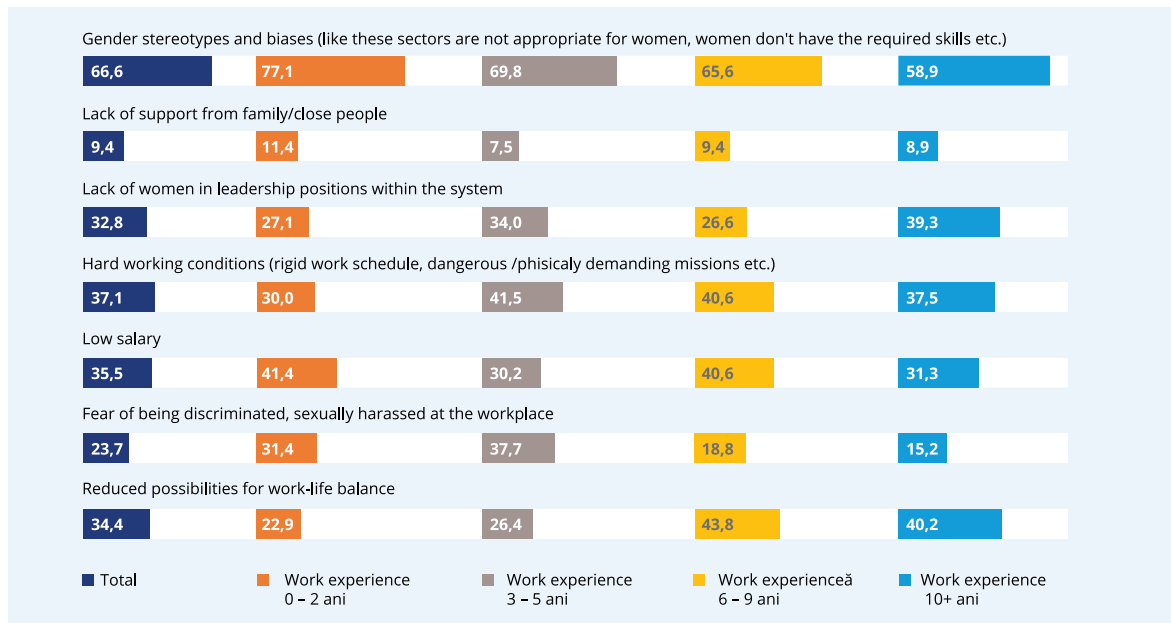


Source: Opinion poll conducted by the Partnership for Development Center and UN Women Moldova, 2024

**Gender stereotypes and difficulties in balancing career and family life remain the main barriers faced by women in the security and defense sector.** A total of 66.6% of respondents noted that gender stereotypes and biases are the most significant barrier. These include opinions that the field is not suitable for women or that women do not have the necessary skills. Another important barrier is the difficulty of ensuring a work-life balance, indicated by 34.4% of women. This problem is felt most acutely by those with 6-9 years of experience (43.8%) and those with over 10 years (40.2%), suggesting that, with career advancement, family responsibilities become an increasingly difficult burden to manage in the absence of adequate support policies. Also, 37.1% of respondents identified difficult working conditions as barriers, such as a rigid regime, physically demanding, or dangerous assignments.

**FIGURE 4.**

**Barriers faced by women in the security and defense sector based on work experience (%)**

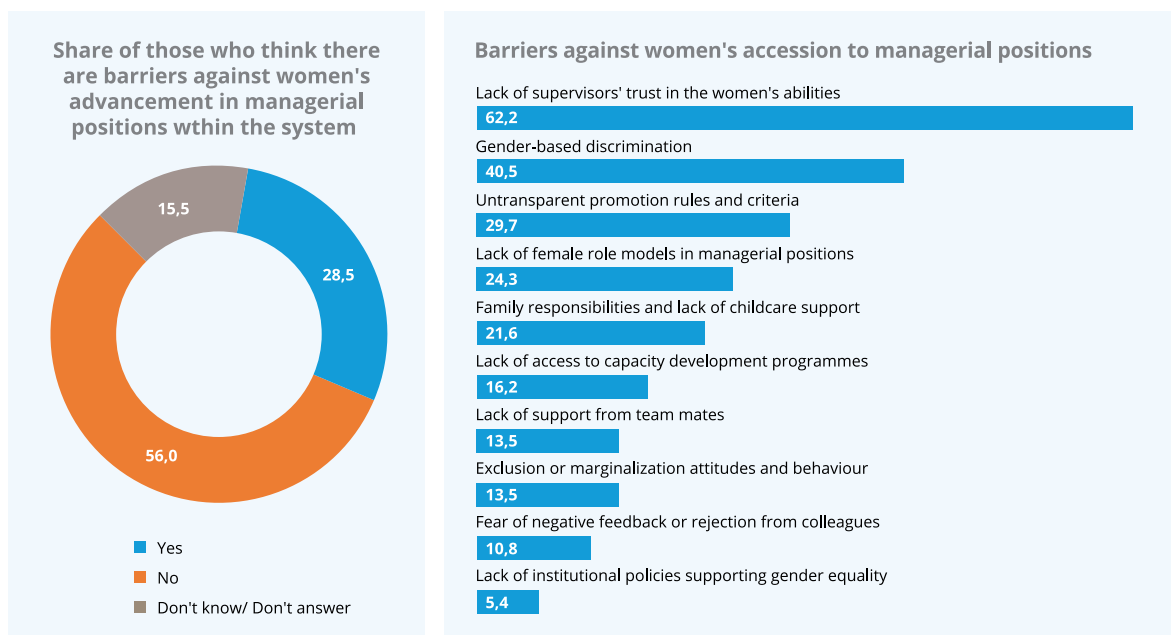


Source: Opinion poll conducted by the Partnership for Development Center and UN Women Moldova, 2024

**Lack of trust, discrimination and reduced transparency were identified as the main obstacles to promoting women to leadership positions.** The most significant barrier is the lack of confidence of superiors in women's abilities, mentioned by 62.2% of respondents, which reflects the persistence of gender stereotypes in the perception of women's skills. The second barrier is gender discrimination, indicated by 40.5%, highlighting structural biases that hinder women's professional advancement. In third place are non-transparent promotion rules and criteria, mentioned by 29.7% of participants, which suggests an opaque system that disadvantages women in selection processes.

**FIGURE 5.**

**Share of those who believe that there are barriers that prevent women from participating in management positions, by type of barrier (%)**



Source: Opinion poll conducted by the Partnership for Development Center and UN Women Moldova, 2024

**Work-life balance remains difficult for most women in the sector, disrupted by unforeseen workloads, high workloads and rigid schedules.** One-third of respondents (31.9%) say that this balance is difficult to achieve, and only 8.5% of survey participants manage this balance easily. The most acute challenge in balancing personal and professional life is unplanned work or urgent tasks, as cited by 34.3% of women. Also, the reduced flexibility of the workplace limits the ability of employees to combine work with family responsibilities. One-third of respondents cited stress generated by high workloads and the difficulty of taking breaks or holidays at the right time as persistent challenges to balancing professional and personal life.

**FIGURE 6.**  
**Level of work-life balance and top five challenges in achieving it (%)**



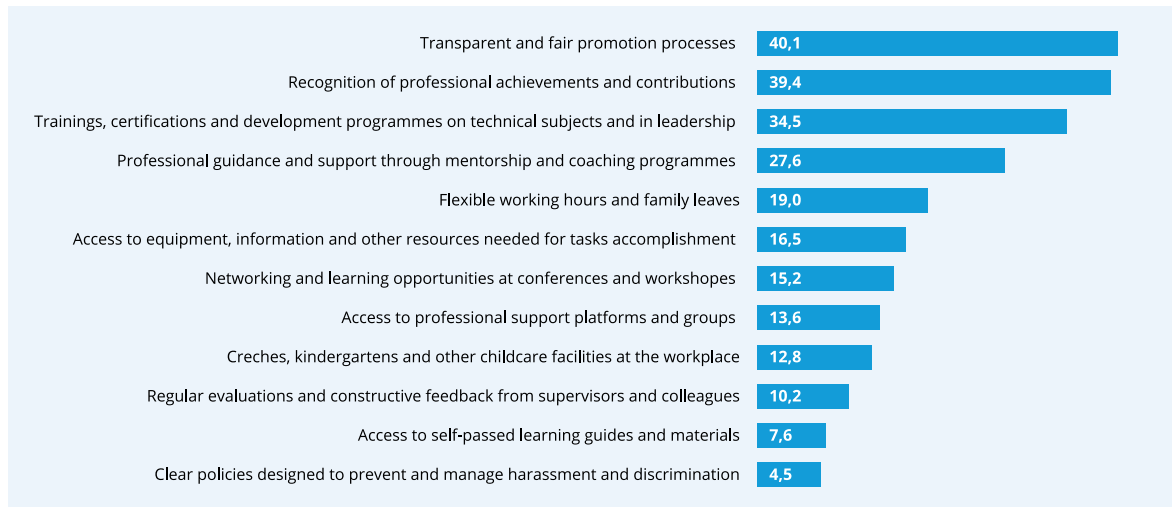
Source: Opinion poll conducted by the Partnership for Development Center and UN Women Moldova, 2024

### Professional and personal development needs

**Transparency in the promotion process and recognition of professional achievements and contributions are essential needs for women in the sector.** The most important aspects reported are related to the transparency of promotion processes, recognition of achievements and access to professional development opportunities, identified by about 40% of respondents. In second place is recognition of professional achievements and contributions, indicated by 39.4% of participants. This need reflects women's desire to have their work and efforts appreciated, an essential element for motivation and professional progress. Courses, certifications and development programmes in technical and leadership fields are mentioned as professional needs by 34.5% of respondents. Another need is professional guidance and support through mentoring and coaching programmes, identified by 27.6% of women. This highlights the need for constant support for professional orientation and development, especially in a sector where women are underrepresented.

**FIGURE 7.**

**Main professional needs for women's career advancement, by percentage (%)**



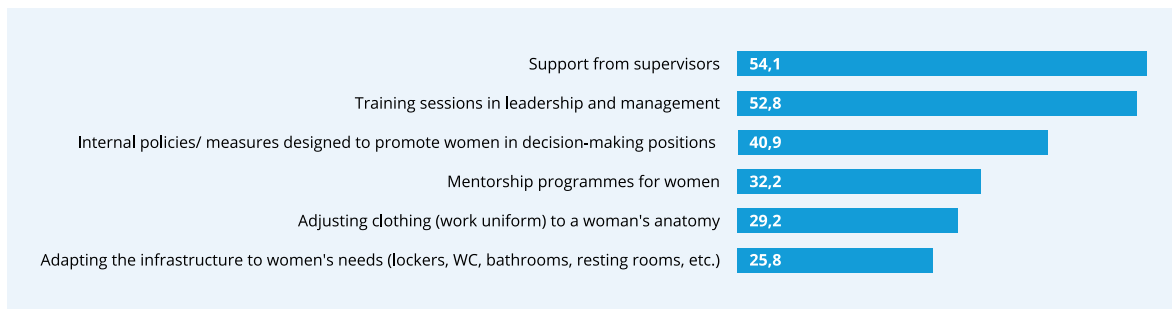
Source: Opinion poll conducted by the Partnership for Development Center and UN Women Moldova, 2024

**Support from superiors and leadership and management training are essential measures identified by women to encourage their participation in the security sector, including in decision-making positions.** The most requested measure is support from superiors, indicated by 56.1% of women with 3-5 years of experience, closely followed by those with 6-9 years (55.5%) and those with over 10 years (54.3%). This requirement reflects women's need for institutional support to overcome professional barriers. Another important measure is the need for leadership and management training sessions, mentioned by 55.5% of participants with 0-2 years of experience, which suggests the desire of young women to develop skills that will facilitate their access to decision-making positions. This measure also remains relevant for women with 6-9 years of experience (54%) and for those with over 10 years (51.4%). Internal policies and measures to promote women to leadership positions are also necessary, indicated by 43.9% of women with 10+ years of experience, an indication that transparency and equitable access to promotion remain priorities throughout the career.

A practical but essential measure is adapting infrastructure to women's needs (changing rooms, toilets, rest rooms). This was mentioned by 40.2% of women with 6-9 years of experience, which suggests the importance of a working environment appropriate to women's specific needs. Finally, mentoring programmes for women are particularly appreciated by those with over 10 years of experience (35.9%) and those at the beginning of their careers (31%), highlighting the role of mentoring in guiding and supporting women's professional journeys in the sector.

**FIGURE 8.**

**Measures needed to encourage women's participation in the sector, including in decision-making positions (%)**

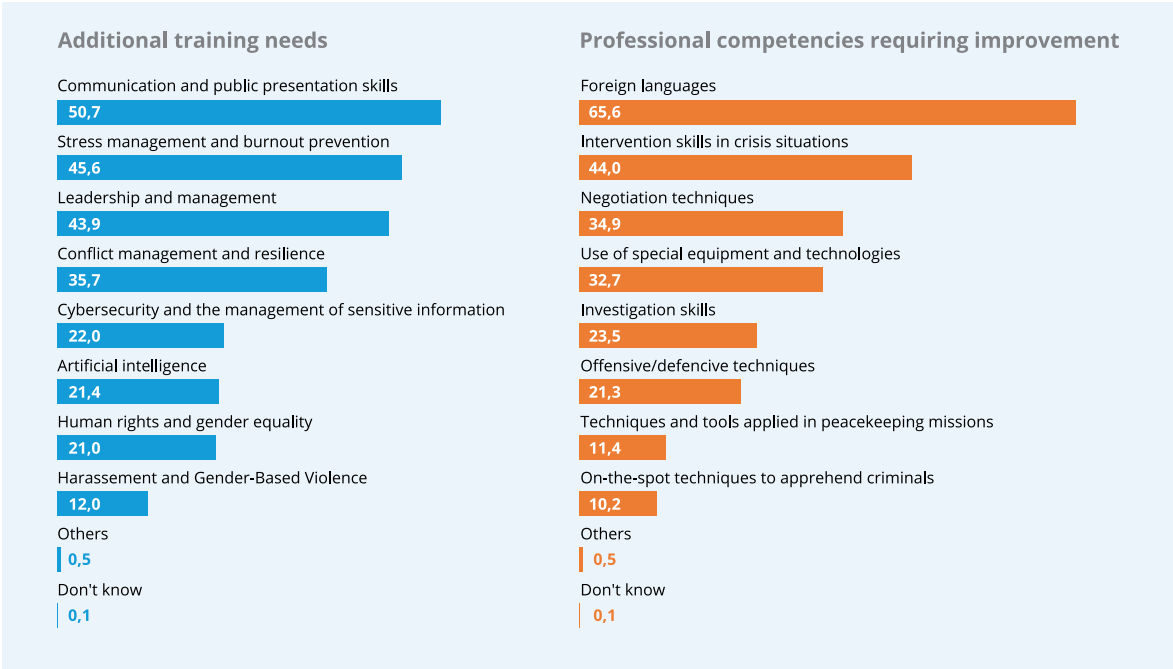


Source: Opinion poll conducted by the Partnership for Development Center and UN Women Moldova, 2024

**Women in the security and defense sector consider training in communication, leadership and stress management essential for professional advancement.** In terms of additional training topics needed, communication and public presentation skills are the most requested, indicated by 50.7% of respondents. This priority highlights the need for women to strengthen their ability to express themselves effectively in professional environments and to occupy visible positions. At the same time, stress management and prevention of professional burnout represent another major need, mentioned by 45.6% of participants, reflecting the high pressures and demanding environment in this sector. Leadership and management are also required training for 43.9% of respondents, which confirms women's desire to access management positions.

Regarding the professional skills that need to be developed, foreign languages are a priority, as mentioned by 65.6% of women. This would facilitate their participation in missions and/or programmes and international events. Additionally, 44% of respondents identified the need to develop their skills for intervention in crisis situations. In addition to those mentioned above, negotiation techniques and developing skills in the use of specific equipment and technologies were mentioned by one-third of women.

**FIGURE 9.** Training and professional skills needed to increase professional performance and advance in career (%)

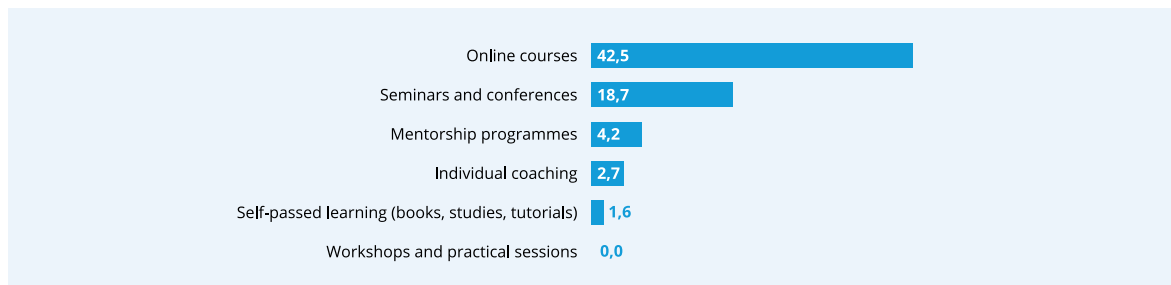


Source: Opinion poll conducted by the Partnership for Development Center and UN Women Moldova, 2024

**Online courses and study visits to other countries are the preferred methods of professional development, highlighting women's need for flexibility and the desire to learn from international experiences.** Online courses are the most popular method, preferred by 42.5% of respondents. One-third of respondents prefer study visits to other countries as a learning method. Seminars and conferences are preferred by 18.7% of respondents, indicating an interest in direct interaction, exchange of ideas and accumulation of knowledge in a formal learning environment. In contrast, mentoring programmes and individual coaching are less popular, preferred by only 4.2% and 2.7% of women, respectively. This could be explained primarily by the lack of such opportunities within state institutions; therefore, respondents are not even familiar with the benefits and applicability of these learning and professional development methods.

**FIGURE 10.**

**Learning methods that respondents prefer to develop their professional skills (%)**



Source: Opinion poll conducted by the Partnership for Development Center and UN Women Moldova, 2024

**Another necessity for women’s professional development is psychological counseling and support in the workplace.** Over half of the respondents stated that these services are necessary, and employees in institutions with intense workloads and a tense work environment, such as the Customs Service and the National Penitentiary Administration, register the highest demand. In the Customs Service, professional pressure and the fast pace of work explain this high level of perception: almost 53% of employees state that such services are necessary or very necessary. Similar situations are reported in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the National Anticorruption Center, where the activity exposes employees to constant stress. This finding underlines the importance of introducing adapted psychological support programmes to ensure the mental health of employees and a more balanced work environment.

**FIGURE 11.**

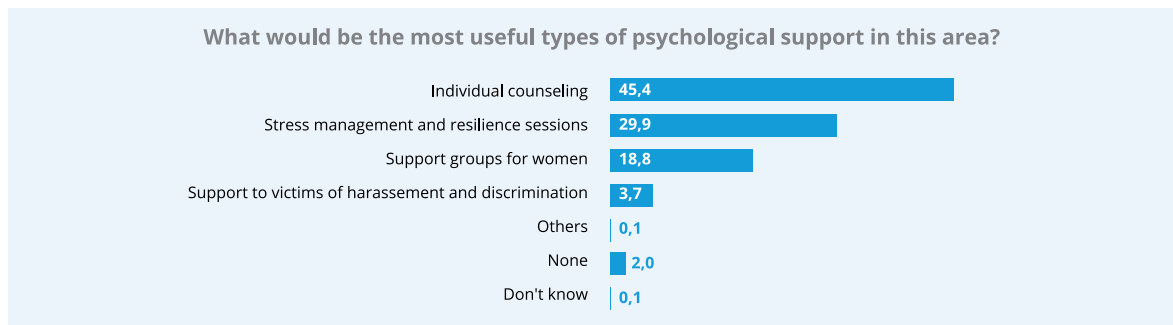
**Need for psychological counseling and support services at the workplace, by institution (%)**



Source: Opinion poll conducted by the Partnership for Development Center and UN Women Moldova, 2024

**Individual counseling and stress management are the main forms of psychological support requested by women in the sector.** The results show that women in the security sector consider individual counselling to be the most useful form of psychological support, with 45.4% of respondents requesting this type of intervention. This preference highlights the need for personalized support, adapted to the demanding professional context and individual challenges. Also, as useful support methods, one-third of the participants mentioned stress management and resilience sessions. These sessions are essential to respond to the problems generated by the high workload and the tense nature of the activities specific to the sector, providing women with the necessary tools to cope with the pressures. At the same time, women's support groups are seen as a useful form of support by 18.8% of respondents. This result suggests the importance of creating spaces for discussion and solidarity, where common experiences can be shared and managed in a constructive way. Interest in support for victims of harassment and discrimination is relatively low, being mentioned by only 3.7% of women. This figure may reflect a lack of awareness of the existence of such problems or a reluctance to talk about them due to stigma.

**FIGURE 12.**  
Types of psychological support needed for women in the sector (%)

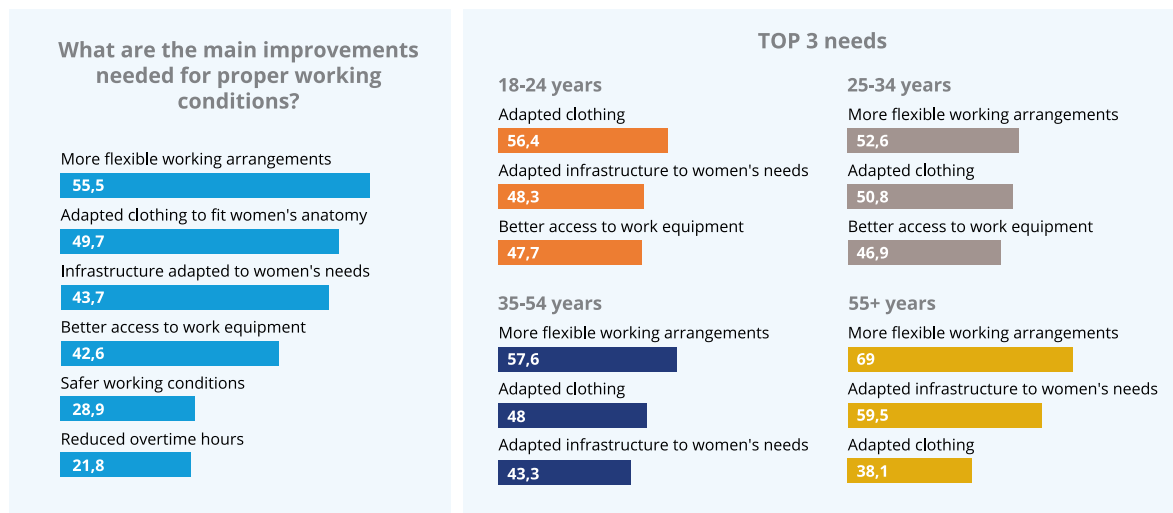


Source: Opinion poll conducted by the Partnership for Development Center and UN Women Moldova, 2024

## Level of satisfaction with the working environment

**Work schedule flexibility and appropriate clothing are common priorities for women of all ages.** Specific needs, such as infrastructure adapted to women's needs and access to work equipment, were mainly mentioned by younger employees, while those with longer experience feel the rigidity of the schedule most acutely. Overall, the need for a more flexible work regime is dominant, mentioned by over half of the respondents (55.5%). Another need for change is clothing adapted to women's anatomy, noted by every second respondent. This finding highlights the discomfort generated by current uniforms, which do not correspond to the female body. Also, adequate infrastructure, such as changing rooms, toilets, or rest areas, is a need expressed by 43.7% of the respondents, indicating persistent shortcomings in adapting workspaces to the realities of women in the system.

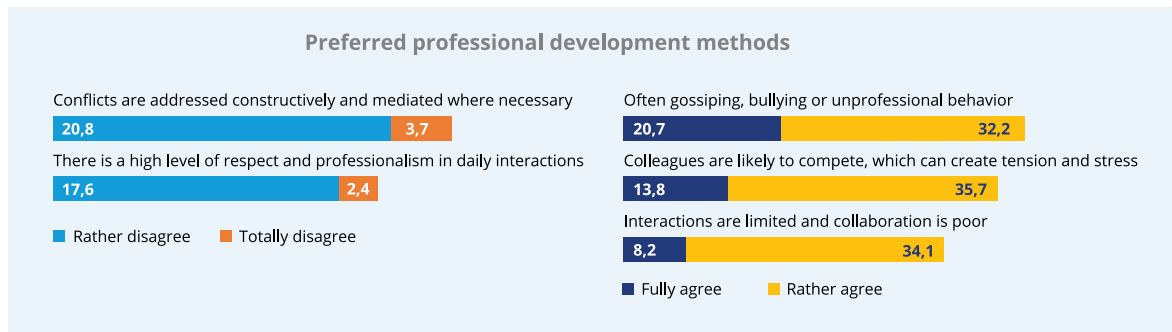
**FIGURE 13.**  
Improvements needed to have adequate working conditions, by age (%)



Source: Opinion poll conducted by the Partnership for Development Center and UN Women Moldova, 2024

**Women's perceptions reflect a tense organizational climate, marked by unprofessional behaviors, competition between colleagues and ineffective conflict management.** Approximately 42.3% of women believe that interactions are limited and collaboration leaves much to be desired. At the same time, competition between colleagues is a factor that generates tension and stress, confirmed by half of the respondents. An even more worrying aspect is the frequent manifestation of intimidation and unprofessional behaviors, recognized by approximately half of the respondents. At the same time, 24.5% of women believe that disputes are managed unconstructively.

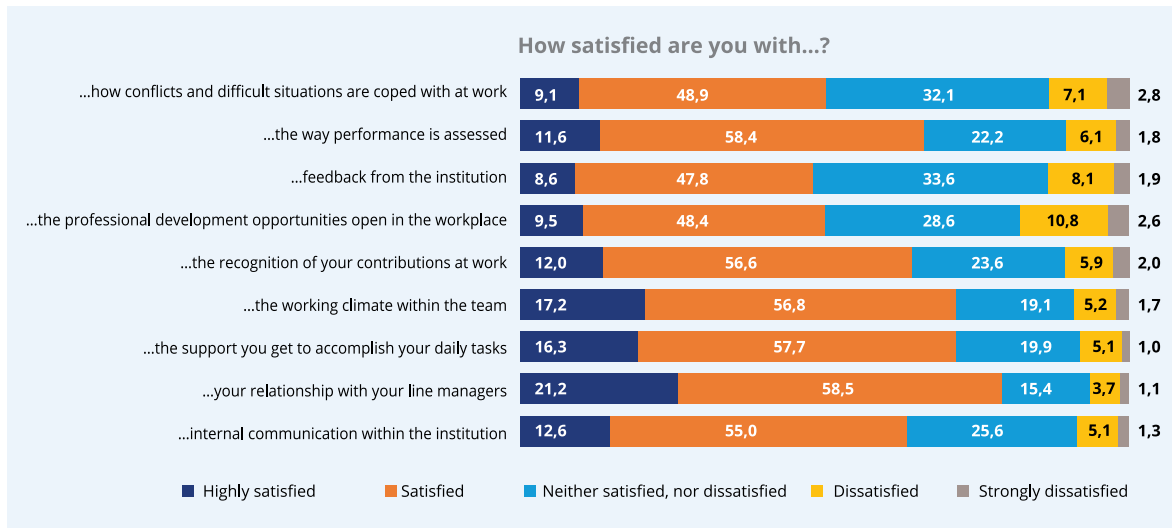
**FIGURE 14.**  
Satisfaction with the work environment (%)



Source: Opinion poll conducted by the Partnership for Development Center and UN Women Moldova, 2024

**Dissatisfaction with workplace development opportunities and institutional feedback undermines the organizational climate.** Half of the employees are relatively satisfied with how conflicts and difficult situations are managed, and 32.1% take a neutral position. In contrast, 9.9% are dissatisfied, suggesting a clear need to improve the mediation and dispute resolution processes. A similar problem arises concerning the feedback provided by the institution. Although 47.8% of the respondents declare themselves “satisfied,” 33.6% have a neutral opinion and 10% are dissatisfied. Regarding professional development opportunities, 48.4% of the women declare themselves satisfied, but a notable proportion of 13.4% are dissatisfied, highlighting the perception of insufficient access to training, mentoring and advancement.

**FIGURE 15.**  
Level of satisfaction with various aspects of the work environment (%)

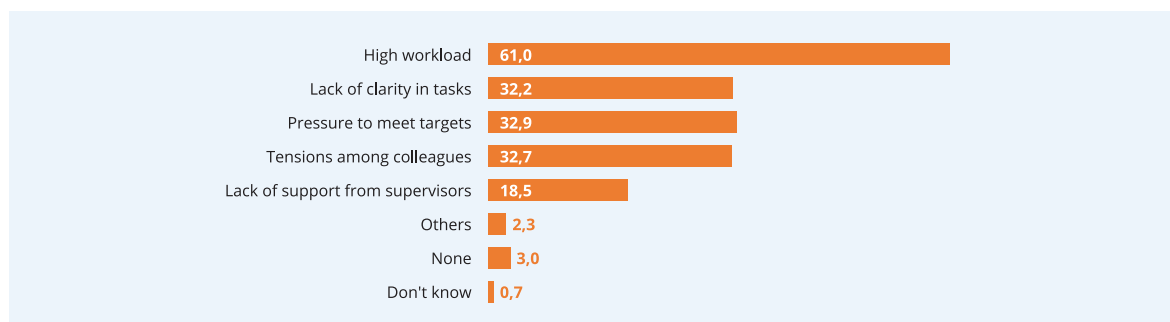


Source: Opinion poll conducted by the Partnership for Development Center and UN Women Moldova, 2024

**Overwork creates a tense and stressful environment.** Professional overload is the primary source of stress for women in the security and defense sector, mentioned by 61% of respondents. In addition to this challenge, the lack of clear task assignments and the pressure to meet objectives contribute to the increase in work climate tension. Professional relationships are another significant stressor, with tensions between colleagues mentioned by 32.7% of respondents. A work environment where collaboration is affected by conflicts and a lack of communication can diminish employees' motivation and trust in the team. An additional but equally relevant concern is the lack of support from superiors (18.5%).

**FIGURE 16.**

**Main sources of stress at work (%)**



Source: Opinion poll conducted by the Partnership for Development Center and UN Women Moldova, 2024

**Encouraging collaboration and mutual support is the most frequently mentioned solution by 65.3% of respondents.** Another potential solution is promoting more open and transparent communication, as suggested by 57.9% of participants. The lack of effective communication generates misunderstandings and tensions in the team, which underlines the need for clear and constant channels of dialogue between employees and management. In addition, reducing unhealthy competition between colleagues is perceived as a priority by 38.5% of women. Adopting measures that promote an organizational culture based on collaboration, rather than rivalry, could contribute to a more harmonious work environment. Activities to address this, such as team-building and socializing, were proposed by 37.3% of respondents.

**FIGURE 17.**

**Activities needed to improve the working atmosphere within the team (%)**

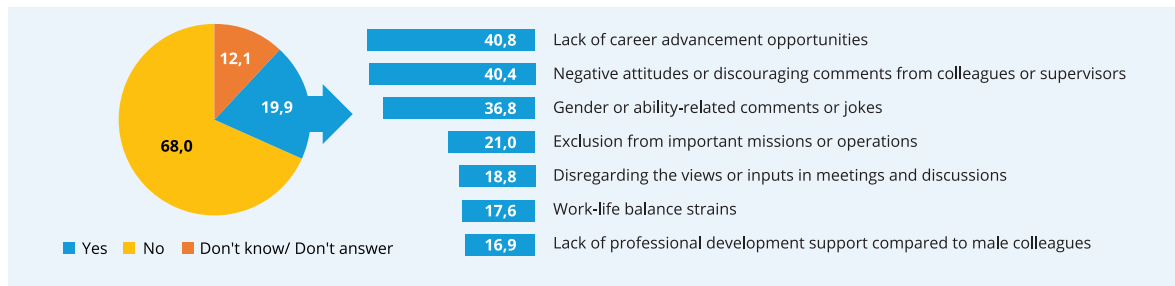


Source: Opinion poll conducted by the Partnership for Development Center and UN Women Moldova, 2024

## Prevalence of discrimination and harassment/sexual harassment practices

**Workplace discrimination manifests itself in various forms, from limited access to promotions to discouraging comments and professional exclusion.** The findings indicate that differential treatment and discrimination are significant problems in the workplace. Although the majority of respondents (68%) do not recognize the existence of such practices, a worrying 19.9% say that they have experienced differential treatment, and 12.1% say that such cases exist in their organizations. Lack of opportunities for promotion in management positions and negative attitudes and discouraging comments from colleagues and superiors are the most common forms reported, mentioned by over 40% of the participants. Another frequently reported treatment is comments or jokes based on gender or abilities, reported by 36.8% of women. In addition, excluding women from important missions or operations is a practice encountered by 21% of the respondents.

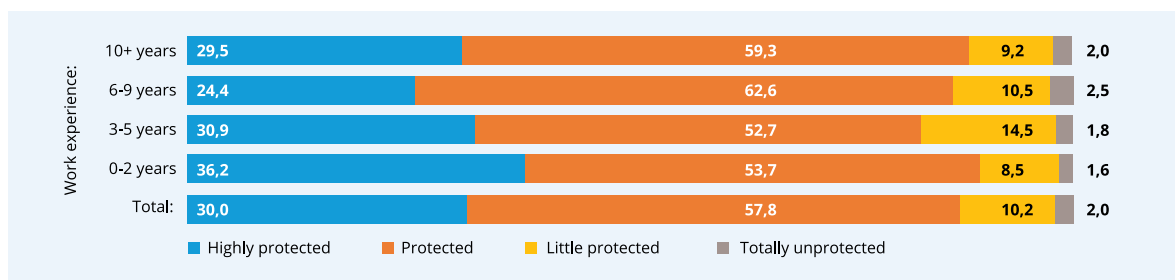
**FIGURE 18.**  
Incidence of cases of differential treatment at work and types (%)



Source: Opinion poll conducted by the Partnership for Development Center and UN Women Moldova, 2024

**Women’s perception of safety against discrimination and harassment decreases with professional experience.** Although a significant proportion of women in the sector say they feel "protected" against discrimination and harassment, the feeling of safety gradually decreases with the accumulation of professional experience. Women at the beginning of their careers, with 0-2 years of experience, feel the most protected, with 36.2% saying they are very protected. However, this percentage decreases as experience increases, reaching only 29.5% for employees with over 10 years of experience.

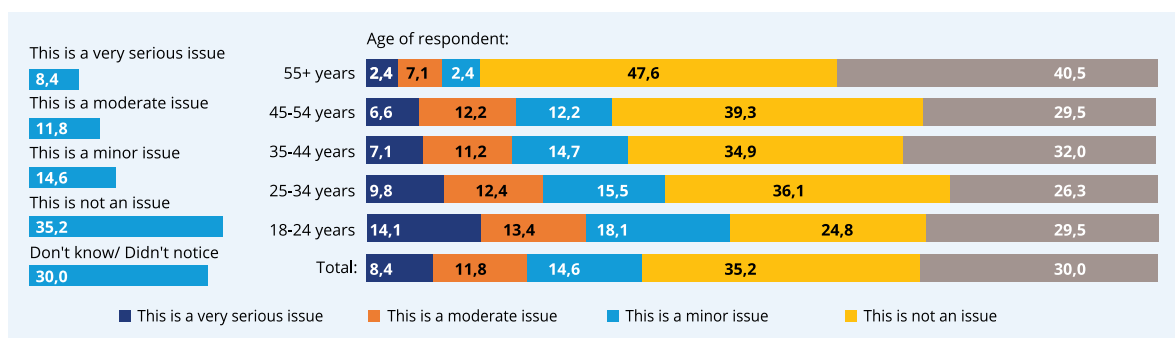
**FIGURE 19.**  
Level of perceived safety against discrimination and harassment/sexual harassment at work, by years of work experience (%)



Source: Opinion poll conducted by the Partnership for Development Center and UN Women Moldova, 2024

**One-third of respondents do not consider harassment or sexual harassment a problem in their work institution.** On the other hand, another third of the respondents opted not to express their opinion. However, the share of those who consider the phenomenon of harassment or sexual harassment a problem is 20.2%. From an age perspective, perceptions are different. With advancing age, harassment and/or sexual harassment is perceived as a problem less frequently: only 9.5% of respondents over 55 years of age consider it a very serious problem, compared to 27.5% of respondents aged 18-24.

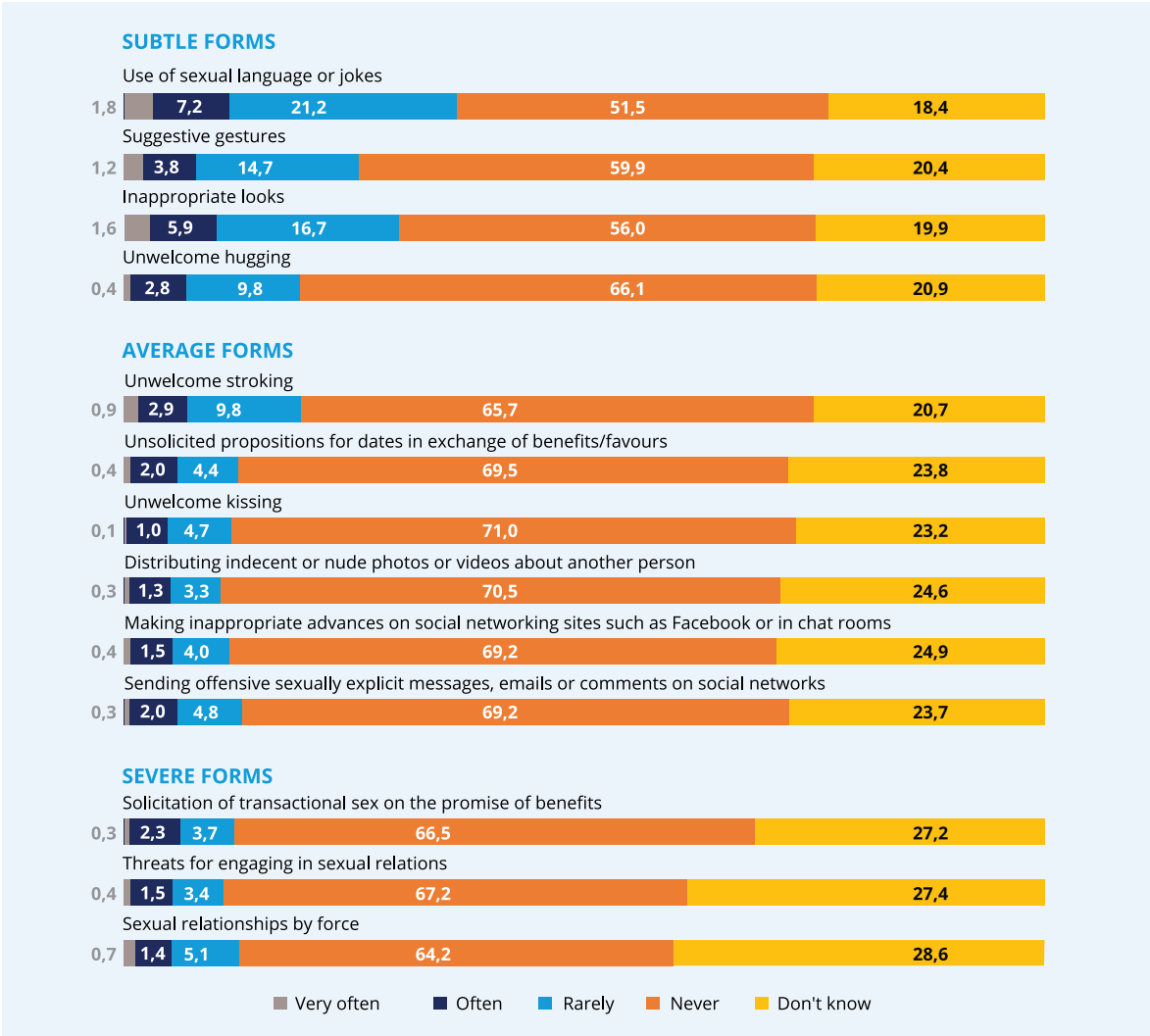
**FIGURE 20.**  
Perception of the seriousness of the phenomenon of harassment and sexual harassment at work (%)



Source: Opinion poll conducted by the Partnership for Development Center and UN Women Moldova, 2024

**Subtle forms are the most common forms of harassment encountered in the system.** The use of language or jokes with sexual connotations has the highest tendency to occur more often than the other forms, as indicated by 9% of respondents. In the category of medium forms, the incidence decreases slightly but remains significant. For example, inappropriate hugging and touching are reported as “frequent” experiences by 2.8% and 2.9% of respondents, respectively. Similarly, 6.8% of respondents recognized the occurrence of cases involving romantic dates in exchange for career advantages, and 5.8% acknowledged incidents of unwelcomed kissing. The most severe form reported was the use of force to maintain sexual relations: 7.2%.

**FIGURE 21.**  
**Incidence level of harassment and sexual harassment cases at the workplace, by form (%)**

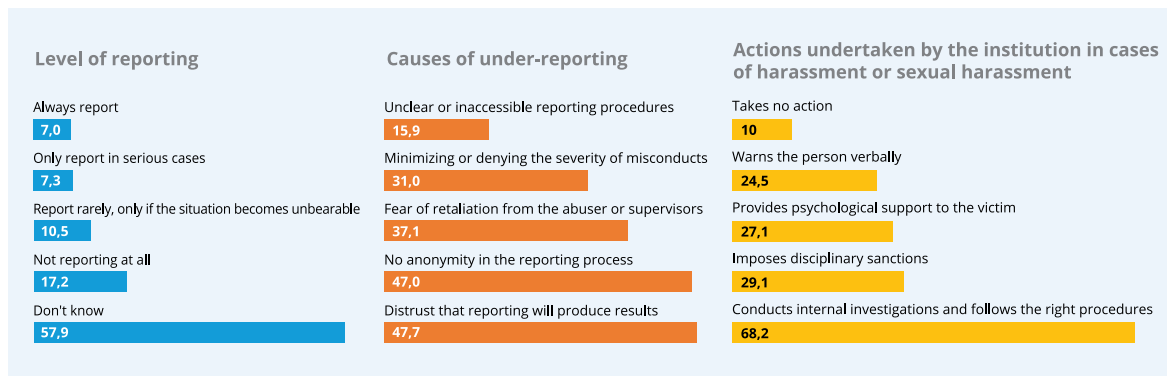


Source: Opinion poll conducted by the Partnership for Development Center and UN Women Moldova, 2024

**The under-reporting of harassment cases is fueled by fear and lack of trust in institutional measures.** Only 7% of respondents state that if there is a case of harassment/sexual harassment, it is reported, and 10.5% state that these cases are reported only when the situation becomes unbearable. Moreover, 57.9% of respondents do not know whether such cases are reported, which indicates a low level of information on the existing procedures to combat this phenomenon. One of the main factors preventing them from speaking openly about harassment cases is the lack of confidence that reporting will have a concrete result, as indicated by 47.7% of participants. Similarly, 47% cited the lack of anonymity in the reporting process as a cause of non-reporting. At the same time, it is encouraging that 68.2% of employees mentioned that in such cases, institutions conduct internal investigations and follow the correct procedures.

**FIGURE 22.**

**Level of reporting and reasons for non-reporting of cases of harassment and sexual harassment and actions taken by the institution in these cases (%)**

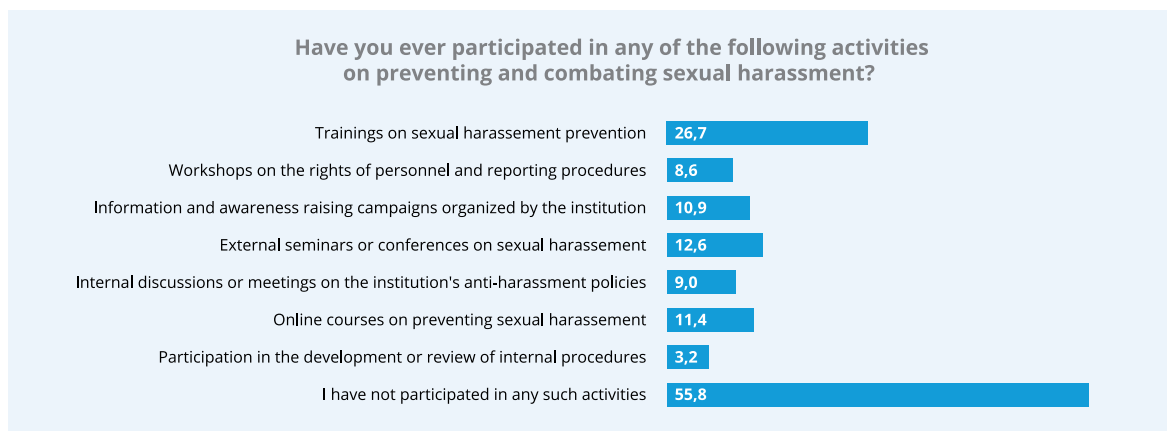


Source: Opinion poll conducted by the Partnership for Development Center and UN Women Moldova, 2024

**The lack of training for employees in preventing sexual harassment undermines efforts to combat the phenomenon.** The graph reveals a significant problem in efforts to prevent and combat sexual harassment in the workplace: over half of respondents (55.8%) say they have not participated in any training or formal prevention effort. This alarming figure reflects the lack of systematic and accessible initiatives to educate employees and raise awareness about sexual harassment and reporting mechanisms.

**FIGURE 23.**

**Level of participation in actions to prevent and combat sexual harassment (%)**



Source: Opinion poll conducted by the Partnership for Development Center and UN Women Moldova, 2024

Among the activities carried out, training sessions on the prevention of sexual harassment are the most accessed, but only 26.7% of respondents participated in them. Activities such as external seminars or conferences on the topic of sexual harassment (12.6%) and institutional awareness campaigns (10.9%) also register a low level of participation. These results indicate that prevention actions are inconsistent and sporadic, insufficiently promoted and at risk of being ineffective. In addition, workshops on employee rights and reporting procedures (8.6%) and internal discussions or meetings on anti-harassment policies (9%) are not carried out often.

Also, only 3.2% of respondents were involved in the development or review of internal procedures, which indicates that the process of developing and adopting such procedures, especially those regarding human resources and improving the organizational climate, is not participatory. This suggests that many of these processes do not include the perspective of all employees, increasing the risk that internal decisions are ineffective.



Photo credit: Gheorghe Vauc/Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Moldova

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Gender mainstreaming in the security and defense sector ensures equal opportunities for women and men to participate in these areas. Research suggests that security and defense institutions are largely male-dominated, thus there is a need to improve conditions for women by strengthening recruitment, retention and career advancement processes, while also providing a safe and productive working environment. Based on the findings and challenges identified in this study, a series of major interventions are required to increase the number of women in the sector and maintain a healthy and inclusive work environment.

### Increasing the level of representation of women in the sector

- **Introduce gender quotas at different levels and structures within the sector.** This is a strategic measure to encourage equitable representation in the field. Considering that the security and defense sector is strongly male-dominated, introducing gender quotas would contribute to recruiting and promoting women in key positions and at different levels (e.g., a certain percentage of staff would be required for each gender). These quotas should be detailed and include clear implementation steps in the short, medium and long term. To ensure equitable representation of women in the sector, it is recommended to introduce gender quotas at different levels, e.g., 30% women in management positions or intervention teams, 40% women in all recruitment structures, and a specific quota for women in military or professional training academies in the security sector. It is also recommended that gender quotas be introduced in the composition of evaluation committees, which are responsible for evaluating candidates for promotion (e.g., at least 30% of the committee members would be women). This balance would allow for a diverse perspective on employee performance and potential, combat gender-based discrimination, and ensure a fairer promotion process. In this context, it is recommended that institutions develop clear procedures for reporting on promotion assessments, to monitor gender balance within committees and to ensure that the process is transparent and fair. Such measures are widely applied in international practice. An example would be Canada, which has set a target to increase the proportion

of women in the Canadian Armed Forces (FAC) from 15.9% in 2016 to 25% by 2026. This target is detailed in Canada's defense policy, entitled "Protection, Security, Engagement." Norway has introduced measures to actively recruit women into the Armed Forces, including gender quotas in military academies. By 2020, women accounted for approximately 25% of the total number of recruits in Norway's armed forces, and specific measures were implemented in military academies to ensure balanced gender representation.

- **Establish transparent criteria for evaluation and promotion in positions.** These criteria must be applied uniformly to all employees, regardless of sex or gender, and be based on measurable performance, skills and professional competences. This would require several interventions: (I) clearly defining the competencies, responsibilities and requirements for each position or function within the institution (e.g., in the case of a command function, the evaluation criteria must include not only tactical and operational skills, but also leadership and communication skills, as well as skills in managing diverse teams); (II) making the evaluation process transparent (the performance evaluation and promotion process must be open and accessible to all employees, from the stage of establishing the evaluation criteria to the final promotion decisions, providing them with access to information on how they are evaluated); (III) objective performance evaluation (the evaluation criteria must be based on measurable achievements, such as meeting mission objectives, the ability to make decisions under stress, efficiency in managing teams and in implementing the organization's strategy).
- **Organize systematic training sessions on gender equality and inclusion, as an institutional obligation.** One of the main obstacles to integrating women in the security and defense sectors is the gender stereotypes deeply rooted in the organizational culture. These stereotypes often manifest themselves in the way women's skills are perceived, their ability to occupy leadership positions or to cope with the physical and psychological challenges specific to the field. Accordingly, institutional change must include specific training sessions for management representatives, for personnel involved in recruitment processes and for members of evaluation committees. Training programmes must become an institutional obligation, which should include training sessions on the concept of gender equality, mechanisms and measures to ensure equality at the institutional level, in recruitment and promotion procedures, support measures, etc. These sessions should also aim to identify and combat gender prejudices that can influence the recruitment, evaluation and promotion process.
- **Develop specific recruitment and retention programmes for women.** Security and defense institutions can launch campaigns that actively promote opportunities for women in security and defense, highlighting the importance of diversity and the benefits of a gender-balanced workforce. These campaigns can include: (I) mentoring for women who wish to pursue a career in defense, (II) dedicated training and development programmes for women to support them in their career progression, and (III) recruitment campaigns that highlight successful women in the sector.

## Strengthening the institutional response to women's development needs

- **Organize training sessions for women in the sector.** The study highlighted several training needs for women in the sector, which will be useful for them in fulfilling their functions, as well as in their professional development in general. Thus, it is recommended to establish a training programme with a systematic frequency that includes topics such as: (I) communication and public presentation skills, skills that are also very necessary for accessing management positions, (II) stress management and preventing professional burnout, a very persistent topic for employees in the security and defense sector, and (III) leadership and management, especially in the context of the underrepresentation of women in decisive positions. Other necessary skills training involve cybersecurity and sensitive information management, artificial intelligence, topical subject in the context of digitalization, and human rights and gender equality (with an emphasis on ensuring these principles in the fields of security and defense). Last but not least, a necessity signaled by the majority of respondents is learning foreign languages, a decisive skill in case of job postings or taking on decision-making positions. It is also recommended that the learning needs of employees in the system be assessed periodically to provide the opportunity for professional development in the workplace.

- **Improve the technical training of women in the sector through specific thematic and tactical training.**

Since there are different provisions on technical trainings for women and men in the sector, it is necessary to institutionalize an additional training programme specifically aimed at increasing women's technical skills. The programme's subjects should be established based on an assessment of women's institutional needs and the specific functions they hold, so that, if necessary, they can access these trainings to increase their skills in different areas. It is also crucial that the specific thematic and tactical trainings cover a wide range of skills, both technical and strategic. These trainings must be adapted to the specific challenges women encounter in the field and also allow them to excel in various roles. Thus, it is recommended to assess the individual needs of women and also train the entire team of employees in techniques such as: fight and self-defense, the use of protective equipment and weapons, survival techniques and management of crisis situations, tactical intervention and team management, cyber and information security, and negotiation and conflict management. Through specific thematic and tactical training, women will become more competent and prepared to face the challenges encountered in this sector and be more competitive in relation to male employees in the system. Importantly, research has found that officers who have adequate training produce better results, have fewer accidents, exercise more discipline, and use violence less often while carrying out their duties (Aamodt, 2015). Also, providing open training opportunities will increase the number of qualified officers, expand career opportunities for women in the system and help them meet the required quality standards (Vermeij, 2020).

- **Establish psychological counseling services.** Security and defense workers are exposed to extreme situations, such as violent encounters, assaults, or dangerous working conditions. These experiences can lead to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and anxiety. Psychological counselling helps manage related symptoms and prevent mental health problems. For example, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) has a programme called Operational Stress Injury Social Support (OSISS), which provides resources for veterans and active-duty personnel, including psychological counselling sessions. Psychological support programmes are also in place to help employees cope with stress and maintain a healthy work-life balance. The Australian Defense Force has integrated psychological counselling as part of its burnout prevention programmes for all employees, including women, given that stress can affect both performance and mental health. International examples show that these programmes improve employees' emotional state and contribute to the operational efficiency of security and defense institutions. Thus, it is recommended that psychological counselling services be established in the form of individualized counselling, which would allow prompt interventions for each employee and ensure monitoring of employees' psycho-emotional well-being. It is also recommended that sessions on developing resilience to stress and managing conflict situations be carried out for all employees on a mandatory basis, with periodic review sessions.

- **Ensure participation in international exchange programmes.** The participation of military personnel in international exchange programmes is essential for improving professionalism, interoperability and relations between the armies of different countries. This contributes to creating an environment of continuous learning, developing skills, and strengthening collaboration in joint operations. To strengthen the capacities of military women in Moldova and to draw inspiration from female models in the security and peace sector, it is necessary to carry out exchange programmes with institutions from other countries. For this effort to be as useful as possible, an analysis on capacity-building areas for female employees should be conducted, along with study visits aimed at their training in various fields, prioritizing the subjects they need to improve their performance and advance in their careers.

## **Creating an inclusive and responsive work environment to the needs of women**

- **Establish flexible work arrangements.** This measure aims to adapt working hours and work schedules to meet employees' individual needs while respecting the specific requirements of security and defense missions. Implementing flexible working hours can contribute to attracting and retaining women in this sector, who often face additional challenges related to work-life balance, as shown by the findings of this study. Although most functions and activities in the security and defense sector require physical presence in the field or in strategic locations, there are also numerous administrative, support, planning and coordination functions that can be carried out through flexible work arrangements.

There are several options through which flexible work schedules can be ensured: **(I) Remote work for employees** who, for example, deal with data analysis, mission planning or resource management, provided that information security is guaranteed. **(II) Flexible working hours** that include the possibility of choosing the start and end times of the working day. Some employees may also choose to work part-time or adjust their workload to suit personal or family needs. In the defense sector, where missions are essential, this could be implemented for support functions or in contexts where physical presence is not constantly required, such as in administrative or logistical functions. **(III) Part-time work** for employees who, for individual reasons (family or educational responsibilities), find it difficult to undertake a full-time work schedule. For example, an officer who has a reduced work schedule due to maternity or other family responsibilities could continue to contribute to administrative or logistical support missions. **(IV) Flexible mission regime**, especially for employees with family responsibilities. In the defense sector, missions in the field or in conflict zones can be a major challenge for personnel with family responsibilities. Making the mission regime more flexible could mean shorter rotations between periods of field activity and those at home, to help employees better manage their personal lives. In this regard, a mission scheduling system can be implemented that allows staff to choose or adjust their periods of absence, taking into account personal and family needs.

- **Establish additional support measures for parents returning from childcare leave.** The defense and security sector should provide institutional support that allows employees, especially women, to manage their family responsibilities without completely giving up their careers. For example, a woman returning from childcare leave could benefit from a part-time work schedule or a gradual return to work, in which she adjusts her working hours according to her personal needs.
- **Adapt physical and technical infrastructure to the specific needs of women and men employed in the sector.** This involves modifying and adapting physical structures, workspaces and facilities to ensure an environment that responds equitably to the needs of both genders. Infrastructure measures need to be linked to policies for the recruitment, promotion and retention of women, as well as other flexibility and work-life balance measures outlined above. This can be achieved by ensuring:
  - 1. Separate facilities for women and men.** As the analysis data indicates, in most defense and security institutions, especially in military structures, facilities (bathrooms, showers, changing rooms) are often designed only for men. An essential adjustment would be to create separate changing rooms and bathrooms for women, especially in institutions with a significant number of female employees, to respect their privacy and comfort. These facilities should also be appropriately equipped to support women's needs, including safe places to store personal equipment or hygiene products.
  - 2. Adapted equipment and uniforms.** Currently, many of the uniforms and equipment used in the defense and security sector are standardized for men, with designs and cuts that do not always suit women, making it difficult to carry out operational work. Authorities need to provide uniforms and equipment that respond to the physical characteristics of women: uniforms tailored to the female body, protective equipment (such as body armor) that is adjustable, and boots and protective footwear that are available in a variety of sizes, adapted to body types, and that ensure a correct fit. The adaptation of uniforms and equipment should be done in consultation with women in the sector to better understand their needs. For example, women who are involved in field missions could provide suggestions for improving uniforms and equipment to make them more functional.
  - 3. Facilities for staff with care responsibilities.** In the context of work-life balance challenges, it is necessary to provide facilities that support employees with family responsibilities. These could include breastfeeding rooms, nurseries or childcare facilities, especially in institutions where the constant presence of employees is required. Accessible recreational spaces should also be created to support the mental and physical health of employees.

## Preventing and combating discrimination and harassment in the workplace

- **Approve internal policies for the prevention, investigation and combating of harassment and sexual harassment at the workplace.** According to the provisions of the Labour Code, as well as Law no. 5/2006 on ensuring equal opportunities between women and men, employers have the obligation to prevent and combat sexual harassment at the workplace. There is also the legal obligation to “*introduce into the regulation of the organization and functioning of the unit provisions prohibiting discrimination based on gender and sexual harassment.*” Thus, the defense and security institutions (the National Anticorruption Center, the State Protection and Guard Service, and the Intelligence and Security Service) must approve internal policies that describe in stages the preventive measures that must be taken at the workplace, the investigation process with very clear steps with reference to the process, the persons responsible for the process as well as with reference to the measures that must be taken in such cases. Last but not least, the institutions must train employees in applying these provisions, and the persons who are appointed responsible for monitoring and applying them must possess specific skills that will allow them to prevent cases of harassment and sexual harassment, or, as the case may be, to investigate such cases and intervene promptly. A policy to prevent and combat sexual harassment in defense and security institutions is absolutely necessary to ensure a safe, respectful and ethical working environment. It protects employee rights, contributes to creating a climate of trust and performance, prevents abuses and ensures compliance with international regulations. This policy is also an important step in promoting diversity and equal opportunities in these essential areas.
- **Review the internal policies of the Ministry of Defense, the MIA, the National Penitentiary Administration and Customs Service on preventing and combating harassment and sexual harassment.** These include orders adopted at institutional level, i.e. No. 327 of 7 July 2020 of the Ministry of Defense, the policy on the procedure for preventing, identifying, registering, reporting and examining cases of discrimination, sexual harassment and gender-based violence; No. 392 of 4 September 2020 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the regulation on preventing, combating and reporting cases of gender-based discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment; No. 420 of 12 August 2022 of the National Penitentiary Administration, the Regulation on preventing, examining and reporting cases of discrimination based on sex, harassment and sexual harassment and No. 54-O of 11 February 2025 of the Customs Service on the procedures of preventing, identifying, registration, reporting and examination of the cases of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and gender-based violence. To see if these policies are effective, an analysis should be carried out on the impact of their implementation, in order to subsequently review and adapt them, as appropriate. It is also recommended that the Ministry of Internal Affairs add provisions on investigating and responding to cases of workplace harassment and sexual harassment, as its current policy largely focuses on prevention measures.
- **Train employees in preventing and combating workplace harassment and sexual harassment.** One of the biggest challenges in preventing sexual harassment is the lack of awareness on what it is and how it manifests. It is essential that employees are informed about what sexual harassment is, what its forms are (verbal, physical, non-verbal) and how it can manifest itself in a work environment or in everyday life. Adequate information also helps prevent abusive behaviors by changing mentalities and attitudes towards sexual harassment. Furthermore, many people, especially victims of sexual harassment, are afraid to talk about abuse due to shame, fear of retaliation, or lack of support. Holding institutional discussions about this phenomenon fosters an environment in which victims feel supported and encouraged to report harassment, knowing that they will not be judged or penalized. Thus, it is important that institutions systematically carry out information and training activities for staff in preventing and detecting workplace harassment and sexual harassment. Informational and awareness-raising activities must be carried out, especially during periods when certain cases have been detected at the workplace. Informational activities can include the development of guides and brochures on the subject, public discussions, training sessions, and simulation exercises on detection processes and responding to harassment cases, etc.



*Raising awareness among employees of the National Penitentiary Administration of the Republic of Moldova in the context of the "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence" Campaign, December 2024. Photo credit: UN Women/Anna Galatonova*



Photo credit: UN Women/Ramin Mazur

# INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

## Normative framework and international standards

**Gender equality in the security and defense sector has become a central element of international agendas for peace and stability.** This principle is enshrined in international legal instruments that recognize the right of women to participate in all dimensions and stages of security processes, from conflict prevention to post-conflict reconstruction. International norms emphasize the integration of a gender perspectives into security institutions and public policies, recognizing that sustainable peace and stability are only possible through the full and equitable participation of women.

**International law has introduced policies on ensuring gender equality in various spheres, including in the field of security and defense.** Adopted in 1979, the CEDAW Convention represents the international legal foundation for combating discrimination against women. Article 7 of the Convention provides for the right of women to participate in public and political life, including in decision-making structures in the security and defense sector. CEDAW obliges signatory states to adopt measures to eliminate all forms of gender discrimination, promoting equal access of women to decision-making positions.

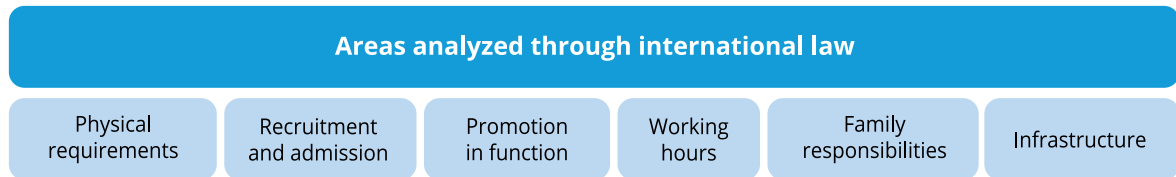
**Within the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the policy of promoting women in military institutions, police forces and peacekeeping missions was expressed and firmly supported.** UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) grouped under the Women, Peace and Security theme provide necessary guidance in efforts to promote and protect women's rights. These resolutions are binding on UN Member States, relevant actors and international organizations and provide a roadmap for strengthening gender equality in the security sector, aimed at mainstreaming gender across all stages of security processes. The following resolutions, particularly UNSCR 1325<sup>1</sup> (2000) and UNSCR 1820<sup>2</sup> (2008), set out guidelines to ensure equitable representation of women and men in the armed forces and to ensure the protection of women's rights in conflict and post-conflict areas: UNSCR 1888<sup>3</sup> and 1889<sup>4</sup> (2009), UNSCR 1960<sup>5</sup> (2010), UNSCR 2106<sup>6</sup> and 2122<sup>7</sup> (2013), UNSCR 2242<sup>8</sup> (2015), and UNSCR 2467<sup>9</sup> and 2493<sup>10</sup> (2019). NATO has declared its commitment to implementing these resolutions, and many NATO member or partner countries have developed their own action plans for their implementation both in relation to national police forces and the armed forces.



*Captain Vacaru Parascovia, with experience in international missions, and journalist Sanda Porubin, at the event dedicated to the International Day of UN Peacekeepers, organized on May 29, 2025 by UN Women, in partnership with the Ministry of Defense, with the support of Sweden and Denmark. Photo credit: Gheorghe Vauc/Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Moldova*

**NATO and the European Union have committed to integrating the gender dimension into their security policies.** The EU launched the Gender Equality Action Plan III (2021-2025)<sup>11</sup>, which promotes the equal participation of women in peacekeeping missions and combats gender stereotypes. NATO also adopted the [Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy](#)<sup>12</sup>, which recognizes the importance of diversity and the complementary skills of women and men for the success of military operations. NATO has stated that gender mainstreaming contributes to operational effectiveness and strengthens relations between military and civilian structures.

**The following diagram presents the main international norms and standards regarding six key areas of analysis based on international law.** Analyzing these provisions is crucial to understanding how Moldova's national legislation aligns with them, existing gaps, and opportunities for improving the national regulatory framework in ensuring gender equality.



### International regulations

Key areas	Relevant international provisions, standards and practices
<b>Physical requirements and gender dimension</b>	<p>The security sector has implemented changes in its selection and evaluation criteria for candidates. Physical characteristics are increasingly complemented and, in certain situations, replaced by cognitive skills, psychological, intellectual and other physical or mental abilities. High-performance equipment is also important, making the differences between the physical strength of women and men not as relevant (on average, as there are exceptions for both sexes).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) emphasizes that Member States have the obligation to periodically assess whether derogations from the principle of equal treatment are still justified in light of social changes (<i>Tanja Kreil v. Bundesrepublik Deutschland</i>, C-285/98, para. 22, similar to <i>Johnston</i> in para. 37<sup>13</sup> and <i>Sirdar</i> in para. 25<sup>14</sup>).</li> <li>• The CJEU has highlighted that the progressive implementation of the principle of equal treatment between men and women must remain a permanent objective (<i>Tanja Kreil v. Bundesrepublik Deutschland</i>, C-285/98, para.14)<sup>15</sup> The Court has established that physical or gender requirements must always be justified by the specific nature of the activities and the requirement must be proportionate.</li> <li>• Article 14, para. 2 of Directive 2006/54<sup>16</sup> allows for a derogation from equal treatment in situations where a difference in treatment based on sex is justified by a determining, legitimate and proportionate occupational requirement. In interpreting this exception, the CJEU has shown that in certain areas such as public security, national defense, and the carrying of firearms, States have a certain margin of appreciation, with the possibility of derogating from the principle of equal treatment between women and men as long as the principle of proportionality is respected (CJEU cases <i>Leifer</i><sup>17</sup>, <i>Johnston</i><sup>18</sup>, <i>Sirdar</i><sup>19</sup>, and <i>Tanja Kreil v. Bundesrepublik Deutschland</i><sup>20</sup>).</li> <li>• The CJEU has emphasized that this exception must be applied strictly, only for specific activities and never in a generalized manner. Article 14(2) of Directive 2006/54 therefore makes the introduction of a determining occupational requirement subject to compliance with the condition that its objective is legitimate and the requirement is proportionate. The reason for the need for a restrictive application of the derogation is that these requirements constitute a derogation from an individual right provided for by the directive (<i>Tanja Kreil v. Bundesrepublik Deutschland</i>, paras. 20-29, citing <i>Johnston</i>, para. 36)<sup>21</sup>. and <i>Sirdar</i> para. 23<sup>22</sup>). In explaining the principle, the CJU gives examples of professions or specializations where the imposition of a sex-specific occupational requirement may be justified: guards in a male/female prison, in situations where the nature of the activities requires that the staff be of the same sex as the prisoners (<i>Commission v. France</i>, C-312/86 of 1988, paras. 11 and 18).<sup>23</sup>; police activities where there is a high risk of violence or serious internal unrest, where physical or gender requirements may be justified (<i>Johnston</i>, paras. 36 and 37<sup>24</sup>), service in special combat units where there is a condition of interoperability (<i>Sirdar</i>, para. 29 and 31<sup>25</sup>).</li> </ul>

Key areas	Relevant international provisions, standards and practices
<b>Recruitment and admission</b>	<p>The recruitment of women into the security sector is globally recognized as a strategic necessity to promote diversity and improve the effectiveness of institutions. UN studies show that mixed gender teams are more effective in interacting with local communities, increasing population trust and reducing conflict.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The UN has set an ambitious goal to achieve equal participation between women and men in international peacekeeping missions. During the first phase, the target was 20% female representation, with an ultimate goal of reaching 50% women in peacekeeping troops, whether military or police.<sup>26</sup></li> <li>• Many UN Member States have adopted multi-year strategies to recruit more women in security and defense professions. These strategies are reviewed periodically (every five years), with adjustments that take into account social and technological developments. A notable example is the guide developed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), which provides good practices for creating inclusive recruitment processes.<sup>27</sup> The document recommends: (I) reviewing selection criteria to eliminate requirements that may indirectly discriminate against women; (II) creating support and training programmes for female candidates from underrepresented backgrounds; and (III) implementing transparency and monitoring measures to ensure equal opportunities.</li> <li>• The UN has issued checklists for recruiting women into police forces for international missions<sup>28</sup> and establishing physical and medical standards, respectively. Both of these checklists can be adapted at the national level to create fair recruitment processes. The 2017 NATO annual report shows that 60.7% of the organization's member states apply identical recruitment standards for women and men, marking an increase from previous years.<sup>29</sup> Only 14.3% of states use different recruitment quotas for women and men.</li> <li>• Invoking traditions or misconceptions in an attempt to limit women's access to certain professions is against international human rights law. In this regard, the use of objective criteria based on scientific evidence is essential. For example, in the United States, the "80 per cent" rule is applied to analyze the disproportionate impact of tests on women. If less than 80% of female candidates pass a test compared to the highest performing group, the test is re-evaluated for relevance. In cases where the criterion is essential for the professional tasks, additional training programmes are offered to support female candidates and ensure a fair process<sup>30</sup>.</li> </ul>
<b>Job promotion and vertical segregation</b>	<p>After integrating more women into the security sector, maintaining a safe, fair and inclusive work environment becomes a priority. This requires implementing clear policies and mechanisms to combat discrimination and harassment, including measures to ensure equal opportunities in professional promotion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The UN emphasizes the importance of proactive measures to ensure a work environment that supports the equal representation of women and men at all hierarchical levels. Its guidelines recommend adopting internal policies that prevent and combat any form of discrimination or exploitation, as well as promoting gender equality through tangible measures.</li> <li>• The International Labour Organization (ILO), through Convention No. 190 (2019), defines "violence and harassment in the field of work as referring to a series of unacceptable behaviors and practices, or the threat of them, whether occurring once or repeatedly, which have the purpose, result in or have the potential to cause physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm, and includes gender-based violence and harassment."<sup>31</sup></li> <li>• NATO introduced a strategic policy to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse in 2020, creating a coherent framework for managing these issues in international operations. This policy provides specific measures for reporting incidents, protecting victims and sanctioning inappropriate behavior.<sup>32</sup></li> <li>• UN guidelines suggest reviewing and re-evaluating promotion criteria and procedures to ensure they are gender-equitable. It also recommends training interviewers and evaluators in selection and professional evaluation committees so that they are aware of gender bias and include more women on these committees, such as experts from outside the security sector.<sup>33</sup> Recommendations offered by the NATO expert commission<sup>34</sup> and the UN in its</li> </ul>

Key areas	Relevant international provisions, standards and practices
	<p>guide on the integration of women in police forces include creating annual plans and establishing a gender equality office or hiring gender experts to monitor the implementation of relevant public policies. These experts should conduct a periodic gender equality audit regarding the measures adopted and their impact.<sup>35</sup> The person who is hired as a gender expert will be involved in developing procedures, drafting specifications, or operationalizing and monitoring processes under a gender mainstreaming lens.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The UN also recommends that security and defense structures adopt specific gender equality policies to mainstream gender considerations into their institutions.<sup>36</sup> Such initiatives involve empowerment programmes for women in the sector, leadership programmes, information campaigns, networking and training. An example of a network that supports national organizations of women officers within police forces is the Women Police Network in Moldova.<sup>37</sup> Similar organizations should be implemented at the national level for women who choose a career in these structures.</li> </ul>
<b>Working hours</b>	<p>Ensuring an adequate balance between professional life and family responsibilities is an essential aspect of human resource policies, especially in the security sector. This is a field that often involves long working hours and irregular shifts and missions that can affect the personal stability of employees. Adopting flexible work hours for employees contributes to not only to increasing retention but also to promoting diversity and inclusion within security and defense institutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The UN Guide to Mainstreaming Gender in Security Activities mentions that one of the interventions with good results in increasing the retention of women in the police is encouraging a balance between family and professional life by establishing mentoring, counseling and training programmes.<sup>38</sup></li> <li>• In many countries, institutions in the security and defense sector have adopted flexible work schedules to reduce the risk of burnout and increase employee satisfaction. These measures include: (I) adaptable work schedules, where employees can choose between fixed shifts, night shifts or alternative schedules, allowing for more efficient management of family responsibilities; (II) teleworking and hybrid schedules, which offer the possibility of working remotely; and (III) flexible leave, tailored to the individual needs of employees, without affecting their careers.</li> </ul>
<b>Family responsibilities</b>	<p>Family responsibilities represent a major challenge for security sector employees, especially women, who often have to combine demanding professional requirements with family duties. From a gender equality perspective, addressing these challenges should not lead to the exclusion of women from security and defense professions but to the adoption of specific measures enabling them to participate equally in work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CJEU has indicated that the specific biological or social needs of women, such as pregnancy or childcare, do not justify their exclusion from professions in the security sector. Thus, the protection offered must be based on concrete measures, such as maternity leave, days off for childcare or flexible working hours, without affecting equal access to careers (Tanja Kreil v. Bundesrepublik Deutschland, C-285/98, para. 30, citing Johnston para. 44)<sup>39</sup>.</li> <li>• The UN has developed a series of recommendations aimed at supporting work-life balance in the security sector, including<sup>40</sup>: paid parental leave for both parents, options to modify or make work responsibilities more flexible during pregnancy, the provision of appropriate uniforms during pregnancy, part-time or flexible work schedules, and the installation of childcare facilities within the unit or next to the unit.</li> </ul>
<b>Infrastructure</b>	<p>Adequate infrastructure plays a fundamental role in promoting gender equality and ensuring a safe and functional working environment for women in the security sector. The lack of adapted facilities can constitute a significant barrier to women's participation, influencing both the decision to pursue a career in this field, as well as retention and professional performance.</p>

Key areas	Relevant international provisions, standards and practices
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International practices indicate the need to ensure infrastructure appropriate to the needs of women, which may include: (I) segregated accommodation in school dormitories or military units (separation of bedrooms, adaptation of common areas); (II) adapted sanitary facilities (separate, well-maintained and safe toilets and showers, meeting international hygiene standards); (III) adapted equipment and armament (protective equipment, uniforms and armament adapted to the physical size and needs of women); (IV) gyms and training facilities/equipment accessible and adapted for both men and women; (V) arrangements for the care of pre-school children (establishing care services in the vicinity of security units or providing subsidies for childcare supports employees, especially women).</li> </ul>



*Strengthening teamwork and influence skills, workshop organized by the Women's Police Association in collaboration with UN Women and the financial support of the Government of Denmark, August 2024. Photo credit: UN Women Moldova*

## National regulatory framework

**The Republic of Moldova has made constant efforts to develop a legislative and institutional framework that promotes gender equality, including in the field of security and defense.** At the national level, guaranteeing equality between women and men in all areas of public and private life, including in the security sector, is one of the fundamental principles defined by the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova (1994): “all citizens of the Republic of Moldova are equal before the law and public authorities, without privileges or discrimination” (Article 16). The Constitution, which provides the general framework for all national legislative acts, establishes the obligation to address gender equality, emphasizing the need to eliminate all forms of discrimination, whether direct or indirect.

**Therefore, at the national level, there is a legislative framework that aims to promote equality and combat discrimination.** Two of the most relevant legislative acts in the field of gender equality are Law No. 5 of 09-02-2006 on ensuring equal opportunities between women and men and Law No. 121 of 25-05-2012 on ensuring equality. Their provisions promote the equitable participation of women and men in political, economic, social, cultural and professional life, including provisions that oblige public institutions to mainstream gender across their internal policies and practices. At the same time, they prohibit discrimination on any grounds, including gender, and promote equal treatment and opportunities in all areas.

**Gender-based violence and gender-based discrimination are prohibited in the Republic of Moldova.** The Labour Code (2003), an act that regulates labour relations between employers and employees, includes express provisions that support gender equality in the workplace, prohibiting discrimination in the hiring, promotion and remuneration process. It also provides for the adaptation of working conditions to meet the specific needs of women and men, thus contributing to the creation of an inclusive environment in the workplace. The Criminal Code (2002) also criminalizes all forms of gender-based violence, including sexual violence and harassment. In addition to the provisions of the Criminal Code, the prevention and combating of domestic violence is regulated by a separate legislative framework approved by Law no. 45 of 01-03-2007.

**Moldova has made significant progress in ensuring work-life balance, approving a set of measures that involve:** (I) reforming childcare leave to give parents flexibility to decide its duration and the method of sharing and also stimulate the equitable involvement of both parents in raising and caring for the child; (II) flexible work schedules; and (III) expanding childcare options.

**To ensure equal pay for equal work, the authorities approved a law in 2022<sup>41</sup> that adjusted the legislation on wage transparency.** The latter regulates a series of measures, including: (I) the definitions of: remuneration, wage level, gender pay gap, equal work, and work of equal value, which have all been introduced into the legislation; (II) large and medium-sized enterprises will be obliged to periodically inform employees about the level of remuneration by gender; (III) employers will submit to the authorities, once a year, information on average remuneration based on gender and position; (IV) employees can obtain information on request on the levels of remuneration, broken down by gender, for categories of employees who perform equal work or work of equal value.

**Moldova’s legislative and policy frameworks in the security and defense sector reflects the government’s clear commitment to promoting gender equality and strengthening women’s participation.** As a country located on the border between the European Union and the non-EU state of Ukraine, and facing complex challenges generated by the existence of an unresolved conflict on its territory and regional developments in Ukraine, mainstreaming gender into the security and defense sector becomes an even more strident priority in the process of consolidating sovereignty and territorial integrity. As a result, Moldova adopted its first National Action Plan for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 in 2018, an act that includes measures to increase the participation of women in the security sector and prevent armed conflicts.

**Lessons learned from the implementation of the National Programme for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 for the period 2018-2021 highlighted the need for a more comprehensive strategic framework.** The new National Programme for the Period 2023-2027 aims to respond to current challenges, such as

security risks and the impact of regional humanitarian crises and promote women's participation in decision-making processes in the security sector. The Programme also aims to reduce gender stereotypes and structural barriers in the security and defense sector. Priority areas include: (I) increasing the share of women's participation in international peacekeeping missions; (II) improving mechanisms for preventing and combating gender-based violence; (III) facilitating equal access to decision-making processes; and (iv) developing an inclusive and gender-sensitive institutional environment. The Programme and its Action Plan are aligned with the Council of Europe's Strategy for Equality between Women and Men (2018-2023), the European Union's Strategy on Gender Equality (2020-2025) and UN Women Moldova's Strategic Plan (2023-2027). At the same time, they support the national commitments undertaken within the Moldova-EU Association Agenda and the National Development Strategy "European Moldova 2030." In this context, at the national level, there is a clear commitment to strengthening women's participation in security structures, protecting their rights and combating systemic discrimination.

**Regulatory frameworks within specific institutions also address the principle of equality and non-discrimination, as outlined below:**

Specific legislation for the institutions analyzed	
<b>Ministry of Defense</b>	<b>Law No. 162 of 22-07-2005</b> regulates the status of the military, including provisions to ensure equal access to positions and responsibilities. The ministry's internal regulations include specific measures to promote the participation of women in missions and decision-making positions.
<b>Ministry of Internal Affairs</b>	<b>Law No. 288 of 16-12-2016</b> establishes the framework for the equitable recruitment and promotion of women and men in public positions with special status. The Ministry of Internal Affairs also implements policies that support the integration of women in its structures.
<b>National Penitentiary Administration</b>	<b>Government Decision No. 583/2006</b> regulates the organization of prisons, including measures to protect employees against discrimination. The ANP places particular emphasis on ensuring a work environment that supports women's rights.
<b>State Protection and Guard Service</b>	<b>Law No. 134 of 13-06-2008</b> ensures equal opportunities in access to positions within the SPPS. The institution also runs training programmes that include modules on gender issues and the prevention of discrimination.
<b>National Anticorruption Center</b>	<b>Law No. 1104 of 06-06-2002</b> provides explicit measures on mainstreaming gender into the institution's activities. At the same time, the CNA promotes gender equality through policies focused on recruitment, promotion and professional training.
<b>Customs Service</b>	<b>The Customs Code</b> guarantees equal access to professional opportunities for all categories of personnel. The Customs Service contributes to the promotion of gender equality through regulations that eliminate stereotypes and support women in operational functions.



Photo credit: UN Women/Ramin Mazur

# APPLICABILITY OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AT THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

## Ministry of Internal Affairs

### 1.1. Physical requirements

**MIA Order No. 644 of 2022 regulates the minimum training requirements for personnel with officer and non-commissioned officer status within subordinate institutions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.** This regulation replaced MIA Order No. 69 of 2017 and aims to unify the physical requirements for all subordinate institutions, taking into account the particularities of the missions and the personnel's age, gender and health status.

**The regulation outlines differentiated physical requirements for women and men without providing objective justification.** The regulation for assessing basic motor qualities, such as strength, speed, and endurance, attempts to take into account the anatomical peculiarities of women and men. The regulation on military physical training was amended in 2004, 2013 and 2020, mainly aiming to adapt the exercises and scales. However, these amendments maintained separate scales for women and men, which were considered justified by specific military activities. Despite this seemingly inclusive approach, the different physical requirements between the two sexes are significant and raise questions about objectivity. For example, in terms of running, women are required to cover a distance of 1,000 meters, while men must run 3,000 meters, a considerable difference that is not always justified in relation to professional requirements. Also, exercises such as the “bar pull-ups” are exclusively for men, while women must perform a modified version of this exercise called the “bar pull-ups from a hanging position.” On the other hand, some exercises such as the “bar push-ups from a lying position” are identical for both sexes, which raises the question of why the same uniform approach cannot be applied to other tests. These differences in physical requirements, although apparently adapted, are not always supported by objective justifications. Consequently, they may perpetuate discriminatory practices that limit women's access to certain positions or affect their career paths.

**Predominantly male evaluation committees raise questions about the objectivity of the process.** According to the data in Table 1 (2018–2024), the presence of women in the physical fitness evaluation committees within the MIA institutions was very low, even non-existent in some cases, with variations from one year to another that highlight discrepancies and worrying trends. For example, at the level of the General Inspectorate of Police (IGP) and the General Inspectorate of Carabinieri (IGC), the evaluation committees were initially made up exclusively of men (0 women in 2018 for both structures). Later, although female staff were also co-opted, their share remained minimal. At the IGP, for example, there were three female members on the committee in 2019 compared to 12 men, but female representation decreased again in the following years, reaching the point where only one woman was present alongside 14 men in 2023–2024. Similarly, at the IGC, the first woman only appeared on the committee in 2021, reaching a maximum of five women (out of a total of 30 members) in 2022. However, women’s participation decreased to three women (out of 17 members) in 2024.

At the opposite end, within the **General Inspectorate of Border Police (IGPF)**, an atypical situation was recorded in 2018–2019, when the number of women involved in the committees was relatively high and even reached the majority in 2018 (16 women vs. 6 men). However, this initial trend has reversed since 2020: the IGPF committees in recent years have been numerically dominated by men (e.g., eight women and 28 men in 2020 and six women and 23 men in 2023). At the **General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations (IGSU)**, the composition of the committees remained almost unchanged in each year evaluated, with one to two women and three men (a format repeated in 2018, 2019 and 2021–2024). This highlights the consistent predominance of men on the committee, even bearing in mind that in 2020 the IGSI did not organize a committee, according to the data in the table.

From 2018 to 2023, the evaluation committees of the **Ministry of Internal Affairs Academy** were composed exclusively of men (usually five or six members, all male). The first female member was recorded only in 2024, when one woman was included in the committee along with five men. The total absence of activity among some committees during certain years is also noteworthy. For example, at IGPF in 2021 and at IGSI in 2020, “–” was recorded in the table), indicating temporary interruptions of the physical fitness evaluation process, possibly due to the COVID-19 or internal reorganizations. Overall, these data confirm a major gender imbalance in the MIA’s evaluation committees during the period 2018-2024 and illustrate the fluctuations and limited efforts to include women in such structures. The predominantly male presence in committees perpetuates the perception that women are being excluded. Furthermore, it also influences the interpretation of evaluation criteria, especially in the context of the significant physical differences imposed on women and men by the current scales.

**TABLE 1.** Number of women and men involved in the Evaluation Committees created based on the "Regulation on the organization of physical training and sports" within the Ministry of Internal Affairs for 2018-2019 in IGP, IGPF, IGC and IGSI.

Institution	2018		2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
IGPF	16	6	18	7	8	28	–	–	5	17	6	23	8	18
IGSI	1	3	2	3	–	–	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	3
IGC	0	5	0	20	0	5	2	23	5	25	3	9	3	14
IGP	0	8	3	12	2	7	2	10	2	14	1	14	1	15
Academy	–	5	–	5	–	5	–	5	–	6	–	6	1	5

**The exclusively male representation in professional guides excludes women from operational scenarios.** The Ministry of Internal Affairs introduced the Guide on Professional Intervention in the Exercise of Function (through Joint Order No. 4 of 11 January 2018) to standardize practices related to the use of physical force, special means and firearms. Although the guide is a comprehensive and well-structured document, the

illustrations show the procedures being exclusively carried out by men. This visual approach sends a subtle but problematic message: female police officers are excluded from scenarios involving the use of force in a professional context. This representation may discourage women from perceiving themselves as having an active and equal role in such situations and perpetuates gender stereotypes within the profession.

#### References in international standards:

- **CEDAW, Article 10(a):** States are obliged to ensure the same conditions for access to the profession, including identical curricula and examinations for women and men.
- **In the case of *Tanja Kreil v. Federal Republic of Germany*, para.22,** the CJEU ruled on the need for a permanent assessment of social needs that could justify different standards applied to women and men: “A Member State may restrict certain activities and vocational training only to men or to women, as the case may be. In such a case, as is clear from Article(2) of Directive 76/207, Member States have an obligation to periodically assess the activities in question in order to decide whether, in the light of social developments, the derogation from the general framework of the Directive can be maintained (Johnston in para. 37 and Sirdar in para. 25).”
- **NATO Annual Report 2017:** Over 60% of NATO member states require identical physical requirements for women and men, promoting equal opportunities in the armed forces.<sup>42</sup>

#### Examples of international good practices:

**United Nations Police Gender Toolkit<sup>43</sup>.** The National Center for Women and Policing's recruitment guide in the United States mentions the "80 percent rule" as effective, which implies that if at any point in the selection or recruitment process, less than 80% of female candidates pass the test compared to the group with the highest success rate, it is concluded that the test has a differential impact on women. In such cases, the procedure automatically requires that the relevance of the test be examined in relation to the position and work performed, and ways are sought to reduce the disproportionate impact. When it is determined that the criterion for resolving the tie is still crucial for the police work but may negatively impact women, training and preparation are provided before the test to improve candidates' success rates.

- **Canada:** The selection procedure does not differentiate between women and men; instead, it emphasizes the ability to perform the specific tasks of the position.
- **Germany:** Emphasis is placed on individual skills and the ability to complete missions, regardless of gender.

#### Recommendations:

- **Review the physical requirements and eliminate unjustified differences between women and men.** Physical requirements must reflect the abilities necessary to perform professional tasks, without discriminating based on gender. Exercises currently excluded for women should be adapted, and control scales should be adjusted to account for biological differences while maintaining the level of training appropriate to the functions within the Ministry of Internal Affairs.
- **Increase the representation of women in evaluation committees through the following steps:** (I) Ensure the participation of both sexes in the evaluation committees, avoiding committees composed exclusively of men or exclusively of women. An adequate number of evaluators of different genders contributes to the diversity of perspectives and reduces the risk of systematic bias. (II) Explicitly introduce into internal regulations (MIA orders, competition regulations, etc.) an obligation to maintain an evaluation committee with balanced gender representation. For example, the rules could require that each committee be composed of people of both genders (possibly setting a minimum proportion for the underrepresented gender, such as a quota of 30-50%). (III) Raise committee members' awareness of gender biases and stereotypes that may affect the evaluation process. Evaluators must apply objective

assessment criteria focused on each candidate's capabilities and performance and avoid gender-based assumptions (e.g., underestimating the physical abilities of female candidates or overestimating those of male candidates without concrete evidence).

- **Update guides and training materials** to reflect the new scales and procedures while providing staff clear guidance on meeting the revised requirements. Implementing this change involves reviewing existing content with the support of experts in the field, including instructions tailored to the specific needs of staff of both genders and distributing the new guides to all employees, ensuring uniform training across the entire institution.
- **Implement a system for monitoring and periodic re-evaluation** of the scales' physical requirements to verify the relevance and fairness of these requirements. This system involves the systematic collection of statistical data on the performance of personnel in physical tests (e.g., success rates disaggregated by gender and age group) and the periodic analysis of these indicators by a specialized commission, to adjust the standards if significant deviations or changes in operational requirements are found. At the same time, it is recommended that the methodology for establishing physical scales be published to ensure the transparency of the decision-making process and increase personnel confidence in the fairness of these standards. Piloting the new physical requirements on a small sample size is also necessary before large-scale implementation. This stage involves testing the proposed scales in a limited sample of MIA units and adjusting them based on the results obtained, so that the final application is optimized and based on concrete evidence.
- **Continue and expand training programmes on gender equality** by organizing mandatory sessions for all staff, including management. These sessions should be developed in collaboration with international experts and specialized organizations to ensure a comprehensive and effective approach to the themes of gender equality, non-discrimination and inclusion.
- **Monitor and evaluate the impact of implemented measures** by collecting and analyzing data on women's participation in different programmes and the effect on their careers. Conduct periodic evaluation studies to measure progress and identify possible areas for improvement. This practice should be complemented by collaboration with experts in the field and international organizations to align measures with global standards.

## 1.2. Recruitment and admission

The admission competition for the first cycle (higher education bachelor's degree) is organized by the Ștefan cel Mare Academy through different study programmes based on internal documents under the MIA. The admissions are also made based on the "Nomenclature of fields of professional training and specialties", approved by Government Decision No. 482 of 18-06-2017, depending on the form of education and the source of financing (budget, contract with payment of tuition fees), within the limits of the enrollment plans, approved in the established manner.

**The admissions policy at Ștefan cel Mare Academy** establishes the conditions and stages candidates must meet to be admitted. Candidates must be citizens of the Republic of Moldova, with a stable residence, know the Romanian language and have no criminal record. Other criteria imposed on the candidates concern integrity (lacking the capacity to be accused or indicted in a criminal trial) and apoliticality (candidates cannot be members of any banned political party or organization). Another specific requirement of the institution is the different age limit depending on gender: men can apply until they reach the age of 30, while women have a lower limit of 27 years. According to specialist assessments, candidates must also be physically, mentally and medically fit.

The admissions process is carried out in several stages. Initially, candidates submit their application files to the Academy's Admissions Committee or through the territorial inspectorates, including the required documents (baccalaureate diploma, identity documents, characterizations, criminal record, etc.). This is followed by a medical examination organized by the Ministry of Internal Affairs to confirm the candidates' physical and mental fitness. Candidates declared fit then take the competition tests, which usually include

assessing physical performance and verifying the necessary knowledge/skills (written tests on legislation or foreign languages, interview, etc., according to the Academy's internal rules). Admission is based on a competition, within the limit of available places, with candidates ranked according to the results obtained in the qualifying tests and academic performance (competition average).

Finally, the lists of candidates admitted to budget-funded places (state-subsidized studies, which usually involve subsequent employment in the Ministry of Internal Affairs structures) and fee-paying places (contract studies, self-financed) are displayed. Essentially, the admission regulations aim to select candidates who are integrated from a legal, medical and skills point of view, but they also provide for certain special criteria, such as age limits and gender criteria, that influence the conduct of the competition and the composition of the future student promotion.

**Different admission requirements for men and women based on age and height have no justification and are considered discriminatory.** However, candidates must meet several conditions according to the admission regulations of the Ștefan cel Mare Academy for places with budget funding. Men must not exceed the age of 30 and not have a height of less than 170 cm (168 cm for high school graduates in the current year); and women must not exceed the age of 27 and not have a height of less than 165 cm.

From an equal opportunities perspective, these provisions raise issues. Biological considerations have traditionally justified the height difference – women are on average slightly shorter than men – and indeed, many governments initially applied separate height scales or even eliminated this criterion in recent times. Romania, for example, reduced the minimum height requirement (to 1.65 m for men and 1.60 m for women) as early as 2014 and in 2017, it completely repealed the height limit for admission to police institutions, acknowledging that specific practical tests can better verify physical aptitude than height requirements. Although less problematic than other criteria, different height requirements have usually been eliminated in line with modern recruitment practices.

While the height difference can be justified, given that women are statistically shorter than men, there is no reasonable and legitimate justification for the age difference established as a condition. The differentiation based on age is much more questionable. Setting a lower maximum age for female candidates (27 years) compared to male candidates (30 years) has no clear objective justification and is considered to be direct discrimination based on sex. Without a demonstrated link between gender and the optimal age for training as a police officer, this rule appears to be based on stereotypes or historical considerations (possibly assumptions regarding women's family careers or shorter duration of their availability for work). European law stresses that any differentiation in employment based on sex must be supported by an essential and legitimate occupational requirement; otherwise, the measure violates the principle of equal treatment. In this case, no data shows that a 26-year-old candidate would be less able to complete the training than a candidate of the same age; this condition artificially advances the age limit for women only.

The practical impact of this provision is difficult to quantify, as applications that do not meet the age criterion are rejected from the start and therefore not officially registered. However, we can deduce that certain women may be excluded from the competition solely for this reason, which contradicts the principle of equal opportunities for access to the profession. The Academy does not have public data regarding the existence of women/girls who would have wanted to participate in the admission competition and were not admitted due to these requirements. This can be explained by the fact that at the stage of receiving the applications, the age is verified based on the applicant's identity card and registered as an applicant based on that information.

**The Academy's admissions policy establishes a quota for female candidates for government-funded places.** The 2024-2025 Admission Regulations of the Ștefan cel Mare Academy explicitly stipulate that *“up to 35% of the places financed from the state budget, the full-time form of education, are reserved for female candidates.”* In other words, women can occupy a maximum of 35% of the total budgetary places made available for admission. This quota functions as a percentage ceiling: if the number of women admitted exceeds 35% of the total budgeted places in a study programme, it is necessary to limit it to the 35% threshold. Such a limitation potentially introduces an artificial barrier to female candidates who meet all the admissions criteria.

Under a merit-based competition without gender quotas, the proportion of women admitted would depend solely on the relative performance of the candidates. However, imposing the 35% threshold means that, *no matter how well a larger number of female candidates perform*, only up to one-third of the state-funded places can be filled by them. The practical consequence is that when many female candidates achieve high averages in years, some of them could be rejected simply because they exceed the quota. In contrast, male candidates with lower averages would be admitted to fill the remaining 65% of places. This administrative barrier restricts women's access based *not on merit but on gender*. Therefore, the maximum quota can be interpreted as an artificial limitation of qualified women's access to government-funded places.

Introducing such a quota seems to be an institutional measure to control the gender composition of future officers. Without an explicit justification for this policy, one can speculate that the reasons would be either practical considerations (the need for a certain number of men for operational functions) or institutional tradition. However, compared to international practices promoting gender balance, this quota creates an opposite effect (i.e., it acts as an upper limit, not a minimum). For example, in other systems, gender quotas are implemented to ensure a *minimum representation* of women, not to cap their number. Thus, this policy raises questions about its compatibility with the principles of equal opportunities.

**The Admissions Committee has the power to adjust the quota.** The Regulation grants the Admissions Committee the power to modify this ceiling “as necessary,” stipulating that the Committee is “*vested with the right to increase the proportion in question, as well as to establish the exact ratio regarding the distribution of places [...] according to gender.*” This clause represents a tool for flexibility. In practice, if in a given year it is found that either the number of well-prepared female candidates is very high, or that the number of male candidates is not sufficient to cover the available places, the Committee may decide to increase the quota of women to fill the remaining vacant government-funded places. In the old regulation (for example, the one from 2019 ), there was even an explicit margin: the basic quota for women was 30%, but the Commission could increase it to 40% of the seats with the agreement of 3/4 of its members. This shows that the application of the quotas is not set in stone but can be modulated by the Commission.

In the current 2024-2025 regulation, the exact procedure for approving this quota increase is no longer detailed (there is no mention of a qualified vote as in 2019), suggesting increased confidence in the decision-making power of the Admissions Commission. In other words, the Commission can establish the “exact ratio” of admitted candidates by gender, adapting it to the context. It is important to emphasize that any substantial change to the gender quota (e.g., an increase above 35% or the elimination of the ceiling) would require either a formal decision of the Senate (by amending the annual regulation) or the intervention of the Senate Bureau. The regulation specifies that it can be modified by the Academy's Senate or the Senate Bureau (with subsequent validation by the Senate) to align with the regulatory framework. So, the dividing line is that the Senate sets the general policy (including quotas) at the beginning of each admission cycle, and the Admissions Committee implements and operates tactical adjustments within that year. In practice, applying the gender quota has been consistent in principle (keeping women below 35-40% of the total) from year to year. Still, the details (exact percentage, conditions for increase) have depended on annual decisions. The Committee has acted in accordance with these decisions while also having the margin to respond to unforeseen situations (e.g., places not covered by men) by making the gender ratio more flexible. According to the data, it can be concluded that initially the quotas contributed to increasing the presence of women (from very few to one-third of the total). Later on, however, the quotas acted as an instrument to keep women at an under-representative level relative to their number and ability.

**TABLE 2.**

**Number of candidates admitted to bachelor's/master's studies at the Ștefan cel Mare Academy of the Ministry of Interior (women/men) for 2018-2025**

Studies	Number of Requests		Number of Admitted Candidates	
<b>Academic Year 2018-2019</b>				
Bachelor's	317		255	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
	150	167	119	136
Master's	250		250	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
	80	170	80	170
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>306</b>
<b>Academic Year 2019-2020</b>				
Bachelor's	321		262	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
	151	170	124	138
Master's	241		241	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
	83	158	83	158
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>296</b>
<b>Academic Year 2020-2021</b>				
Bachelor's	476		431	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
	210	266	190	241
Master's	212		212	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
	77	135	77	135
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>376</b>
<b>Academic Year 2021-2022</b>				
Bachelor's	426		373	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
	216	210	187	186
Master's	212		212	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
	89	123	89	123
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>309</b>
<b>Academic Year 2022-2023</b>				
Bachelor's	319		283	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
	141	178	126	157
Master's	178		178	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
	73	105	73	105
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>262</b>

Academic Year 2023-2024				
Bachelor's	334		309	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
	152	182	141	168
Master's	218		218	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
	78	140	78	140
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>308</b>
Academic Year 2024-2025				
Bachelor's	648		474	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
	248	400	234	240
Master's	225		225	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
	92	133	92	133
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>373</b>

#### References to international practice:

- **CEDAW:** Establishing different criteria for women and men in admissions processes contravenes Article 1 of CEDAW regarding the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of gender, as well as Article 10 regarding the obligation of states to establish the same conditions for access to professions (same curriculums, examinations and teachers, etc.).
- **Other UN Frameworks:** The detailed list prepared by the UN on how physical tests and medical examinations for police recruitment can be constructed and periodically evaluated suggests common assessment elements for women and men. These are outlined in the Strategic Policy and Development Section of the Police Division, Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI), Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), in the *United Nations Police Gender Toolkit*<sup>44</sup>.

**Pregnant women who apply for admission to police training institutions or for employment within the Ministry of Internal Affairs face discriminatory exclusions.** This is due to the normative provisions included in the Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs no. 69 of 16-03-2017, later repealed and replaced by the Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs no. 644/2022. These provisions stipulate that pregnant women are not certified by the Medical Expertise Commissions, which prevents them from accessing the Police Academy and the Border Police College or from occupying operational positions. Although the intention seems protectionist, the measure is discriminatory and rooted in stereotypes. Pregnant women are perceived exclusively through the lens of vulnerability and the need for protection, which limits their access to professional and educational opportunities without an objective or reasonable justification.

#### References to international practice:

- **CEDAW and UNSC Resolutions:** The explicit prohibition of discrimination on the basis of maternity, including indirect discrimination, is articulated in Article 11(2) of CEDAW and reaffirmed in UNSCR 1325 (2000), UNSCR 1889 (2009), UNSCR 2122 (2013), UNSCR 2242 (2015) and UNSCR 2467 (2019).
- **ILO:** The prohibition of discrimination against pregnant women is also reaffirmed by the ILO in the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), and in Recommendation No. 2000 (No. 191).

- **CJEU:** The stereotypical argument of protecting pregnant women to justify refusing to hire them was demonstrated by the CJEU, which shows that arguments such as "the protection of the biological condition of women and the special relationship that exists between a woman and her child" do not allow "the exclusion of women from certain types of professions on the grounds that they should be granted greater protection than men against risks that are different from the point of view of women's specific protection needs."<sup>45</sup>
- **Other UN Frameworks:** The importance of accommodating the rights of women, including pregnant women, at the time of selection and subsequently in the course of activities is also emphasized by the UN through its decision Strategic Policy and Development Section of the Police Division, Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI), Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), in the compendium of standards United Nations Police Gender Toolkit in the Model Policy on Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming in the Police Organisation.

**The Ministry of Internal Affairs has implemented measures to increase the number of women in the police through its Action Plan on Gender Equality in the Police 2022-2025.** Important initiatives include informational campaigns such as "Behind the Scenes of the Police," which aimed to promote police professions among both women and men. These actions were complemented by an active online campaign, using social networks to attract a more diverse audience and encouraging women to apply for police positions.

However, significant internal challenges still hampered efforts to recruit and promote women. The interviews conducted for this study confirm what was highlighted in previous chapters regarding barriers for women in the system, such as the lack of transparency in the selection process and insufficient support for professional development.

#### References in international standards:

- **CEDAW: Article 1** prohibits gender discrimination in all areas, including recruitment and admissions. **Article 10** requires states to ensure the same conditions for accessing professions, while **Article 11 (2)** prohibits discrimination based on maternity and calls for the protection of the rights of pregnant women.
- **ILO:** Convention No. 183 on Maternity Protection (2000) and Recommendation No. 191 protect the rights of pregnant women in the workplace and prohibit discrimination on the basis of maternity.
- **CJEU:** Dekker vs. Sichting Vormingscentrum voor Young Adults established that refusing to hire a pregnant woman constitutes discrimination on the basis of sex.
- **UNSC Resolutions:** UNSCR 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions – including 1889 (2009), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015) and 2467 (2019) stress the importance of women's equal participation in the security and defense sector and the need to eliminate gender discrimination.

#### Recommendations:

- **Amend the provisions regarding admission quotas by transforming them from a maximum restriction into a positive measure to ensure minimum representation.** Specifically, it is proposed to guarantee a minimum threshold of 40% for each gender among admitted candidates. Instead of imposing a ceiling that limits the presence of one gender, this amendment would ensure that no gender falls below a 40% share in the structure of admitted students. Such a minimum requirement eliminates artificial exclusions and guarantees that both genders will be substantially represented as long as there are eligible candidates.

- **Institutionalize rules regarding gender quotas for admission into a clear and permanent regulatory framework.** The gender percentages allowed (such as the minimum threshold of 40% proposed above) should be directly written into a normative act or official policy of the Academy, with stable legal force, and applied uniformly in each admission session. Instead of each annual Committee interpreting or establishing these quotas, the normative framework should explicitly outline the rule and application method. For example, the Academy's policy (or an act of the relevant Ministry) could firmly stipulate the criteria for distributing places by gender, eliminating ambiguity.
- **Ensure gender balance in the composition of admission committees.** Each selection committee should include members of both sexes, ideally in a balanced proportion (e.g., parity or at least one-third of the members of the underrepresented sex). In practice, this could involve appointing an equal or nearly equal number of women and men with the qualifications required for the assessment to the committee. If exact numerical parity is not possible in certain situations, a minimum number of representatives of each sex should still be included to avoid one-sided judgment.
- **Implement a transparency policy by periodically publishing admission data by gender.** The Academy should collect and publish annually detailed statistics on the admission process: the total number of applicants, the number of admissions, the success rate, the distribution of these indicators by gender (how many men and women applied and how many were admitted), as well as any data on the distribution by specialization or funding sources, all disaggregated by gender. This information should be published on the Academy's website and in its annual reports to the Ministry, in an accessible and easy-to-understand format. Also, in addition to the raw data, comparative analyses with previous years can be included to highlight trends and the impact of the measures taken.
- **Amend regulations that exclude pregnant women from admission and employment processes to ensure non-discrimination against them.** Introduce reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access and adapt procedures to allow pregnant women to participate in selection.

### 1.3. Job promotions and vertical segregation

**Promotion within the Ministry of Internal Affairs is regulated by a series of normative acts, including Law No. 288 of 16-12-2012** on the civil servant with special status within the Ministry of Internal Affairs; Government Decision no. 460 of 22 June 2017 for the implementation of the provisions of Law no. 288/2012; Government Decision no. 409 of 7 June 2017 on the approval of the Disciplinary Statute of the civil servant with special status within the Ministry of Internal Affairs; Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs no. 138 of 18 April 2013 on the approval of the Regulation on the evaluation of professional performance; Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs no. 239 of 14 August 2017 on the approval of the Regulation on the exceptional control of candidates for employment or promotion.

**Following the analysis, it was identified that no promotion quotas are established within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and most institutions subordinated to the Ministry.** Job promotions within the Ministry of Interior are strictly regulated by formal criteria (studies, seniority, performance) and are carried out through competitions organized according to the law. Law 288/2012 and Regulation GD 460/2017 do not reference a numerical or percentage threshold for gender representation. Also, competition committees are not legally obliged to include members of both genders – their composition is decided by the institution's management, depending on skills and functions, without any parity criteria. Order MIA 239/2017 (if it details the constitution of committees) does not mention the need for gender mix, but only the number of members and their quality (usually, the hierarchical head, HR representative, possibly union or others, according to standard procedures). It is important to note that the absence of gender quotas does not mean that women do not have the right to run for office or be promoted – the right exists and is protected by the principle of equal opportunities. However, if there is no affirmative action, there are no guarantees that this formal equality will translate into equality of outcome.

**According to data provided by the Ministry of Interior, by 2023, the number of women employed in the internal affairs system increased, but has not yet reached gender parity.** In 2023, 27.95% of MIA employees were women (4,660 out of 16,675). Of these, in the last five years, 2,581 employees were promoted to management positions, of which 284 were women, representing 11% of the total number of promoted employees. This underrepresentation is particularly evident within the operational and territorial subdivisions of the police. The underrepresentation of women is particularly visible in operational subdivisions, such as the Special Purpose Police Brigade (SPB) "Fulger", where the presence of women is almost non-existent. In contrast, women are better represented in administrative and support subdivisions, occupying roles in human resources, finance, or communication departments. This polarization of roles accentuates gender inequality and highlights the existing barriers to women's access to operational functions.

**Hiring/promotion committees are predominantly composed of men.** Under the procedures established by the relevant regulatory acts, when two or more candidates from internal sources equally meet the career development conditions for filling a vacant position, their selection is made through a competition. Competition committees are essential in this process, evaluating the candidates and deciding on their promotion or transfer. The committee is usually composed of one of the deputy heads of the subdivision, the head of the human resources subdivision, a representative of the human resources service (as secretary) and 2-4 other members, designated by an administrative act of the competent authority.

**All members of the Commission, including the Secretary, have voting rights, thus ensuring a collective decision-making process.** However, data indicate a significant underrepresentation of women in the recruitment and promotion committees within the MIA and its subordinate institutions. This underrepresentation is primarily due to the fact that most management positions (from which committee members are often selected) are held by men – a knock-on effect of vertical segregation: if few women occupy senior positions, few will be present in the committees that decide on promotions.

**TABLE 3.**  
**Number of women and men included in the competition committees for filling vacant positions**

Institution	2018		2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
IGPF	11	22	16	33	15	32	17	30	15	34	18	33	17	31
IGSU	3	16	5	20	5	20	5	21	8	18	8	18	8	18
CGI	45	405	31	335	61	428	31	239	43	167	25	157	37	142
IGP	115	272	114	271	108	226	121	237	104	219	114	242	132	265
Academy	2	6	2	5	5	7	4	8	3	11	4	9	4	9

The absence of gender representation requirements in these committees or the promotion procedure makes the low proportion of women seem “natural” in the current institutional context. In practice, if the law does not require balance, the composition of the committees reflects the existing staff structure, which is dominated by men at the higher levels.

This can perpetuate a vicious circle: without women on committees or in decision-making positions, the promotion model can unintentionally favor maintaining the status quo through implicit bias or the lack of sufficient female candidates. It should be noted that there are no official indications of direct discrimination in competitions; the problem is rather one of weight and participation: few women apply or manage to be promoted to management positions, which suggests systemic obstacles (organizational culture, family responsibilities, physical eliminatory criteria, etc.). The current situation confirms that, in the absence of specific interventions, the gender balance in management positions evolves very slowly – women remain under-represented both among promoted candidates and at the decision-making table (committees, internal boards).

### References in international standards:

- **UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).**
  - **Article 7:** stipulates that State Parties must ensure equality in public and political life, including the right of women to hold public office and participate in policy-making.
  - **Article 11** outlines the obligation to eliminate discrimination in employment, thus ensuring equality in employment, promotion and working conditions.
- **Beijing Platform for Action (1995):** Strategic Objective G.1 discusses the need to adopt measures to ensure gender balance in decision-making processes at all levels.
- **The Council of Europe:** Recommendation CM/Rec (2007) 17 urges member states to promote gender equality in the security and defense sector, including by setting quantifiable objectives and targets for increasing the representation of women in leadership positions.
- **European Union (EU):** Directive 2006/54/EC on equal opportunities and treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation prohibits direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of sex in terms of employment, promotion and working conditions.

### International good practices:

- **Serbia:** The Gender-Sensitive Policing Guide developed by the Women Police Officers Network in South East Europe (WPON) recommends forming recruitment committees with balanced gender representation and training committee members on gender equality and non-discrimination.
- **United States of America:** The National Center for Women and Policing developed guides that include tools for assessing human resources policies from a gender perspective; strategies for recruiting and promoting women in the police; and mentoring programmes and family-friendly policies.
- **United Kingdom:** The Metropolitan Police Service implemented the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy 2017-2021, which prioritizes diverse recruitment; setting clear goals for increasing the representation of women in leadership positions; and creating an inclusive work environment.
- **The Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU):** Case C-409/95, Hellmut Marschall v Land Nordrhein-Westfalen established that, in the event of equal scores between a man and a woman, priority may be given to the woman in order to redress the gender imbalance. The measure must be proportionate and allow for an objective assessment of all candidates.

### Recommendations:

- **Establish temporary positive measures, given the low number of women in management positions in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and subordinate institutions.** We note that temporary measures are permitted by Law No. 121 of 2012. Therefore, it is proposed to amend the provisions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Order No. 239 of August 14, 2017 on the approval of the Regulation on the special control of candidates for employment or promotion in the civil service with special status within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, whereby, in the event of an equal score between two candidates (a woman and a man), priority should be given to the woman in terms of promotion, as long as there is still a major gender imbalance among women in the profession. The measure is to be established temporarily.
- **Ensure balanced gender representation in hiring and promotion committees to eliminate potential bias and encourage diversity in decision-making.** The revision of MIA Orders no. 138/2013 and no. 239/2017 should require a minimum representation of 40% of each gender within these committees. At the same time, committee members should participate in mandatory training sessions on gender equality, stereotypes and prejudices, to ensure an objective and fair assessment of candidates.

- **Implement mentoring and professional development programmes to support women in accessing leadership positions and contribute to their professional development.** These programmes should include personalized mentoring, courses, and leadership, management and professional skills workshops. They should be accessible to all employees and specifically encourage women.
- **Collect and analyze gender-disaggregated data to regularly monitor and report on progress in achieving gender equality.** This data should reflect trends in employment, promotion, and participation in training programmes, providing a basis for policy adjustments and identifying areas for improvement. Publishing annual reports would allow for a transparent assessment of progress and persistent obstacles.

## 1.4. Working hours

**In the MIA and subordinate institutions, rules regarding working hours are applied based on the general provisions of the Labour Code of the Republic of Moldova.** Thus, the right to part-time work (provided for in Article 97(2), reasonable accommodation of working conditions for pregnant women (provided for in Article 250(1)), breaks for feeding the child (provided for in Article 108), individualized programmes/flexible work regime (provided for in Article 100(7)) apply to the MIA and subordinate institutions, except for the Carabinieri troops. The Carabinieri troops have a militarized character, and in this regard, legislation similar to the military is still applicable.

Although these rights are regulated, the number of those benefiting from these opportunities across the entire MIA is still challenging. The majority of employees in the operational structures of the MIA (police, carabinieri, firefighters) work shifts, which often involve a shift work schedule, including 24/48 hours. This type of schedule presents significant challenges for work-life balance. Furthermore, the previous chapter highlights that the need for flexible work schedules and care leave is among the top five professional needs reported by women.

According to the data obtained, 20% of respondents indicated these aspects as essential for supporting work-life balance. In units that provide 24/7 services (patrol police, border police, firefighters/IGSU, carabinieri/IGC, etc.), people often work in extended shifts (e.g., the 24/48-hour regime, which is 24 hours of work followed by 48 hours of free time). These atypical hours can cause increased fatigue and reduce the time available for personal life and rest, affecting the psychological balance of employees and the time spent with their family. For mothers with young children, a 24-hour shift can create additional difficulties in breastfeeding and childcare, especially if there is no possibility of using feeding breaks in decent conditions at the workplace.

Although the law provides mechanisms such as reduced or flexible working hours and breastfeeding breaks, these are insufficiently utilized in the structures of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The data of the previous study, for example, highlights that in 2018–2019 no employee within the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations (IGSU) and the General Inspectorate of Carabinieri (IGC) benefited from a flexible work schedule, while in the National Police there were cases (primarily women) who used a flexible schedule. Also, the breaks for feeding the child provided for by the law were not applied in any institution subordinate to the Ministry of Internal Affairs at that time, probably due to the lack of infrastructure (absence of rooms specially designed for breastfeeding) and other practical impediments.

MIA employees returning from maternity leave also face particular challenges: in addition to the difficulty of re-entering the rhythm of a shift-based or physically demanding schedule, they must meet the professional requirements (including physical fitness) at the level of their colleagues, in a relatively short time after returning. In the absence of transitional measures, these requirements can be daunting. For example, if a new mother were to have to take physical fitness exams or participate in night missions immediately after returning, her work-life balance would be severely challenged. At the same time, in paramilitary units (such as the Carabinieri troops), the organizational culture and strict discipline may discourage the request or granting of flexible arrangements, even where the law would allow them, creating an additional obstacle for employees needing special accommodations.

**MIA Order No. 644/2022 establishes physical training requirements for MIA personnel, but it does not include specific provisions for women returning to work after giving birth.** This omission impedes new mothers' professional reintegration and can affect their physical performance. The order does not provide for a postpartum grace period before an employee returning from maternity leave must undergo mandatory physical tests. Immediately after giving birth, the body needs time to recover – both to regain physical fitness and to heal from any obstetric trauma. Without a transition period, there is a risk that women will be forced to undergo demanding tests too early, which increases the likelihood of injury (due to weakened muscles, still unstable joints, and the presence of the hormone Relaxin) and of failing the test due to temporarily reduced physical capacity. The experience of other institutions shows how important this transition is: for example, the US Army doubled the period given to women after childbirth to regain their physical fitness before testing, from 6 months to 12 months, recognizing that this one-year postpartum window is critical for gradually rebuilding pre-pregnancy physical capacities.

At the same time, the current Regulation imposes the same physical fitness standards for all women, regardless of postpartum status. This uniformity becomes a barrier for new mothers: after months of pregnancy and possibly up to two years of childcare leave, their strength, endurance, and speed naturally decrease. A sudden return to previous physical standards may be unrealistic immediately after leave. Thus, without temporary adjustments to the standards, many women risk not reaching the required scores, not due to lack of potential, but to natural physiological changes and limited training time after childbirth. This situation can unfairly disadvantage them, affecting their professional qualifications or promotion prospects.

Order 644/2022 does not contain provisions allowing the postponement or rescheduling of physical tests for women who are breastfeeding or who work flexibly. In practice, physical exams are often scheduled on fixed dates (e.g., annually or semiannually, on a pre-established date for all staff). Women returning from maternity leave may find themselves in a situation where the exam date occurs very soon after their return, at a time when they are still heavily breastfeeding their baby or have not been able to train sufficiently. Without the option of rescheduling, they are faced with a difficult choice: either attend unprepared, risking failure or injury, or miss (for breastfeeding or health reasons), risking disciplinary consequences or being marked as absent/failed. This rigidity represents a significant barrier, especially for mothers with reduced or flexible work schedules, who cannot simply interrupt their baby-care routine to take the exam at the required time.

#### References in international standards:

- **UN Frameworks:** The prohibition of discrimination, including indirect discrimination, is provided for in CEDAW as well as in the European Convention on Human Rights in Article 14 and Additional Protocol 12. It is also reaffirmed in UN resolutions No. 1325 of 2000, No. 1889 of 2009, No. 2122 of 2013, No. 2242 of 2015 and No. 2467 of 2019.
- **International Labor Organization (ILO):** The prohibition of discrimination against pregnant women is stipulated in the ILO's Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 No. 183 and in Recommendation 2000 No. 191.
- **EU:** Directive 2019/1158 on work-life balance provides minimum rights to paternity leave, parental leave and flexible working arrangements for parents and carers.

#### Recommendations:

- **Initiate recovery procedures at the MIA's institutional level,** including (I) the right to part-time work (provided for in Article 97(2) of the CM), (II) reasonable accommodation of working conditions for pregnant women (provided for in Article 250(1) of the CM), (III) breaks for feeding the child (provided for in Article 108 of the CM), (IV) individualized schedules/flexible work regime (provided for in Article 100(7) of the CM). Provisions referring to the organization of the necessary infrastructure are also recommended to make Article 108 of the CM applicable.

- **Introduce a postpartum transition period, according to which**, after returning from maternity leave, employees are temporarily exempted from mandatory physical testing for a specified period (e.g., 6 months) or their physical assessment is postponed until the expiry of this period. This time window will allow them to gradually restore their physical condition in a safe manner, preventing injuries and ensuring a correctly assessed performance. The order may stipulate that, before the resumption of official tests, indicative assessments and assisted training sessions will be carried out to guide the return to fitness.
- **Make temporary adjustments to physical fitness standards for women who have recently given birth (e.g., up to one year postpartum).** Physical scales/tests should be adapted to their recovering capacities. Adaptation could mean proportionally reduced performance parameters (without compromising the minimum necessary for safe function) or a graduated assessment system – for example, the scale for the next higher age group should be applied at the first test after return (which is more permissive), followed by a return to the standard scale at the next test. This would recognize the medical reality of postpartum recovery and prevent mothers from automatically being penalized for below-normal physical scores immediately after birth.
- **Provide flexibility in scheduling physical tests.** Amend the regulation to allow for rescheduling physical tests if an employee is on maternity leave, during the maternity leave period, or breastfeeding. In practical terms, if the annual testing falls during a period when the employee is not fit (medically or logistically) to participate, she will have the right to take the test at a later date without negative consequences. For example, it could be stipulated that an employee who has recently given birth can request to postpone the test until one month after returning to work or even to a date equivalent to one month after giving birth. It will also be specified that employees who are breastfeeding can request special conditions on the day of the test, such as breaks for breastfeeding during the test, if it is a long exam, or the possibility of taking certain tests at a time that does not interfere with the baby's feeding schedule.
- **Introduce a section stating that implementing physical training will consider legal provisions regarding maternity protection.** This includes (I) scheduling training and testing in accordance with breastfeeding breaks (e.g., physical training sessions should not be scheduled during the hours allocated to breastfeeding breaks, and if they do overlap, the employee should be able to recover from physical activity in another interval without losing the right to the break); and (II) adapting to flexible working hours (i.e., if an employee has an approved reduced or flexible schedule, such as the right to leave two hours earlier for breastfeeding or partial teleworking, then physical training obligations should be integrated into her actual work schedule). Thus, she cannot be required to participate in physical training outside her agreed working hours, avoiding disruption of the work-life balance. Any deviation from the employee's regular schedule for physical testing should be treated as working time (similar to paid breastfeeding breaks) and planned in advance, by mutual agreement.

## 1.5. Family responsibilities

**Employees of the MIA benefit from a robust legislative framework that regulates childcare leave** in accordance with the provisions of the Labor Code of the Republic of Moldova, Law No. 158 on the civil service and the status of civil servants, and Law No. 289/2004 on temporary incapacity for work benefits and other social insurance benefits. These regulations provide protection and flexibility, facilitating the possibility for employees to combine family responsibilities with professional requirements:

**Maternity leave** duration is 126 calendar days, of which 70 days are granted before childbirth and 56 days after childbirth. In cases of multiple pregnancy or complicated births, postnatal leave may be extended by an additional 14 days. Maternity benefit covers 100% of the insured average monthly income for the last 12 months before the leave. According to the amendments of March 1, 2023, if both spouses are employed, the benefit may be calculated based on the higher income of one of the spouses. For wives dependent on the insured spouse, the benefit is calculated based on his average income. Unemployed women or students without a contribution period receive 35% of the forecast salary established annually by the Government.

**Paternity leave** is intended for fathers to allow them to be actively involved in caring for their newborn. This leave can be requested at any time during the first 12 months after the birth of the child and can be granted in full or in fractions. The total duration is 15 days, according to the amendments of 2024, and the 15 days can be divided into three periods of 5 days each. To benefit from paternity leave, the father must submit a written request to the employer. The employer is obliged to approve the request, and any action that disadvantages the employee who requests paternity leave is considered discrimination, punishable according to the legislation in force. The paternity allowance covers 100% of the father's average monthly insured income, providing financial stability during the leave.

**Childcare leave** may be granted to one of the parents, grandparents or legal guardians, to allow them to actively participate in raising the child until the age of 3. According to the amendments introduced by Law No. 289/2004, parents may choose one of the following options: (I) Full leave of up to 3 years, with the payment of a monthly allowance for the entire period; (II) 24-month leave, with the payment of the allowance for the first 2 years, followed by an unpaid period until the age of 3; 12-month leave, with the payment of the allowance for the first year, followed by an unpaid period until the age of 3. The childcare allowance is calculated based on the average monthly insured income of the last 12 months before the birth, provided that the income has been subject to social contributions. The flexibility of this leave allows parents to share the leave period or divide it into fractions, without affecting salary rights or seniority.

**MIA data for 2021-2024 show that the total number of MIA employees who benefited from maternity or paternity leave remains relatively low, with significant variations across institutions.** In institutions such as the Border Police (IGPF), women have consistently predominated among beneficiaries, with over 60 cases annually (e.g., 61 women in 2024), while the number of men has been modest (only nine men in 2024). In contrast, in Emergency Situations (IGSU), the situation is the opposite: the number of fathers taking paternity leave has been very high (over 90 annually, reaching 100 in 2024), while requests from women have been much fewer (under 15 per year).

The Carabinieri Inspectorate (IGC) and the General Inspectorate of Police (IGP) show different trends: the IGC had large fluctuations from one year to the next, and the IGP had a significant number of male beneficiaries, although gradually decreasing, concomitantly with minor variations in women. At the Ștefan cel Mare Academy (MIA Academy), the values were the lowest overall, probably also reflecting the lower number of employees: here, women had a notable increase in 2024 (12 cases), and men decreased to 5 instances. These differences highlight the particularities of each structure, influenced by factors such as the gender share of staff and internal policies regarding work-family balance.

**TABEL 4.**  
**Number of women and men who benefited from maternity/paternity leave, during the period 2021-2024**

Institution	2021		2022		2023		2024	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
IGPF	68	7	64	10	73	10	61	9
IGSU	14	90	7	86	8	97	9	100
CGI	12	10	19	29	23	3	5	9
IGP	30	53	26	22	18	31	27	21
Academy	8	4	9	6	4	10	12	5

**Regarding childcare leave, a higher total number of beneficiaries is observed compared to other types of leave,** but the gender distribution varies substantially between institutions. At the IGP level, the most requests are recorded, from both women and men, with a constant ratio in favor of men – over 200 fathers

annually took this leave (e.g., 237 in 2024), compared to approximately 110 mothers per year. This indicates an increased willingness of male personnel to access parental leave in the Police, probably due to the high share of men in the staff and the more open organizational culture. In contrast, at the MIA Academy, the values are the lowest (only 5–10 men and 6–11 women annually), which reflects the institution's smaller size and the academic specificity (fewer births among employees). IGPF and IGSU also show distinct patterns: in the Border Police, the number of mothers taking care leave is relatively constant (61–73 annually), while for fathers, the oscillations are large (from a maximum of 58 in 2022 to a minimum of 17 in 2023).

In Emergency Situations, many men benefited from parental leave at the beginning of the period (75 in 2021, 81 in 2022). Still, the figure gradually decreases to 41 in 2024, in parallel with the reduction in the number of women (from 18 in 2021 to only 7 in 2024). IGC is highlighted by pronounced fluctuations in the number of beneficiaries: women increase from 12 (2021) to 24 (2023), then drop sharply to 5 (2024), and men oscillate from 35 (2021) to 55 (2022) and 51 (2023), and then drop to 20 in 2024. These variations suggest the influence of internal factors (e.g., changes in staff structure or different organizational policies from one year to the next).

**TABLE 5.**  
**Number of women and men who benefited from parental leave in 2021-2024**

Institution	2021		2022		2023		2024	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
IGPF	68	38	64	58	73	17	61	21
IGSU	18	75	16	81	9	71	7	41
CGI	12	35	18	55	24	51	5	31
IGP	115	272	114	271	108	226	121	237
Academy	11	8	8	6	8	10	6	5

National legislation introduced in 2022 allows employers to create alternative services to support employees in reconciling work and family life. These services are essential in helping parents working in fields with high professional demands.

A notable example in this regard is the establishment of a special space dedicated to preschool children within the premises of the National Patrol Inspectorate of the IGP. This initiative facilitates parents' access to a friendly and flexible work environment, allowing them to combine professional and family responsibilities.

**References in international standards:**

**The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women establishes,** in Article 11(2)(c), the obligation of states to provide social support services to enable parents to combine family obligations with professional responsibilities. Suggestions for family support policies proposed by the United Nations include policies relating to: (I) pregnancy (listing types of leave, their duration, conditions to be met, other types of benefits, bureaucratic aspects to be met, reduction of working hours or relocation to less demanding tasks, protection from chemicals or weapons in testing, uniforms); and (II) child-rearing (ensuring access to child-rearing facilities, flexible working hours).

## Recommendations:

- **Promote paternity leave among men, especially within the IGC.** We note that, according to the legislation, for the wives of police officers, who are not employed and do not have an insured income, maternity benefits, one-time allowances upon the birth of a child and monthly allowances for raising a child up to the age of 3, will be calculated and paid at the police officer's husband's place of work, from the state budget.
- **Provide infrastructure and support services for parents.** An important step is the development of alternative childcare services for young children, implemented at the employer's initiative. The example of the National Patrol Inspectorate, which set up a play area for employees' children, is worth following. Such mini-crèches or partnerships with kindergartens close to the MIA headquarters would give parents the possibility to bring their child to the workplace. In addition, equipping the premises with breastfeeding rooms and changing rooms/uniforms adapted for pregnant women would eliminate the discomfort of mothers returning to work. Investments in this infrastructure convey that the institution values the parental role of employees and actively supports them.

## 1.6. Infrastructure

**Uniforms provided within the MIA and subordinated institutions are not adapted to the anatomic peculiarities of women's bodies.** The issue of uniforms, frequently mentioned by women in the police services, highlights significant difficulties related to size, conformation and comfort. Unisex uniforms, the standard in most cases, do not consider the morphological differences between women and men. For this reason, many women must procure uniforms on their own to ensure the necessary comfort and functionality.

According to an internal survey conducted by GIZ among the police, 40.95% of respondents (61.27% were women) reported that uniforms and equipment were not adapted to their needs. This finding highlights that the lack of suitable uniforms is not just a one-off problem but a systemic one, disproportionately affecting women.

In informal discussions, female officers and non-commissioned officers highlighted that the current uniforms – shirts, trousers and jackets – are often too large, uncomfortable and non-functional. Another factor contributing to the perpetuation of this problem is the lack of consultation with women in the design and procurement of uniforms. Statements from female Ministry of Internal Affairs officers highlight that uniforms are distributed without considering their specific needs. For example, shirts provided as service equipment are unisex, and their adaptation to the female body is not taken into account. This situation affects not only comfort but also the perception of equity and professionalism in equipping the human resources.

There are currently no explicit provisions in the MIA's regulations regarding uniforms or protective equipment designed for pregnant employees. A pregnant policewoman is often required to improvise by either wearing a regular uniform in a much larger size (sacrificing the professional authority and comfort) or forgoing some equipment items altogether (e.g., the ballistic vest if it no longer fits over the abdomen). The lack of this facility can endanger both the safety (insufficient ballistic protection) and the dignity of female personnel.

### Examples of international good practices

- **In Croatia,** a special Commission is involved in the process of approving uniforms. It includes representatives of all police structures and trade unions operating within the ministry. Professional support is provided by the Department for Police Equipment and Uniforms, which is tasked with developing detailed regulations for each element of the police uniform and oversees their purchase, production and distribution. If the topic of discussion becomes a specific element of the women's uniform, a larger number of women, representatives of all trade unions within the ministry and from all police structures, are to participate in the session.

- **In the United Kingdom,** Essex Police have Procedure X2001 on the Provision of Uniforms and Equipment, which provides guidance on adapting uniforms and equipment to the individual needs of employees, including on grounds of gender, religion, culture or disability. It provides for appointments for fitting uniforms and the possibility of adapting them in the event of pregnancy.

**The way the weapons are used is partially unfair.** The criteria for the distribution of weapons and special means and the special conditions are regulated within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and its subordinate institutions, but are not made public, given the classified nature of this information. The involvement of representatives from the institutions subordinate to the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the focus groups organized during this study allowed us to identify that the criteria for the distribution of weapons are identical for women and men within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and its subordinate institutions.

However, the participants complained about cases when, according to the procedure, they were supposed to receive weapons or special means but were not entrusted with them. The reasons are unknown. It is known that women and men generally differ in morphological characteristics. Research has shown that shooting accuracy is also influenced by the dimensions of the weapon's stock, so it is necessary to analyze the appropriate type of pistols for women. For these reasons, a detailed analysis of the proper equipment for women is required. Suitable equipment and uniform have repercussions primarily on the safety of employees during the performance of tasks and the results obtained. For these reasons, it is necessary that in future purchases of weapons and equipment, given that the number of women is increasing, their morphological characteristics should also be considered.

**Investments and gaps in adapting infrastructure to women's needs.** The MIA is one of the largest institutions in the Republic of Moldova, with numerous subdivisions and subordinate institutions, has made significant investments in the infrastructure of the dormitories under its control. These include renovating and equipping separate bathrooms with modern equipment, such as washing machines, stoves, microwave ovens and electric kettles. In addition, a space for preschool children was created and equipped within the premises of the National Patrol Inspectorate of the General Inspectorate of Police, providing additional support to employees with family responsibilities.

However, the situation of workplace infrastructure remains insufficiently documented, especially with regard to working conditions and the specific needs of women. Although there are separate bedrooms and bathrooms for women and men in the Police Academy and the Centre of Excellence in Border Security, the situation is less clear in other administrative buildings. During the discussions, it was mentioned that separate bathrooms are present only in new buildings or renovated in recent years, which indicates a lack of uniformity in ensuring adequate working conditions. Another important aspect is the sports facilities. Although there are sports halls and equipment in some locations, their lack of adaptation to the specific needs of women is frequently complained about. In many subdivisions, sports facilities are non-existent, which limits female employees' access to opportunities for adequate physical training, essential for carrying out operational activities.

#### Recommendations:

- **Review uniform specifications and introduce specific requirements for female cuts in procurement documentation.** Technical standards should provide for sizes and patterns adapted to the female body (e.g., fitted jackets, fitted trousers) and elastic materials in necessary areas. Involving clothing ergonomics experts and female staff in defining these requirements would ensure the new uniforms will be comfortable and functional for all employees.
- **Create a Joint Commission for prototype testing.** Establish a working group of women and men from the MIA structures to evaluate uniform prototypes before mass production. An example of good prac-

tice comes from the Romanian Army, which carried out a project to design an ergonomic bulletproof vest for women, using 3D scanning to determine the prevailing measurements and testing the prototype vests on 150 female cadres. Through a similar approach, the MIA commission could identify potential tailoring or sizing issues in advance and propose adjustments before final procurement.

- **Budget for individual touch-ups and adjustments.** Allocate funds to individual uniform modifications where necessary. Even with improved standards, there may be variations from one person to another; therefore, the possibility of making alterations (adjusting the length of pants, tightening or widening certain parts, adapting bulletproof vests to the bust, etc.) at the institution's expense would demonstrate concern for employee comfort.
- **Undertake a technical analysis of the available firearm types.** The MIA should ergonomically assess existing weapons and alternatives on the market, considering different hand sizes and user firing forces. A technical audit can measure parameters such as grip circumference, trigger pull force and recoil, correlating them with the anthropometric data of female personnel. The aim is to identify service weapon models that offer different dimensional versions or interchangeable components (e.g., hammer, trigger guard, thinner magazine) to suit police officers with smaller hands.
- **Conduct a practical evaluation in the range using different weapons.** Introduce test firing sessions where personnel (especially new officers) test several pistol models. Based on the results (accuracy, reaction times, subjective comfort feedback), it can be determined which weapon best suits each officer. In police departments abroad, this approach has revealed that models with narrower butts and reduced weight significantly improve shooting accuracy for people with small hands. A formal evaluation at the range, followed by recommendations, would ensure an optimal weapon-user fit.
- **Diversify facilities and personalized choices.** Instead of a universal “one size fits all” approach, the MIA can adopt a flexible system for equipment, allowing officers to choose weapons from a list of options. For example, in addition to the standard pistol with a large-capacity magazine, there should be an alternative model (more compact, possibly with 10+1 cartridges) in the inventory for those who achieve better results with this size. It has been shown that short agents or agents with small hands shoot more accurately and comfortably with small-sized pistols, if given this option. Making more choices available – accompanied by clear rules (e.g., conditions for authorizing alternative pistols and specific training) – would increase efficiency and safety during missions.
- **Introduce “maternity” articles into MIA standards.** It is recommended that equipment regulations be updated to explicitly include uniforms for pregnant women – for example, specially tailored tunics, shirts, and trousers. These maternity uniforms should provide the same level of visual authority and protection as the standard ones, but with design adaptations: trousers with an elastic band and high waist to support the belly, shirts/jackets with a looser cut in the abdomen and chest area, possibly adjustable panels or extensions to bulletproof vests. There are already examples on the equipment market: tactical trousers designed for pregnant women offer similar durability to the standard uniform and have an adjustable waistband to accommodate abdominal growth. Adopting such items in the MIA equipment would allow police officers to continue working in decent conditions in the last months of pregnancy, without resorting to informal solutions.
- **Assess access to infrastructure in all subdivisions of the Ministry of Interior.** It is recommended that a detailed study of all buildings and facilities within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and subordinate institutions be conducted to identify access and conditions of use of the infrastructure. The assessment should include the conditions of bathrooms, sports halls, and work and rest areas, ensuring uniform standards across all subdivisions. This would contribute to creating equitable working conditions, adapted to the needs of women and men.

- **Create a facilities standardization plan.** Based on the audit, the Ministry of Internal Affairs must develop a multi-year plan to bring the infrastructure to a uniform minimum standard in all subordinate institutions. The standard may stipulate, for example, that any office with more than a certain number of employees must have: a properly equipped gym or fitness corner, modern toilets (with hot, running water) separate for women and men, a break area and, where appropriate, a room where a mother can breastfeed or care for her child in case of need.
- **Adapt and diversify sports equipment.** Investments should be directed towards equipping gyms with modern equipment that can be used effectively by both men and women. This means including adjustable weight machines (e.g., multi-gyms where the resistance can be finely adjusted so that even a person with less strength can progress gradually), cardio exercise devices (treadmills, bicycles, ellipticals – especially useful for getting back in shape after giving birth), and functional training areas. By diversifying, each employee can choose the right type of exercise (strength, endurance, mobility) without being limited by overly masculine equipment. At the same time, it is essential to purchase accessories such as gym mats, elastic bands, and dumbbells of different weights to allow bodyweight training or specific exercises preferred by many women.

## ANNEX NO. 1.

### Ministry of Internal Affairs

1. Correlation of physical requirements with determining professional requirements	
1	<p><b>Existing barriers</b> (all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</p> <p>The regulation maintains the different requirement related to the different running distance for male and female candidates for the Police Academy and persons opting for employment in subordinate institutions: Women are required to run 1,000 meters compared to men who have to run 3,000 meters. Also, certain exercises in the regulations are required among men without specifying a reasonable justification for the selection of these exercises as part of the standard test package.</p>
	<p><b>Legal provision</b> (the legal provisions that establish and regulate the requirements mentioned)</p> <p>Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs No. 69 of 16 March 2017 on the approval of the "Regulation on the organization of physical training and sports within the Ministry of Internal Affairs."</p>
	<p><b>International standards</b> (international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</p> <p>The principle of equal treatment between women and men and fair representation, including in the security sector, reflects not only the legal obligation to respect the principle of non-discrimination. In this context, the CJEU, which had the opportunity to examine the application of this principle in the context of the employment or promotion of women in areas of force, stressed that "the States are obliged to periodically evaluate the activities concerned in order to decide whether, in the light of social developments, the derogation from the general framework provided for in the Directive should still be maintained" (Tanja Kreil v. Bundesrepublik Deutschland, para. 22, similar to Johnston in para. 37 and Sirdar in para. 25).</p>
	<p><b>Relevant indicators</b> (the relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</p> <p>Number of people experiencing difficulties in completing control exercises.</p>
	<p><b>Proposals for amendment</b> (the recommendations for adjusting the legislative framework, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</p> <p>Amendment to the Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs No. 69 of 16 March 2017 on the approval of the "Regulation on the organization of physical training and sports within the Ministry of Internal Affairs." In order to eliminate stereotyped practices, it is necessary to amend the Regulation so that physical training tests take into account the biological differences between women and men when performing certain exercises and the principle of proportionality, described in Chapter No. I. The exercises must help women and men to reach a certain level of physical training that allows them, without discrimination, to fulfill the mission assigned to the police officer.</p>
	<p><b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b></p> <p>It is noted that the recommendation on the "Correlation of physical requirements with the determining professional requirements" has not been fully implemented. Although Order No. 644/2022 replaces the old Order No. 69/2017, it continues to maintain significant differences between the evaluation scales for women and men (e.g., 1,000 meters of running for women and 3,000 meters for men), without an objective and proportionate justification related to the actual requirements of the profession.</p> <p><b>Assessment of the degree of implementation:</b></p> <p>The provisions of the new regulation (MIA Order no. 644/2022) maintain the differentiated approach (some exercises only for men, very different running distances, etc.), trying to take into account "anatomical particularities" but without presenting clear criteria justifying the professional (operational) need behind these differences.</p> <p><b>Consequence:</b> The large difference between the running requirements for women and men are not explained by risks, professional skills or specific missions and are, in fact, uncorrelated with real tasks in the field. Thus, the recommendation to "correlate physical requirements with professional requirements" has not been put into practice in the desired sense, with a potential for discrimination and perpetuation of stereotypes still present.</p> <p><b>Conclusion:</b> <i>The recommendation to standardize and objectively substantiate physical tests, so that they reflect the real needs of the profession and eliminate unjustified differences between women and men, is not implemented satisfactorily.</i></p>

	<p><b>New recommendation</b></p>	<p><b>Reformulating and adapting physical requirements based on an analysis of the required operational skills, using unified and proportionate criteria applicable to both genders.</b></p> <p><b>1. Occupational and risk analysis: It is recommended that a systematic study be carried out, with the support of experts in the field of security and physiotherapy, on:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Types of missions within the MIA structures (public order, investigations, rapid response, etc.);</li> <li>• The real need for strength, resistance, speed and endurance in operational situations; and</li> <li>• Anatomical and physiological differences that can be taken into account strictly in relation to the safety and efficiency of mission performance.</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Establishing common minimum standards and adapted thresholds:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designing identical exercises for both genders, with differentiated passing scores only when analysis shows that there is a clear need (e.g., age categories or particular health situations).</li> <li>• Instead of completely different distances (e.g. 1,000 meters vs. 3,000 meters), a time limit can be introduced for running the same distance, providing a minimum endurance threshold clearly justified for professional tasks (e.g., running 2,000 meters in "X" minutes, with slightly adjusted passing parameters for women and men by age group).</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Transparency and steering:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publishing the methodology for establishing the scales in annexes to the future order or regulation, in the form of a Justification Note, from which the real professional need emerges.</li> <li>• Piloting the new set of physical requirements in 1-2 subdivisions, with feedback collection and adjustment before large-scale implementation.</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Training and support for staff:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a higher level of requirement is maintained (e.g., for special forces), a continuous training programme (including progressive physical training and access to gyms) should be created to support the achievement of the standards and to avoid the disproportionate exclusion of women.</li> </ul> <p><b>5. Periodic monitoring and re-evaluation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a deadline (e.g., every 2 years) for reviewing the requirements, according to the real situation on the ground, developments in the field of police work and EU/international recommendations.</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Existing barriers</b> <i>(all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</i></p>	<p>The evaluation committees created under the "Regulation on the organization of physical training and sports" within the IGP and IGC of the Ministry of Internal Affairs are predominantly composed of men. The results of the physical assessment carried out under the Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs No. 69 of 16 March 2017 on the approval of this regulation can influence the careers of girls and women, especially in terms of job promotions.</p>
	<p><b>Legal provision</b> <i>(the legal provisions that establish and regulate the requirements mentioned)</i></p>	<p>Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs No. 69 of 16 March 2017 on the approval of the Regulation on the organization of physical training and sports within the Ministry of Internal Affairs.</p>
	<p><b>International standards</b> <i>(international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</i></p>	<p>Article 14, para. 2 of Directive 2006/54 allows EU Member States in the application of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment between men and women in matters of employment, an exception, namely that "a difference in treatment based on a characteristic based on sex does not constitute discrimination where, having regard to the nature of the particular occupational activities in question or the context in which they are carried out, such a characteristic constitutes a genuine and determining occupational requirement, provided that its objective is legitimate and the requirement is proportionate."</p>

	<b>Relevant indicators</b> <i>(the relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</i>	Number of people experiencing difficulties in completing control exercises.
	<b>Proposals for amendment</b> <i>(the recommendations for adjusting the legislative framework, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</i>	Amendment to MIA Order No. 69 of 16 March 2017 on the approval of the Regulation on the organization of physical training and sports within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in order to eliminate stereotyped and unjustified practices, so that the Training Commissions have at least 50% women in their composition.
	<b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b>	According to the data provided, most evaluation committees are composed of men. Women, although they can be part of committees, are rarely appointed to these structures, although the results of the physical assessment have an important impact on the professional path, especially for girls and women. Given that physical test performance counts for recruitment or promotion, the absence of a balanced gender perspective in the committee can lead to biased evaluations, lack of trust in the objectivity of the process and, in the long term, discourage women from advancing in positions. Order of the Ministry of Interior no. 644/2022 replaces the old Order of the Ministry of Interior No. 69/2017 but does not explicitly provide requirements regarding the gender composition of committees that assess physical fitness. Thus, the recommendation to have at least 50% women in evaluation committees (or another quota that ensures balance) is currently not put into practice.
	<b>New recommendation</b>	<p><b>Establish a minimum quota for women's representation in physical fitness evaluation committees and introduce training measures for committee members on gender equality topics.</b></p> <p><b>1. Revision of MIA Order No. 644/2022</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce an express provision requiring evaluation committees to include a minimum of 40% representation of each gender (or another threshold – up to 50% – adapted to the current personnel context).</li> <li>• Adjust the procedure for appointing members in order to avoid situations in which committees are made up exclusively of men.</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Training committee members in gender equality and avoiding stereotypes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize trainings for all committee members, aiming to familiarize them with the principles of non-discrimination, equal opportunity standards and how to objectively evaluate candidates.</li> <li>• Include in these courses case studies on potential prejudices and their effects on women's careers.</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Monitoring and reporting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish mechanisms to collect data on the gender composition of committees and the results of physical assessments, including the percentage of women who pass the exams and subsequently access management positions.</li> <li>• Periodically publish (e.g., annually) this information to ensure transparency of the process and observe whether there is progress or persistent imbalances.</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Creating databases with female specialists</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highlight and conduct continuous training of employees with skills in physical education and sports so that they can be included in committees without impediments.</li> <li>• Encourage and motivate them through incentives (specialized training, professional recognition, promotion opportunities) to remain or become involved as evaluators in these committees.</li> </ul>
3	<b>Existing barriers</b> <i>(all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</i>	Women are not trained in the application of physical force and special means.

<p><b>Legal provision</b> <i>(the legal provisions that establish and regulate the requirements mentioned)</i></p>	<p>Joint Order of the Ministry of Interior No. 4 of 11 January 2018 of the Ministry of Interior, which approved the Guide on Professional Intervention in in the exercise of duties.</p>
<p><b>International standards</b> <i>(international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</i></p>	<p>References in international standards: Article 10 letter a) of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women provides for the obligation of states to establish the same conditions for access to the profession, to the same curricula, the same examinations and teachers for women and men. More than 60% of NATO member states require identical physical requirements for women and men as shown in the NATO Annual Report for 2017. Notable examples in this regard are Canada or Germany, countries where the selection procedure does not differentiate between women and men. In the case of Tanja Kreil v. Bundesrepublik Deutschland, para.22, the Court of Justice of the European Union ruled on the need for a permanent assessment of social needs that could justify different standards applied to women and men.</p>
<p><b>Relevant indicators</b> <i>(the relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</i></p>	<p>Number of women who have been trained in procedures related to the application of physical force and special means</p>
<p><b>Proposals for amendment</b> <i>(the recommendations for adjusting the legislative framework, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</i></p>	<p>Adjustment of the Joint Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs No. 4 of 11 January 2018 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which approved the Guide on Professional Intervention in Gender-Specific Requirements, including by providing examples of the application of physical force and special means depending on the subject applying it and the subject to whom it is applied, where relevant.</p>
<p><b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b></p>	<p>The Guide on Professional Intervention (approved by Joint Order MIA No. 4/2018) illustrates exclusively men in scenarios of the use of force and special means, and women are not adequately trained on this subject. Although Order 4/2018 is in force and provides a general framework for training in the use of physical force and special means, there are no specific provisions or examples that take into account anatomical particularities or operational scenarios relevant to women. There is no statistic that demonstrates that the number of trained women has increased or that specific training sessions have been introduced for them.</p> <p><b>Conclusion:</b> <i>The recommendation to adjust the Guide and to train/involve women in training related to the use of physical force is not yet satisfactorily implemented. Women do not appear explicitly as a subject of training (exercises, scenarios, illustrations), and data shows that this shortcoming can create a perception of exclusion or minimization of their operational role.</i></p>
<p><b>New recommendation</b></p>	<p><b>Actively integrate women into all training programmes on the use of force and special means and adjust the Professional Intervention Guide with gender-relevant examples and scenarios.</b></p> <p><b>1. Review the Guide on Professional Intervention</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adding chapters or practical examples that include scenarios in which female officers act to manage operational situations, including cases of self-defense, immobilization, handcuffing, and use of special means (e.g. tear gas, baton).</li> <li>• Introducing illustrations and photo-video materials with female police officers and non-commissioned officers applying the procedure (not just men), to reflect the real diversity of personnel and eliminate the stereotype that only men can perform force maneuvers.</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Co-educational and compulsory training programmes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop specific training modules (intervention techniques, self-defense tactics) for both men and women. These courses can be included in annual continuous training plans for all employees.</li> <li>• Ensuring, through planning and budget, that every female police officer or non-commissioned officer undergoes training similar to that of men (same curriculum and same examination), respecting the principle of “same conditions and examinations” (CEDAW, art. 10).</li> </ul>

	<p><b>3. Personalized coaching for women</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplement standard training with additional modules on anatomical differences or more effective strategies for female police officers in force situations, where relevant.</li> <li>• Invite trainers with expertise in self-defense techniques and police tactics adapted for women (e.g. specialized coaches or policewomen with operational experience).</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Monitoring and impact assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect data on the number of women who participate in and successfully complete professional intervention courses.</li> <li>• Conduct periodic evaluations (e.g., every 6-12 months) to see if introducing examples and scenarios that include women increases their involvement in operational actions and the degree of confidence in their own skills in the use of force.</li> </ul> <p><b>5. Publication and dissemination of new materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once revised, the Guide must be available (including online) in a version that explicitly presents the sections addressing gender aspects.</li> <li>• Undertake internal communication (both through official emails and in meetings) to encourage female staff to sign up for training sessions and to emphasize the importance of their equal involvement in all forms of training.</li> </ul>
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**2. Encouraging gender equity in recruitment/employment by introducing recruitment quotas**

<b>1</b>	<p><b>Existing barriers</b> <i>(all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</i></p>	<p>Unjustified age and height requirements. The admission competition to the first cycle – higher bachelor's degree studies is organized by the Stefan cel Mare Academy through professional training and study programmes, based on the "Nomenclature of fields of professional training and specialties," approved by Government Decision No. 482 of 28 June 2017. According to the Admission Regulations of Academy, candidates for places that receive state-funding in the admission competition must cumulatively meet several conditions, including men not exceeding the age of 30 and having a height not less than 170 cm (168 cm – for high school graduates in the current year). Women must not exceed the age of 27 and have a height of at least 165 cm or above.</p>
	<p><b>Legal provision</b> <i>(the legal provisions that establish and regulate the requirements mentioned)</i></p>	<p>The provisions for places with state-funding at the Stefan cel Mare Academy must cumulatively meet several conditions, including men not exceeding the age of 30 and having a height not less than 170 cm (168 cm – for high school graduates in the current year). Women must not exceed the age of 27 and have a height of at least 165 cm.</p>
	<p><b>International standards</b> <i>(international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</i></p>	<p>Based on the need to increase the presence of women in the fields of power, the UN launched the United Nations Global Effort initiative in 2009. The objective is that at least in peacekeeping troops, the presence of women should initially reach 20%, with the ultimate goal being that of a 50% presence of women in peacekeeping troops, whether they are military or police forces. In this regard, some UN member states have adopted multi-annual strategies, which are reviewed every 5 years, for the recruitment of a greater number of women as officers. The first type of action suggested in this regard is the revision of recruitment criteria, with the analysis of determining occupational requirements as derogations depending on specific positions and not their formulation and application in a general way. Such a guide for recruitment models in the spirit of diversity was developed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office).</p>

<p><b>Relevant indicators</b> <i>(the relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</i></p>	<p>Number of people admitted, disaggregated by age and gender.</p>
<p><b>Proposals for amendment</b> <i>(the recommendations for adjusting the legislative framework, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</i></p>	<p>The differentiated admission provisions for men and women based on age and height have no justification and are discriminatory; they must be reviewed by establishing uniform criteria in the Admission Regulations of the Police Academy.</p>
<p><b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b></p>	<p>The Admission Regulations of the Ştefan cel Mare Academy maintain differentiated age and height requirements (men: max. 30 years / 170 cm; women: max. 27 years / 165 cm), without objectively justifying their necessity.</p> <p>There is no evidence to date that these criteria have been modified or that a detailed occupational analysis has taken place to demonstrate why certain positions impose age or height restrictions.</p> <p>Therefore, the recommendation to eliminate unjustified age and height requirements or to adapt them proportionally to the real needs of the profession has not been implemented satisfactorily.</p> <p><b>Conclusion:</b> <i>This admissions requirement creates double discrimination for women (by reducing the age limit to 27 and by maintaining unjustified height barriers).</i></p> <p>Beyond the legal aspect (which contravenes the principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination), this situation effectively limits women's access to the police profession and reduces diversity among law enforcement agencies.</p>
<p><b>New recommendation</b></p>	<p><b>Review of the differentiated age and height criteria in the Admission Regulations, based on a real occupational analysis and objective justifications.</b></p> <p><b>1. Occupational analysis and proportionality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct an internal study (with the involvement of experts in the field of security, occupational medicine and human resources specialists) to determine whether there are positions that actually require a certain height threshold and/or age limit.</li> <li>• If it is concluded that some parameters are indispensable for specific operational functions (e.g., certain special intervention troops), these criteria must be applied strictly for the respective positions and not generalized for all specializations of the Academy.</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Establish uniform and non-discriminatory criteria</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate differentiated age limits for women and men or, where strictly necessary (e.g., operational necessity for certain special forces), there should be a clear technical and legal justification.</li> <li>• Standardize the height requirement and, where applicable, the maximum allowed ages, in light of real professional requirements (e.g., standardizing at 165 cm for all candidates).</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Piloting and monitoring the new criteria</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce the new set of criteria on an experimental basis (for one or two admission sessions) and monitoring the impact on the number of women and men admitted.</li> <li>• Publish gender- and age-disaggregated data to assess whether the new approach increases female participation and reduces unjustified differences in admissions.</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Ensuring transparency and alignment with international best practices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publicly communicate the reasons why certain requirements remain (if they remain) and how they serve the purpose of the position.</li> <li>• Align with the principles recommended by the UN and international associations (e.g., IACP, COPS Office), which argue that reviewing recruitment criteria represents the first step in increasing diversity and the presence of women in police structures.</li> </ul>

2	<p><b>Existing barriers</b> (all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</p>	<p>Capping the admission quota for women at a maximum of 35% of state-funded positions, which limits their access to education and careers in the structures of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.</p>
	<p><b>Legal provision</b> (the legal provisions that establish and regulate the requirements mentioned)</p>	<p>The existence of a maximum admission quota of 35% for female candidates to places with state-funding, full-time education, within each study programme, which restricts women's access above this percentage. According to point 38 of the "Regulation on the organization of admission to higher undergraduate studies within the "Ștefan cel Mare" Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for the academic year 2024-2025", it is established that "up to 35% of places with funding from the state budget, full-time education, are reserved for female candidates." The admission committee may increase this proportion depending on the need and establish the exact ratio of the distribution of places, depending on gender.</p>
	<p><b>International standards</b> (international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</p>	<p>Based on the need to increase the presence of women in leadership positions, the United Nations launched the United Nations Global Effort initiative in 2009. The objective is that the presence of women should initially reach 20% in peace-keeping troops, with the ultimate goal of reaching 50%, whether in military or police forces. In this regard, some UN member states have adopted multi-annual strategies, which are reviewed every 5 years, for the recruitment of a greater number of women as officers. The first type of action suggested in this regard is the revision of recruitment criteria to determine occupational requirements as derogations according to specific positions and not their formulation and application in a general way. Such a guide for recruitment models in the spirit of diversity was developed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office).</p>
	<p><b>Relevant indicators</b> (the relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</p>	<p>Number of people admitted, disaggregated by age and gender.</p>
	<p><b>Proposals for amendment</b> (the recommendations for adjusting the legislative framework, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</p>	<p>Repeal the current formula provided for in the Admission Regulations of the Police Academy regarding the presence of women who "constitute up to 35 percent of the total number of places provided for full-time education", a formula that is discriminatory. Replace the current formula by reformulating it in such a way as to establish a positive measure to ensure equality in accordance with Article 2 of Law No. 121 of 2012 on ensuring equality. A possible formula could be: "women constitute at least 35% of the total number of places provided for full-time education."</p>
	<p><b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b></p>	<p>The 2024-2025 Admission Regulation of the Ștefan cel Mare Academy explicitly states that "up to 35% of the places financed from the state budget, the form of full-time education, are reserved for female candidates." The Regulation grants the Admissions Committee the power to modify this ceiling "depending on necessity." The text stipulates that "The Admissions Committee, depending on necessity, is invested with the right to increase the proportion in question, as well as to establish the exact ratio regarding the distribution of places [...] according to gender."</p> <p>This clause represents a tool for flexibility. Basically, if in a given year it is found that either the number of well-prepared female candidates is very high, or that the number of male candidates is not sufficient to cover the available places, the Commission may decide to increase the quota of women to fill the vacant budgetary places. In the <a href="#">old regulation</a> (for example, the one from 2019), there was even an explicit margin: the basic quota for women was 30%, but the Commission could increase it to 40% of the places with the agreement of 3/4 of its members. This shows that the application of the quotas is not set in stone but can be modulated by the Commission. In the current 2024-2025 regulation, the exact procedure for approving such an increase is no longer detailed (there is no mention of a qualified vote as in 2019), suggesting increased confidence in the decision-making power of the Admissions Commission.</p> <p><b>Conclusion:</b> <i>The recommendation to repeal the discriminatory formula and replace it with a positive measure (e.g., "at least 30%") has not yet been implemented.</i></p>

**New recommendation**

**Eliminating the maximum limit for women and introducing a formula that effectively ensures equal opportunities and a greater presence of women within the Academy.**

**It is recommended:**

- **Amend the provisions regarding admission quotas by transforming them from a maximum restriction into a positive measure to ensure minimum representation.** Specifically, it is proposed to guarantee a minimum threshold of 40% for each gender among admitted candidates. Instead of imposing a ceiling that limits the presence of one gender, this amendment would ensure that no gender falls below a 40% share in the structure of admitted students. Such a minimum requirement eliminates artificial exclusions and guarantees that, as long as there are eligible candidates, both genders will be substantially represented.
- **Institutionalize rules regarding gender quotas for admission into a clear and permanent regulatory framework.** The gender percentages allowed (such as the minimum threshold of 40% proposed above) should be directly written into a normative act or official regulation of the Academy with stable legal force and applied uniformly in each admission session. Instead of each annual commission interpreting or establishing these quotas, the normative framework should explicitly provide for the rule and the method of application. For example, the academy regulation (or an act of the relevant Ministry) could firmly stipulate the criteria for the distribution of places by gender, eliminating ambiguity.
- **Ensuring gender balance in the composition of admission committees.** Each selection committee should include members of both sexes, ideally in a balanced proportion (e.g., parity or at least one-third of the members belonging to the under-represented sex). In practice, this could involve appointing to the committee an equal or nearly equal number of women and men with the qualifications required for the assessment. If exact numerical parity is not possible in certain situations, a minimum number of representatives of each sex should still be included to avoid one-sided judgment.
- **Implementing a transparency policy by periodically publishing admission data, broken down by gender.** The Academy should collect and publish annually detailed statistics on the admission process: the total number of applicants, the number of admissions, the success rate, the distribution of these indicators by gender (how many men and women applied and how many were admitted), as well as any data on the distribution by specialization or funding sources, all segmented by gender. The publication could be made on the official website of the Academy and in annual reports to the Ministry, in an accessible and easy-to-understand format. Also, in addition to the raw data, comparative analyses with previous years can be included, to highlight trends and the impact of the measures taken.
- **Additional support for female candidates.**
- **Conduct promotional campaigns and preliminary preparation sessions** (physical training, preparation for entrance exams), so that as many candidates as possible are informed and have real chances of success in the competition.
- **Collaborate** with high schools, universities and NGOs to showcase opportunities in policing and break stereotypes about careers in law enforcement.

### 3. Introduction of promotion quotas for management positions

1	<b>Existing barriers</b> <i>(all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</i>	<p>No promotion quotas have been established within the MIA and its subordinate institutions. The only gender quota was established within the General Inspectorate of Police through the approval of the Inspectorate's Action Plan for the period 2018-2020, which contained an objective to increase the percentage of women in the police by 20% by 2020.</p>
	<b>Legal provision</b> <i>(the legal provisions that establish and regulate the requirements mentioned)</i>	<p>Personnel policies within the MIA and subordinate institutions.</p>
	<b>International standards</b> <i>(international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</i>	<p>Retention and promotion opportunities are also relevant and in this regard the UN guidance suggests reviewing and re-evaluating promotion criteria and procedures to ensure that they are gender-equitable. It is also recommended that interviewers and assessors in selection and professional evaluation committees be trained to be aware of gender bias and that women, including people from outside the security sector, be included in selection or promotion committees. Annual plans, dedicated strategies, the establishment of a gender equality office or the employment of gender experts to monitor the application of relevant public policies and conduct a periodic gender equality audit regarding the measures adopted and their impact are recommendations offered by the NATO expert commission, as well as by the UN in its guide on the integration of women in police forces. The person who is hired as a gender expert will be involved in the development of procedures, the elaboration of specifications or the operationalization and monitoring of processes (with a focus on gender mainstreaming).</p>
	<b>Relevant indicators</b> <i>(the relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</i>	<p>Number of women and men recruited in subordinate institutions in officer and non-commissioned officer positions.</p>
	<b>Proposals for amendment</b> <i>(the recommendations for adjusting the legislative framework, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</i>	<p>Establishing recruitment quotas based on gender criteria in the organizational and institutional policies of the Ministry of Interior and subordinate institutions.</p>
	<b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b>	<p>According to the information presented, there are no clear and uniform internal policies or regulations within the MIA and its subordinate institutions that establish formal quotas or concrete measures to ensure the representation of women in recruitment and promotion.</p> <p>The only notable precedent is the objective proposed by the IGP Action Plan (2018-2020) to increase the share of women in the police to 20%.</p> <p>However, this does not represent a universally applicable regulation, but rather a strategic target specific to PGI only. There is no data to show to what extent this objective has been fully achieved or whether it has been translated into a real and coherent positive measure at the institutional level. Furthermore, it has not been extended/updated for the period after 2020 (at least from the information provided).</p> <p>In addition, there is no information that a dedicated gender equality office has been established within the MIA or that a gender expert would systematically monitor the implementation of policies and conduct gender audits at the institutional level.</p> <p><b>Conclusion:</b> <i>The recommendation to establish recruitment or promotion quotas (or other positive measures) in the policies of the MIA and subordinate institutions is not yet widely implemented. There is only a specific reference (20% in the police, valid until 2020), without it being clear whether it has turned into a permanent and generalized mechanism.</i></p>

	<p><b>New recommendation</b></p>	<p><b>Adoption of clear and unified policies at the MIA level regarding recruitment and promotion quotas for women, in parallel with the establishment of an institutional mechanism for monitoring gender equality.</b></p> <p><b>1. Set explicit and measurable institutional targets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an Action Plan at the level of the entire Ministry of Internal Affairs (not just at the level of the IGP), which would contain quantitative objectives and clear deadlines for increasing the presence of women in officer/non-commissioned officer positions and in management positions.</li> <li>• Adjust the Internal Regulations, so as to explicitly provide for either a minimum figure (e.g. at least 30% women in recruitment/promotions), or other methods of equitable distribution, where the staff structure and operational context allow.</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Implementation of temporary positive measures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In accordance with Law No. 121/2012, special measures may be applied to accelerate the achievement of gender balance (e.g. priority for equal scoring, as in the case of other recommendations).</li> <li>• These measures must be transparent, proportionate and reviewed periodically (e.g., every 2-3 years) to see whether they have achieved their purpose.</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Establishing a structure or appointing a gender expert</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an office dedicated to gender equality within the Ministry of Interior or nominating gender advisors in each subordinate institution, with the role of developing and implementing equality policies, monitoring progress and periodically auditing recruitment/promotion practices.</li> <li>• This structure would provide assistance to recruitment committees, assessors and managers to ensure that procedures are fair and non-discriminatory.</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Formation of recruitment and promotion committees</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include a significant percentage of women in committees (e.g., a minimum 40% if the staff structure allows it) and, where possible, specialists who are not part of the security sector, to diversify the perspective.</li> <li>• Training committee members on gender equality, stereotypes and prejudices, so that the selection process is based on real skills and transparent criteria.</li> </ul> <p><b>5. Periodic monitoring and reporting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual collection and publication of gender-disaggregated data on the number of recruitments, promotions and people participating in internal competitions.</li> <li>• Assessing the impact of adopted policies, adjusting objectives and positive measures based on real progress and obstacles encountered.</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Existing barriers</b> <i>(all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</i></p>	<p>Hiring/promotion committees are predominantly made up of men.</p> <p>The data shows that within the Ministry of Interior and its subordinate institutions, hiring/promotion committees are predominantly made up of men.</p> <p>The low or lack of women on hiring/promotion committees disadvantages women.</p>
	<p><b>Legal provision</b> <i>(the legal provisions that establish and regulate the requirements mentioned)</i></p>	<p>Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs No. 138 of 18 April 2013 on the approval of the Regulation on the evaluation of professional performance of employees with special status within the subdivisions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs No. 239 of 14 August 2017 on the approval of the Regulation on the special control of candidates for employment or promotion in the public position with special status within the Ministry of Internal Affairs do not establish quotas in the number of members of the recruitment committees.</p>

<p><b>International standards</b> <i>(international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</i></p>	<p>Reflected previously.</p>
<p><b>Relevant indicators</b> <i>(the relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</i></p>	<p>The proportion of women and men in the Certification Committees.</p>
<p><b>Proposals for amendment</b> <i>(the recommendations for adjusting the legislative framework, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</i></p>	<p>Amendment to the Order of the Ministry of Interior No. 138 of April 18, 2013 on the approval of the Regulation on the evaluation of professional performances of employees with special status within the subdivisions of the Ministry of Interior and of the Order of the Ministry of Interior No. 239 of 14 August 2017 on the approval of the Regulation on the special control of candidates for employment or promotion in public positions with special status, through the mandatory inclusion of a gender quota requiring 50% female representation in hiring and promotion committees and the obligation to conduct courses on gender and diversity, stereotypes and prejudices for all members of hiring/promotion committees, including conditioning the activity in these committees on conducting relevant courses on this topic.</p>
<p><b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b></p>	<p><b>There are no formal obligations</b> regarding the inclusion of gender quotas in hiring/promotion committees within the Ministry of Interior and subordinate institutions (Order of the Ministry of Interior no. 138/2013 and Order of the Ministry of Interior no. 239/2017 do not contain such provisions).</p> <p>The data presented (table no. 2) indicate a predominantly male participation in the competition committees, sometimes with a rate of less than 10-15% women.</p> <p>In practice, this imbalance remains constant, with no explicit regulation imposing a minimum quota for women or training of committee members in the field of gender equality.</p> <p><b>Conclusion:</b> <i>The recommendation to amend internal regulations (MIA Order No. 138/2013 and No. 239/2017) to include mandatory quotas and training courses in the field of gender equality is not implemented. Hiring/promotion committees remain overwhelmingly male and can create an evaluation climate that disadvantages women in promotion.</i></p>
<p><b>New recommendation</b></p>	<p><b>Introducing gender quotas and mandatory gender equality training for members of hiring/promotion committees.</b></p> <p><b>1. Revision of MIA Orders no. 138/2013 and no. 239/2017</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set a minimum quota for the underrepresented gender (e.g. 40% or 50% women) in recruitment and promotion committees, aiming to ensure gender diversity.</li> <li>• Include a clear provision regarding managerial responsibility to appoint women to committees; if there are not enough candidates with an appropriate profile in the respective structure, identify training or inter-subdivision cooperation solutions.</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Mandatory training for committee members</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create (or update) a specialized training module on the topics of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equal opportunities and treatment</li> <li>• Diversity management</li> <li>• Preventing and combating gender stereotypes and prejudices.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Each committee member will need to certify attendance at least one such training session to be eligible to serve on the committee.</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Monitoring and reporting results</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect gender-disaggregated data on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composition of committees (number of women vs. number of men).</li> <li>• Competition results (who is admitted/promoted).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The career path of the subsequently promoted candidates.</li> <li>• Annual publication of a report showing progress towards gender balance and any necessary adjustments.</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Integrating independent experts (where possible)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To strengthen objectivity, the inclusion of an external expert/observer (e.g., from an NGO specialized in women's rights or a public institution with equality responsibilities) in certain key stages of the promotion competitions may be considered.</li> <li>• This practice, even if it does not become a general rule, can be piloted in the subdivisions with the largest gender discrepancies.</li> </ul> <p><b>5. Correlation with other positive measures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committees with balanced representation are just one of the pillars of ensuring women's access to leadership positions. They must be complemented by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring programmes</li> <li>• Continuous leadership training</li> <li>• Measures to ensure women's participation in internships and professional development courses</li> <li>• Setting clear institutional targets for increasing the share of women in leadership positions.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Existing barriers</b> (all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</p>	Human resources policies do not take gender into account.
	<p><b>Legal provision</b> (the legal provisions that establish and regulate the requirements mentioned)</p>	<p>Special domestic laws and regulations that regulates the activity of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and subordinate institutions; Law No. 288 of 16 December 2012 on the civil servant with special status within the Ministry of Internal Affairs;</p> <p>Government Decision No. 460 of 22 June 2017 for the implementation of the provisions of Law No. 288 of June 16 2012 regarding the civil servant with special status within the Ministry of Internal Affairs;</p> <p>Government Decision No. 409 of 7 June 2017 on the approval of the Disciplinary Statute of the civil servant with special status within the Ministry of Internal Affairs; MIA Order No. 138 of 18 April 12013 on the approval of the Regulation on the evaluation of professional performance of employees with special status within the MIA subdivisions;</p> <p>Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs No. 239 of 14 August 2017 on the approval of the Regulation on the special control of candidates for employment or promotion in public positions with special status within the Ministry of Internal Affairs.</p>
	<p><b>International standards</b> (international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</p>	Reflected previously.
	<p><b>Relevant indicators</b> (the relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</p>	x
	<p><b>Proposals for amendment</b> (the recommendations for adjusting the legislative framework, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</p>	Re-evaluation of special internal normative acts regulating the activity of the Ministry of Interior and subordinate institutions by including the gender component.

<p><b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b></p>	<p>Although there are general provisions regarding the organization and functioning of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) and subordinate institutions, <b>there is no clear and systematic approach to the gender component</b> in human resources policies.</p> <p>For example, in the regulations on performance evaluation, promotion or special control of candidates (Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs no. 138/2013, Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs no. 239/2017), <b>there is no explicit mention of gender mainstreaming or concrete measures</b> to prevent discrimination and support equal opportunities.</p> <p>There is an Action Plan on Gender Equality in the Police for 2022-2025 and some specific initiatives (e.g., mentoring, promotion campaigns), but these have not yet been translated into a unitary regulatory framework that would oblige all MIA structures to adopt gender-sensitive human resources policies (recruitment, promotion, training, infrastructure, etc.).</p> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p><i>The recommendation to re-evaluate internal regulatory acts and include the gender component in human resources policies is not yet implemented. Although there is some progress (strategic plans, information campaigns), these are not formally and uniformly included in the internal legislation and regulations applicable to all MIA subdivisions.</i></p>
<p><b>New recommendation</b></p>	<p><b>Integrate the gender perspective into all human resources policies and procedures within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and subordinate institutions, through a coordinated review of internal legislation and normative acts.</b></p> <p><b>1. Legislative and institutional audit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct an audit of normative acts (laws, government decisions, MIA orders and internal regulations) with the aim of identifying gaps in terms of gender equality.</li> <li>• Further develop the Evaluation Report with concrete recommendations for each normative act that does not yet reflect the principles of equal opportunities (e.g. lack of definitions, non-existence of provisions regarding non-discriminatory selection and promotion criteria, neglect of reasonable accommodations, etc.).</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Developing or updating human resources policies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explicitly introduce, in the relevant regulations (e.g. MIA Order no. 138/2013, MIA Order no. 239/2017, Regulation on the special control of candidates, Disciplinary Statute, etc.), articles and procedures that provide for:</li> <li>• Prohibit discrimination based on gender at all stages (recruitment, evaluation, promotion).</li> <li>• Ensure transparent and gender-sensitive criteria for performance evaluation and disciplinary processes.</li> <li>• Include mechanisms for reporting and resolving cases of discrimination or harassment, including gender bias.</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Integrating mandatory gender equality training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stipulate in regulatory documents that personnel involved in HR processes (managers, committee members, human resources specialists) must participate in training courses on gender equality and non-discrimination.</li> <li>• Create a standardized training module to be completed periodically, with a focus on recognizing and preventing gender stereotypes and indirect discrimination.</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Creating a structure or appointing a gender officer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish (or strengthen) a department/office within the Ministry of Interior to deal with gender mainstreaming, verifying how normative acts are applied, and proposing updates or adjustments when inconsistencies are detected.</li> <li>• Provide resources and support so that this gender officer (or team) can coordinate and monitor the implementation of measures.</li> </ul>

		<p><b>5. Continuous monitoring and reporting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce clear indicators on the number of women and men at different hierarchical levels, participation in training courses, access to professional development programmes, as well as data on parental leave or other facilities.</li> <li>• Annually publish reports on progress made in implementing gender-sensitive human resources policies to ensure transparency and accountability.</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Existing barriers</b> (all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</p>	<p>Hiring/promotion commissions favors men. In accordance with the standard human resources procedures approved within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in the event that several candidates have the same final grade, the candidate with the highest grade in the written test is declared the winner of the competition. If the competition includes additional tests, the tiebreaker is based on the practical skills assessment. If equality persists, the decision is made based on the physical performance test results. In the event of equal scores, based on the tiebreaker conditions, women could be disadvantaged considering that the tie-breaking criteria establish the relevant assessment test physical performance. Even if the norms are apparently adjusted to gender aspects, there is a risk that the committee may give priority to male candidates due to unconscious or unacknowledged stereotypes.</p>
	<p><b>Legal provision</b> (the legal provisions that establish and regulate the requirements mentioned)</p>	<p>Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs No. 239 of 14 August 2017 on the approval of the Regulation on the special control of candidates for employment or promotion in public positions with special status within the Ministry of Internal Affairs.</p>
	<p><b>International standards</b> (international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</p>	<p>Regarding ensuring equal opportunities in hiring or promotion processes, the UN recommends establishing committees in which gender diversity is respected and in which committee members receive prior professional training on gender equality to ensure awareness and awareness of this issue. In order to ensure equal opportunities between women and men, the formula proposed by the Court of Justice of the European Union in case C-409/95, Hellmut Marschall v Land Nordrhein-Westfalen is that, in the event of an equal score between two candidates (a woman and a man), priority should be given to the woman in terms of promotion, as long as there is still a major gender imbalance in relation to promotion in the profession in the specific field analyzed. The formula developed by the Court of Justice is flexible and also allows for an exception in the case where, in an objective assessment of the specific criteria for each individual candidacy, the balance tips in favor of the man. In turn, these latter specific criteria are also analyzed by the Court in order to avoid the risk of them being discriminatory in relation to female candidates.</p>
	<p><b>Relevant indicators</b> (the relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</p>	<p>No. of people who advanced in their careers in the last 2 years.</p>
	<p><b>Proposals for amendment</b> (the recommendations for adjusting the legislative framework, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</p>	<p>The provisions of the Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs No. 239 of 14 August 2017 on the approval of the Regulation on the special control of candidates for employment or promotion in the public position with special status within the Ministry of Internal Affairs are to be amended, whereby in the event of equal scores of candidates and if a candidate is a woman, priority will be given to the female officer. The measure is to be temporarily instituted.</p>
	<p><b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to the data and the regulatory framework analyzed (MIA Order no. 239/2017), in case of equal scores, the candidates are ranked, in order, according to the score on the written test, the practical test, and then the evaluation of physical performance.</li> <li>• There is no explicit provision giving priority to women in the event of full equality, as recommended by both the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union (Case C-409/95) and good international practices (UN, NATO).</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Furthermore, since the final tie-breaking criterion is physical performance, and the current scales are different and not always objectively justified, there is a risk that women are disadvantaged.</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion:</b> <i>The recommendation to amend MIA Order No. 239/2017 to ensure priority for women in equal scores has not yet been implemented. In the absence of a clear provision, competition committees may continue to apply criteria that do not favor correcting gender imbalance, especially in sectors with female underrepresentation.</i></p>
	<p><b>New recommendation</b></p>	<p><b>Amendment of MIA Order No. 239/2017 to introduce a rule favoring women in case of equal scores, along with other measures to eliminate gender imbalance.</b></p> <p><b>1. Insertion of a priority clause for women in case of equality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise the relevant Article of MIA Order No. 239/2017, clearly stipulating that, if equal scores are maintained between a male and a female candidate, the position will be filled by a woman, as long as there is a significant gender imbalance at the level of the position or structure.</li> <li>• At the same time, it will be stipulated that any additional criteria (e.g., very specific skills or a significant difference in experience) may constitute justified exceptions, so as not to affect the principle of meritocracy.</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Correlation with a gender imbalance monitoring</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly define the concept of “significant gender imbalance” (e.g., less than 30% women at the respective function level) to know exactly when the priority applies and when it does not.</li> <li>• Create a mechanism to track the rate of promotion and occupation of positions by women, so that the regulation is only applied temporarily and can be reassessed when the balancing objective has been achieved.</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Re-evaluation of the physical test as the final tie-breaking criterion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-evaluate Order No. 644/2022 on physical requirements to ensure that there are no discrepancies or unjustified scales that may disadvantage women in promotion competitions.</li> <li>• Introduce compensatory measures (e.g., prior training, adaptation of exercises) where it is demonstrated that the difference in scale has a disproportionate impact.</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Gender equality training for competition committees</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the obligation for committee members to be trained in recognizing stereotypes and unconscious prejudices, in order to eliminate the risks of subjectivity in situations of equal scoring.</li> <li>• Promote balanced representation (e.g., minimum 40% women) in these committees in accordance with international recommendations to ensure a diverse perspective in decision-making.</li> </ul> <p><b>5. Reporting and transparency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Periodically publish results of competitions where this priority rule was applied (without disclosing personal data), in order to assess whether the measure favors, in practice, the imbalance.</li> <li>• Establish a deadline (e.g., 2-3 years) to analyze the real impact of the measure and decide to maintain, adapt or terminate it, depending on the progress achieved.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Flexibility of working hours and night shifts</b></p>		
<p><b>1</b></p>	<p><b>Existing barriers</b> <i>(all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</i></p>	<p>Even if national legislation provides for regulations on adjusting working hours, the statistical data provided by the MIA suggests that these legal mechanisms are not being utilized, including due to the lack of necessary infrastructure (lack of rooms equipped for breastfeeding).</p>

<p><b>Legal provision</b> (the legal provisions that establish and regulate the requirements mentioned)</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>
<p><b>International standards</b> (international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</p>	<p>The prohibition of discrimination, including indirect discrimination, is provided for in CEDAW as well as in the European Convention on Human Rights in Article 14 and in Additional Protocol 12 and reaffirmed in UNSCR 1325 of 2000, UNSCR 1889 of 2009, UNSCR 2122 of 2013, UNSCR 2242 of 2015 and UNSCR 2467 of 2019. The prohibition of discrimination against pregnant women is stipulated by ILO in the Convention on Maternity Protection, 2000 No. 183 and Recommendation 2000 No. 191.</p>
<p><b>Relevant indicators</b> (the relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</p>	<p>Number of employees who benefited in the last 2 years.</p>
<p><b>Proposals for amendment</b> (the recommendations for adjusting the legislative framework, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</p>	<p>At the level of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, procedures should be initiated to capitalize on the right to part-time work, provided for in Article 97(2)CM, Reasonable accommodation of working conditions for pregnant women, provided for in Article 250 (1)CM, Breaks for feeding the child, provided for in Article 108CM, Individualized programmes / flexible work regime, provided for in Article 100 (7)CM, including the development of the necessary infrastructure to make Article 108 of the CM applicable.</p>
<p><b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although national legislation (Labour Code) provides for the possibility of part-time work, flexible working hours, reasonable accommodation for pregnant women, and breaks for feeding the child, the data presented indicate a low level of utilization of these mechanisms within the MIA and subordinate institutions.</li> <li>• The main causes identified are the lack of infrastructure (e.g., rooms designed for breastfeeding or preschool spaces) and the lack of information/internal organization regarding legal rights and facilities.</li> <li>• Although there are some specific examples (such as the space dedicated to preschool children within the National Patrol Inspectorate), these types of accommodations are exceptions and there is no systematic programme at the level of the entire institution.</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion:</b> <i>The recommendation to initiate procedures for the realization of the right to part-time work, reasonable accommodation and breastfeeding breaks is not yet widely implemented. The lack of infrastructure and a coherent information/facilitation framework hinders the effective use of these legal provisions.</i></p>
<p><b>New recommendation</b></p>	<p><b>Creating an institutional and infrastructural framework that allows employees to effectively benefit from the right to flexible working hours, part-time work, breaks and breastfeeding rooms.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Developing an internal Procedure/Circular at the MIA level</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explicitly detail how to grant part-time work, flexible working hours, breaks for feeding the child and reasonable accommodation for pregnant women.</li> <li>• The procedure should be communicated to all subdivisions, and managers should be responsible for implementation and informing staff.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>2. Designing spaces for breastfeeding and supporting families</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and arrange rooms in the MIA headquarters and subordinate institutions so that mothers can breastfeed or express milk in hygienic and safe conditions.</li> <li>• Encourage the development of preschool spaces (mini-crèches) or partnerships with specialized institutions, where the number of employees with young children is significant.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

	<p><b>3. Internal information campaign</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disseminate guides (online and printed) explaining the rights and procedures to follow to benefit from these facilities (e.g., flexible working hours, breastfeeding breaks).</li> <li>Organize discussions and Q&amp;A sessions in each subdivision, where employees can ask questions and receive clarifications from HR/managers.</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Monitoring usage and impact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct data annually on the number of people who request and obtain flexible working hours, part-time work, breastfeeding breaks or childcare facilities.</li> <li>Periodically assess (e.g. every 12 months) the obstacles encountered by employees and adjust internal policies if the need for additional measures is identified.</li> </ul> <p><b>5. Creating a resource pool</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure funding (from the MIA budget or through projects/partnerships) for the arrangement of breastfeeding spaces, the purchase of necessary equipment (e.g., refrigerators for storing milk, chairs and tables, etc.).</li> <li>Analyze the possibility of partially subsidizing childcare costs for employed families, especially where there is no dedicated preschool space.</li> </ul>
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**5. The possibility of promoting paternity**

<b>1</b>	<p><b>Existing barriers</b> <i>(all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</i></p>	Childcare leave is not promoted and recommended among men, especially within the IGC.
	<p><b>Legal provision</b> <i>(the legal provisions that establish and regulate the requirements mentioned)</i></p>	Not applicable.
	<p><b>International standards</b> <i>(international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</i></p>	References in international standards: CEDAW establishes in Article 11(2)(c) the obligation of states to provide social support services to enable parents to combine family obligations with professional responsibilities. Suggestions for family support policies proposed by the UN include policies relating to (I) pregnancy (listing types of leave, their duration, conditions to be met, other types of benefits, bureaucratic aspects to be met, reduction of working hours or relocation to less demanding tasks, protection from chemicals or weapons in testing, uniforms), and (II) child-rearing (ensuring access to childcare facilities and flexible working hours).
	<p><b>Relevant indicators</b> <i>(the relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</i></p>	Number of men who have benefited from paternity leave in the last 2 years.
	<p><b>Proposals for amendment</b> <i>(the recommendations for adjusting the legislative framework, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</i></p>	It is recommended to promote parental leave among men within subordinate institutions, especially in IGC.

<p><b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The data show that the right to paternal leave (and childcare leave) is little utilized by men, especially within the IGC.</li> <li>• Although national legislation (Labour Code, Law No. 158 and related Laws/Orders of the Ministry of Interior) clearly provide for paternal leave, there is no active promotion to encourage men to request it.</li> <li>• Current practices suggest that many men do not take paternity leave either due to lack of information or cultural norms/stereotypes about who should care for the baby.</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion:</b>  <i>The recommendation to promote paternity leave to encourage more men to apply for it, especially in IGC, is not fully implemented. Although there is a legal framework that allows for paternity leave, there is no sustained campaign or strategic approach to convince men to take on these family responsibilities.</i></p>
<p><b>New recommendation</b></p>	<p><b>Creating and implementing an internal campaign to promote paternity leave, focusing on its benefits and encouraging men in IGC to exercise their right.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Information and awareness campaign</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an information package (flyers, posters, official emails) explaining legal rights to parental leave (duration, benefits, application procedures) and the benefits of early paternal involvement (for the child, family and work-life balance).</li> <li>• Disseminate this information to all subordinate units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (including the IGC), through internal communication channels (boards, intranet, WhatsApp groups).</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>2. Involvement of managers and HR</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train subdivision heads and human resources managers to encourage men to take paternity leave, emphasizing that this right is legally protected and that there are no negative career consequences.</li> <li>• Create a clear and user-friendly procedure for submitting applications so that men do not encounter bureaucratic obstacles.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>3. Success models and positive examples</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and present case studies with men (officers, non-commissioned officers) who opted for paternity leave and benefited from it (e.g. family harmony, smooth return to work, maintaining professional rhythm).</li> <li>• Organize small events (e.g. workshops, "sharing experience" sessions) where managing family and professional roles is discussed.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>4. Monitoring and feedback</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect (annually) data on the number of men who requested paternity leave, the type and duration of the leave.</li> <li>• Conduct feedback questionnaires for those who used it, to identify problems encountered and improve existing procedures.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>5. Correlation with family support infrastructure and programmes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect the campaign to promote paternal leave with efforts to set up breastfeeding spaces, play areas and mini-nurseries in institutions, to provide a complete set of services that facilitate family life.</li> <li>• Facilitate reintegration into the workplace after parental leave through flexible working hours (where possible) and guidance from HR.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

## 6. The possibility of increasing access to personal hygiene infrastructure

1	<b>Existing barriers</b> <i>(all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</i>	Uniforms are not accommodating and do not take into account physical differences of the female body. The issue of uniforms is in fact a frequently raised issue by women in the police services in informal discussions, because they are frequently faced with the situation where shirts, trousers or jackets are simply too big.
	<b>Legal provision</b> <i>(the legal provisions that establish and regulate the requirements mentioned)</i>	Not applicable.
	<b>International standards</b> <i>(international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</i>	In some states, the minister or a special commission decides on the appearance of uniforms. In Croatia, a committee is involved in the uniform approval process. This special commission includes representatives of all police structures and trade unions operating within the Ministry. Professional support is provided by the Department for Police Equipment and Uniforms, which is tasked with developing detailed regulations for each element of the police uniform and oversees their purchase, production and distribution. If the topic is a specific element of the women's uniform, a larger number of women, representatives of all trade unions within the Ministry, and from all police structures, are included on the commission. Gender-adapted uniforms also exist in Montenegro or Macedonia. In the U.S., police departments have asked vendors to provide them with uniforms and equipment in smaller sizes for women. In the UN's Strategic Policy and Development Section of the Police Division, Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI), Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), in the <a href="#">United Nations Police Gender Toolkit</a> , lists it as one of the evaluation indicators regarding gender equality and adaptation of uniforms.
	<b>Relevant indicators</b> <i>(the relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</i>	Number of adapted infrastructure units.
	<b>Proposals for amendment</b> <i>(the recommendations for adjusting the legislative framework, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</i>	Developing inclusive procedures for consulting women in the process of developing and approving uniforms.
	<b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women within the police structures frequently report that the uniforms distributed (shirts, pants, jackets) are of inappropriate sizes, being designed "unisex", without taking into account the differences in female conformation.</li> <li>• The production and distribution of uniforms in the MIA does not involve a formalized consultation process with female police officers or representatives from various structures, so as to gather feedback and adjust the cut or dimensions.</li> <li>• In addition, there is a lack of detailed regulation regarding women's uniforms (for example, there is an explicit lack of tailored cut parameters), and when there are requests for smaller or more special sizes, the procedure is not sufficiently clear or transparent.</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p><i>The recommendation to adapt uniforms to women's physical characteristics is not systematically implemented.</i></p> <p><i>Sporadic adjustments are made (informally, everyone modifies their uniform items most of the time at their own expense), but there are no official procedures or dedicated consultations with women in the system.</i></p>

	<p><b>New recommendation</b></p>	<p><b>Creating an inclusive uniform consultation and adjustment procedure for female officers and NCOs, which ensures that uniforms:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Respect the female body shape</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes adjustments to the cut (shirts with a waist, tailored pants, jackets that fit better on the shoulders and sleeves).</li> <li>• Offers the possibility of ordering sizes suitable for most body types (without having to resort to personal modifications).</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>2. Commission/Working Group with female representation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form a specialized Commission (following the Croatian model), composed of representatives of all subordinate structures of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, including unions, and staff from the Department for Equipment and Uniforms.</li> <li>• This committee should centralize complaints and suggestions about current uniforms, periodically evaluate feedback, propose new designs, and monitor implementation.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>3. Official regulations and adapted specifications</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update internal rules and specifications for purchasing uniforms so that sizes/cuts adapted for women are also clearly specified.</li> <li>• Explicitly request suppliers to offer female options (e.g., "women's cuts" or "female sizing"), with standardized parameters.</li> <li>• Adopt minimum standards: degree of elasticity, type of material, thermal comfort, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>4. Pilot testing and periodic consultation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiate a pilot programme in which a batch of uniforms (shirts, jackets, pants) with feminine cuts will be distributed to a group of female police officers.</li> <li>• Collect feedback after 3-6 months of use and, based on the results, expand the new model nationwide.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>5. Dedicated budget and implementation plan</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a budget for the phased renewal of uniforms.</li> <li>• Create a clear timeline: consultation → prototyping → testing → review → mass purchase.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>6. Monitoring and reporting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The special commission should periodically publish reports on improvements made and constantly collect feedback through internal surveys.</li> <li>• If deficiencies arise (e.g., the new uniforms still do not fit a certain percentage of women), take prompt corrective action.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
2	<p><b>Existing barriers</b> <i>(all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</i></p>	<p>The way weapons are used seems to be partially unfair. The criteria for distributing weapons and special means and the special conditions are regulated within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and subordinate institutions but are not made public given the classified nature of this information. However, the participants who were involved in the focus group mentioned that the criteria for distributing weapons are identical for women and men within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and subordinate institutions. However, the participants complained about cases when, although according to the procedure they were supposed to receive weapons or special means, they were not entrusted with them. The reasons are not known. It is also known that women and men generally differ in morphological characteristics. Research has shown that shooting accuracy is also influenced by the dimensions of the weapon's stock, it is necessary to analyze the appropriate type of pistols for women. For these reasons, a detailed analysis of the appropriate equipment for women is required. Appropriate equipment and uniform have repercussions primarily on the safety of employees while performing their tasks and on the results obtained.</p>
	<p><b>Legal provision</b> <i>(the legal provisions that establish and regulate the requirements mentioned)</i></p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>

<p><b>International standards</b> <i>(international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</i></p>	<p>According to international practices, in the field of infrastructure: from segregated spaces in school dormitories or military units, in sanitary facilities, equipment to ensure reasonable accommodation in sports halls, the purchase of adapted weapons, the possibility of arrangements for the care of preschool children.</p>
<p><b>Relevant indicators</b> <i>(the relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</i></p>	<p>Number of adapted infrastructure units.</p>
<p><b>Proposals for amendment</b> <i>(the recommendations for adjusting the legislative framework, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</i></p>	<p>x</p>
<p><b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants in the focus groups reported cases in which, although they met the criteria for receiving weapons, they were not entrusted with them, without a clear reason.</li> <li>• The criteria for distributing weapons are not public, and transparency is lacking regarding the selection and equipment method.</li> <li>• International studies highlight that shooting accuracy and safety in use can be affected by morphological differences (e.g., pistols with different stocks or sizes adapted for an ergonomic grip in smaller hands).</li> <li>• Although official rules state that women and men have the same rights to access weapons and special means, in practice discrepancies and possible arbitrary decisions occur.</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion</b> <i>The recommendation to take into account different morphological characteristics and ensure transparency in the distribution of armaments is poorly implemented. In addition, the lack of a clear and public procedure for distributing weapons may foster indirect discrimination.</i></p>
<p><b>New recommendation</b></p>	<p><b>Introducing gender criteria and transparency in the distribution and procurement of weapons, so that:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Analysis of types of weapons suitable for women</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a technical study (with experts in the field) to identify pistol or weapon models suitable for various physical constitutions (e.g., shorter stock options, adapted total weight).</li> <li>• Consult with female police officers (through focus groups and questionnaires) to learn about the real needs and obstacles encountered in shooting.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>2. Updating internal rules</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve a clear procedure for the distribution of weapons, including eligibility criteria and allocation steps, accessible to all (subject to classified parts).</li> <li>• In the event of unavailability or refusal to hand over the weapon, there must be a written justification communicated to the person concerned.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>3. Formation of a Joint Commission</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish at the MIA level a mixed commission (men/women, technical experts), which would permanently analyze complaints regarding the refusal or delay in the allocation of weapons and make recommendations for correction.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>4. Gender-sensitive future procurement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce into the specifications the requirement that weapons suppliers present diverse ergonomic options (bed sizes, weight, etc.).</li> <li>• Establish minimum standards for a diverse range of pistols and accessories (e.g. adjustable holsters, customizable grips).</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

#### **5. Monitoring and reporting**

- Create a periodic mechanism for collecting feedback on the quality of armaments and compliance with women's needs.
- Publish (in a restricted or internal setting) an annual report indicating whether there are discrepancies in the allocation of weapons between women and men.

#### **6. Practical and tailored training**

- Conduct training sessions (including on shooting range) that consider various physical parameters, with instructors trained to adapt shooting techniques (e.g., shooting position at different heights).
- Encourage mentoring programmes where female police officers with shooting experience can provide support to new hires.



Photo credit: UN Women/Ramin Mazur

## Ministry of Defense

### 2.1. Physical requirements

The minimum physical training requirements for military personnel are stipulated in the **Military Physical Training Regulation, implemented by Order of the Minister of Defense No. 91 of 11 February 2020**. The Military Physical Training Regulations were amended in 2004, 2013 and 2020. The amendments were mainly aimed at adapting the exercises and scales. However, it still contains provisions that establish different scales, for example: women must run 2,000 meters, while men 3,000 meters, or specific exercises such as "climbing by force" (Exercise No. 5), "lifting the small dumbbell (snatch)" (Exercise No. 10) and "lifting the small dumbbell (push)" (Exercise No. 11) are provided exclusively for men, without clear professional reasons being specified. Although this regulation introduced some changes aimed at increasing the inclusion of women, such as replacing the "pull-ups on the fixed bar" exercise for men with "pull-ups on the fixed bar from hanging lying down" for women, significant differences in physical demands between the sexes persist.

It is also noted that the recommendation to include control exercises ("lying push-ups") for women has not been implemented satisfactorily. Although some adjustments were made in the process of amending the Regulation (e.g. replacing the pull-ups on the fixed bar with the "lying hanging" variant), the exclusion of women from other fundamental strength exercises, such as lying push-ups, persists, which does not allow women to develop their basic arm/torso strength at the same level. However, such exercises can be essential in military missions. These differences perpetuate the idea that women cannot meet the same effort requirements, which contributes to limiting their access to certain military functions or specialties. Thus, it is noted that the recommendation provided in the previous analysis exercise, to eliminate unjustified differences between women and men in terms of physical requirements, has not been fully implemented.

#### References in international standards:

- **UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW): Article 10** letter a) of CEDAW imposes on states the obligation to ensure the same conditions for access to the profession, including the same curriculum and the same examinations for women and men. By maintaining different physical requirements, the Republic of Moldova violates this fundamental principle.

- **In the case of Tanja Kreil v. Federal Republic of Germany, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU)** ruled that the exclusion of women from certain military posts on grounds of gender constitutes discrimination and breaches the principle of equal opportunities. The Court emphasised the need for a periodic assessment of occupational requirements to justify any differentiation between the sexes.

**International positive practices:**

- **According to the 2017 NATO Annual Report**, over 60% of NATO member states apply identical physical requirements for women and men when recruiting. Countries such as Canada, Germany and Norway have implemented gender equality policies in the defense sector, eliminating unjustified differentiation and promoting inclusion.
- **United Nations Police Gender Toolkit** provides guidelines for the development of physical tests and medical examinations, emphasizing the importance of fair and non-discriminatory assessment of all candidates, regardless of gender.

**A differentiated approach to physical demands has a negative impact on women who want to pursue a military career.** According to the data, 47% of female candidates to the Military Academy of the Armed Forces "Alexandru cel Bun" failed the physical tests, compared to 24% of male candidates. Women reported that the scales are difficult, especially in the strength and endurance tests, as these are not practiced intensively in pre-university education or society. At the same time, according to information provided by the Ministry of Defense, there are no significant differences in the physical test passing rate between men and women during the annual assessments. However, women are tested on fewer exercises (3 out of 4), which may influence the results.

**International positive practices:**

- **Canada:** The Canadian Armed Forces have eliminated all gender-based restrictions since the 1980s. The physical requirements are the same for all candidates, but there are additional training programmes to help women meet the required standards. Mentoring and support programmes have also been implemented to encourage and support women in their military careers.
- **Norway:** Norway has introduced compulsory military service for both men and women, thus promoting equal opportunities. Although the physical demands are the same, there are personalized training programmes that take into account biological differences.
- **Germany:** Following the CJEU ruling in the Tanja Kreil case, Germany has removed restrictions on women's participation in combat units. At the same time, physical requirements are regularly assessed to ensure their relevance and to eliminate any potential discrimination.

**The medical regulatory framework contains discriminatory provisions from a gender perspective.** According to the Regulation on medical-military expertise in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Moldova, approved by Government Decision no. 897/2003, pregnant women are not certified by the Medical-Military Expertise Commissions upon admission to military educational institutions or upon enlistment in military service by contract. Although the previous exercise of evaluating the level of gender integration in the Armed Forces included a recommendation to revise this provision, it is found that it is applicable to this day, or this provision constitutes discrimination based on maternity because the level of physical effort and permitted exercises must be established by medical personnel, and in its current form, the total exclusion of pregnant women from recruitment violates the provisions of international standards.

### References in international standards:

**ILO:** The Maternity Protection Convention No. 183 and Recommendation No. 191 prohibit discrimination against women on the basis of maternity. Excluding pregnant women from recruitment or promotion contravenes these international standards.

### Recommendations:

- **Revise the Military Physical Training Regulation to eliminate unjustified differences between women and men.** Physical requirements must be based on real and fair professional requirements, so the exercises currently excluded for women should be reintroduced, with adaptations if necessary. The control scales should also be adjusted to consider biological differences, but without compromising the level of training required to carry out military missions. Thus, it is recommended that the exercises excluded for women be reintroduced, with the possibility of adaptation (e.g., pull-ups, weightlifting) and the scales adjusted according to objective criteria.
- **Implement additional training programmes** by introducing a training programme that allows women to gradually improve their physical performance. It is also necessary to organize pre-admission courses and workshops to help candidates familiarize themselves with the physical requirements and develop the necessary skills.
- **Update regulations and teaching materials** to include gender in training materials. This will ensure that female role models are promoted in various roles and exercises, encouraging recruitment and retention in the sector.
- **Eliminate discrimination in medical requirements** by removing the provision whereby pregnant women are excluded from the recruitment or promotion process. Instead, reasonable accommodation measures should be implemented to protect the health of the woman and the child and to ensure that the members of the commissions are trained in gender equality and that medical assessments are carried out without prejudice. It is recommended to develop guidelines/methodologies through which medical personnel can determine the type of physical activities allowed depending on the stage of pregnancy, avoiding significant risks and empowering medical personnel to keep records of pregnant employees. It is also recommended that a standardized assessment protocol be introduced so that decisions are uniform and do not depend exclusively on the subjective interpretation of a single doctor.
- **Conduct periodic assessments of physical demands** to ensure that they remain relevant and in line with international practices. To ensure the most efficient process, it is recommended that international organizations and experts in the field collaborate to adapt best practices to the national context.

## 2.2. Recruitment and admission

**Recruitment and admission to the defense sector in the Republic of Moldova** are regulated by a series of normative acts that establish the procedures and selection criteria for candidates, both for military educational institutions and for employment in military service by contract. In the process of evaluating the Regulation on the organization of recruitment, selection and admission of candidates to military educational institutions, it is found that the recruitment process is gender neutral. However, even though the Regulation on the organization of recruitment, selection and admission of candidates to military educational institutions (point 10) mentions information campaigns, in practice, these have mainly targeted young people (students, men), without a specific strategy to attract girls and women, which is also confirmed by the low representation of women of only 21.6% of the total personnel of the Military Academy of the Armed Forces "Alexandru cel Bun", but also by the higher failure rates for female candidates (47%) compared to male candidates (24%) in the physical tests, or by the underrepresentation of women in admission committees (1 woman to 8 men at the Military Academy). The lack of a targeted approach discourages girls in high schools/military schools from applying and reduces, in the long term, gender diversity within military institutions.

**The recruitment and admission regulations include provisions that indirectly discriminate against pregnant women or women who have given birth.** The regulation states that if a candidate cannot appear for the competition due to health or other reasons, it can be rescheduled only until the start of the next test or no later than the last day of the aptitude tests. This seemingly neutral provision disadvantages pregnant women, those who give birth, or are in the maternity period, forcing them to choose between a military career and motherhood. The regulation also requires candidates to take at least three tests: pull-ups on the fixed bar, a 100 m run, and a 3 km run. Although, based on the recommendations provided previously, the Regulation on Military Physical Training (Order No. 91/2020) introduced the option of “pull-ups on the fixed bar from hanging lying down” for women, this is not adequately reflected in the Regulation on the organization of recruitment (page 53). Further, the regulatory act only mentions “pulley pull-ups” and excludes necessary adaptations for female candidates.

#### International positive practices:

- **Canada:** The Canadian Armed Forces has implemented a mandatory online Gender Analysis Plus (GBA+) course for all personnel, ensuring gender awareness and sensitization. Specific recruitment campaigns have also been developed to attract women, including the participation of female military personnel in recruitment events and their promotion in information materials.  
**Norway:** Norway has introduced compulsory military service for both sexes, thus promoting equal opportunities in the defense sector. Mentoring programmes have been implemented to support women in developing military careers.
- **Germany:** The German armed forces have hired more women in career counselor roles and ensured their presence at job fairs and events aimed at women.

#### Referințe în standardele internaționale:

- **The United Nations Police Gender Toolkit recommends equal recruitment**, without the risk of discrimination, and prioritizes including women and gender balance in security structures.
- **NATO:** The Committee on Gender Perspectives recommends mixed composition and training on equal opportunities and diversity for members of selection or promotion committees.
- **The European Students’ Union:** The Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy (adopted in 2003) promotes equal opportunities and prohibits discrimination based on gender. This policy applies to international staff and military personnel, regardless of position.
- **CEDAW:** Article 2 requires states to eliminate discrimination against women in all its forms and to ensure, through legal and other appropriate measures, the full development and advancement of women.
- **ILO:** The Convention concerning Discrimination in Employment and Occupation prohibits discrimination based on sex in access to employment and profession.

**The representation of women in admissions and certification committees is low.** According to the Regulation on the organization of recruitment, selection, and admission of candidates to military educational institutions, the composition of admission committees is established annually by order of the institution's commander and includes mainly men. Similarly, Government Decision No. 941 of 17.08.2006 regulates the attestation committees, which men dominate. Data analysis provided by the Ministry of Defense for 2024 confirms this under-representation of women.

**TABEL 6.**  
Representation of women on certification committees (2024)

Military unit	Women	Men
Military Academy of the Armed Forces	1	8
1st Motorized Infantry Brigade	3	6
2nd Motorized Infantry Brigade	2	7
3rd Motorized Infantry Brigade	2	6
Aviation base	0	6
Anti-aircraft missile regiment	1	5
22nd Peacekeeping Battalion	0	5
Special Purpose Battalion	1	4
Guard Battalion	1	4
Engineer battalion	0	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>55</b>

**Recommendations:**

- **Amend the regulatory framework regarding admission and certification committees to ensure fair representation of women.** Thus, it is recommended to amend and supplement p. 104 of the Regulation on the manner of performing military service in the Armed Forces and p. 47 of the Regulation on the organization of recruitment, selection and admission of candidates to military educational institutions to ensure fair representation of women in the attestation and admission committees, and to introduce the obligation for committee members to attend training courses in the field of gender equality and non-discrimination.
- **Implement positive measures in the recruitment process** by developing recruitment campaigns specifically targeting girls and women, highlighting the opportunities and advantages of a military career. It is also recommended that a minimum quota for women, in accordance with Article 2 of Law no. 121/2012, be established to ensure equality for the admission of women to military educational institutions.
- **Adapt physical demands and pregnancy provisions** by amending point 53 of the recruitment regulations to reflect the practical adaptations already implemented, such as replacing the pull-up test with the "hanging pull-ups" exercise for women. It is also recommended to amend points 50-51 of the regulations to allow for the postponement of the physical tests for female candidates who are pregnant, have recently given birth or are breastfeeding and to add an express provision stipulating that pregnant women, those who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding benefit from the postponement of the physical tests for an appropriate period (e.g. several months), based on a medical certificate.
- **Establish a sex-disaggregated data collection system** to monitor progress and identify obstacles to equal opportunities.

**2.3. Job promotions and vertical segregation**

The Military Career Guide regulates the promotion process in military positions, approved by Order of the Minister of Defense No. 590/2021. This document establishes the requirements for the career progression of military personnel and constitutes the basis for career management. According to the Guide, "in case several military personnel meet the respective [promotion] criteria, the promotion decision will be made based on the recommendations of the attestation commission and the selection competition organized under the conditions established by the normative acts of the Ministry of Defense." At the same time, the composition of the attestation commissions is regulated by the "Regulation on the manner of performing military service in the Armed Forces," approved by Government Decision No. 941/2006, point 104, which, unfortunately, does not contain explicit provisions to ensure equitable gender representation in these commissions. As a result, the lack of women in the commissions may reduce objectivity in promotion decisions.

**Although the provisions appear to be gender neutral, the representation of women in management positions is low.** Although the Military Career Guide has been updated (Order of the Minister of Defense No. 590/2021), it does not contain an explicit provision on temporary special measures (positive discrimination) in favor of women, which would ensure an increase in their representation at the decision-making level. According to data provided by the Ministry of Defense in 2024, women represent more than 21% of the total number of soldiers in the National Army, a significant percentage compared to the average of 13% in the armed forces of Western countries (according to the Summary of the National Reports of NATO Member and Partner Nations to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives 2020). Of all military women, 37% occupy command positions. However, at the decision-making level, only 2% are women, and there is no female representation in higher positions. At the officer level, all graduates of the Military Academy of the Armed Forces "Alexandru cel Bun" are appointed to command positions, such as platoon commander. However, as they advance in their careers, the number of women in leadership positions decreases, primarily due to the requirement to hold a military bachelor's degree for advancement; girls were first admitted to such studies only in 2012.

#### International positive practices:

- **Spain:** Evaluation and promotion committees rely on a quota system to ensure women's representation.
- **Canada:** Members of promotion committees receive specific training in gender equality and diversity.

#### References in international standards:

- **The UN:** Gender-diverse promotion committees must be established and ensure professional training for members on gender equality for awareness and sensitization.

**The Ministry of Defense has not implemented specific policies to increase the number of women in leadership positions in the defense sector.** However, in 2024, a temporary positive measure was introduced in the "Regulation on the selection and secondment for studies and other forms of professional development", approved by Order of the Minister of Defense No. 108/2021: "For the purpose of balanced representation of women and men in the training process, if several candidates, who applied for the same form of training, correspond under equal conditions to all established criteria, female candidates will have priority (applying the principle of positive discrimination). The special measure aims to promote gender equality and is applied temporarily (until the end of 2030)." This provision is essential to ensure equal opportunities, but no similar policies directly apply to the promotion process in management positions. Also, there is no data available within the institution on the promotion rates for women and men in management positions, and the impact of professional development programmes on the promotion of women is not assessed either.

#### References in international standards:

- **NATO:** The Committee on Gender Perspectives recommends ensuring equal opportunities in evaluation and promotion by: (I) ensuring a mixed composition in promotion committees; (II) establishing a condition of prior training on equal opportunities for members of selection or promotion committees; and (III) identifying selection procedures that ensure equal opportunities and encourage the increased presence of women in the armed forces.
- **CJEU:** Case C-409/95, Hellmut Marschall vs. Land Nordrhein-Westfalen, established that, in the event of an equal score between two candidates of different sexes in a field with a gender imbalance, the female candidate may have priority in promotion, provided that the objective evaluation does not tip the balance in favor of the man.

**Maternity and the military career.** According to Article 32 paragraph 4 of Law No. 162/2005 on the status of military personnel, the period of childcare leave is included in the total length of service and any non-contributory time is treated as equivalent to contributory service. At the same time, Law No. 162/2005 has already been amended, and childcare leave is now included in the calendar length of service for military personnel.

#### References in international standards:

- **CEDAW:** Article 11(2)(b) provides that States Parties must take all appropriate measures to ensure the right to paid maternity leave or comparable social benefits without loss of employment, seniority, or social benefits.

#### International positive practices:

- **Spain:** Women's salaries cannot be reduced if their position changes due to pregnancy. Furthermore, courses and promotion exams must take pregnancy into account, thus ensuring that women are not disadvantaged.
- **Germany:** The Maternity Protection Ordinance provides that military personnel cannot be required to perform certain tasks during the last six weeks before childbirth and the first eight weeks after childbirth (extended period in some instances). To facilitate post-maternity reintegration, it also ensures that women can return to equivalent positions and that the maternity period does not negatively affect their careers.

#### Recommendations:

- **Modify the Military Career Guide** by supplementing point 67 with the following text: "If several military personnel meet the respective criteria under equal conditions, priority will be given to female candidates, applying the principle of positive discrimination to promote gender equality." This provision will support the promotion of women, similar to the temporary positive measure in the "Regulation on selection and secondment for studies."
- **Ensure balanced representation in promotion committees** by amending the "Regulation on the performance of military service in the Armed Forces" to explicitly require a mixed gender composition in attestation and promotion commissions. This should include imposing gender quotas in each attestation commission. Additionally, a policy should be introduced requiring commission members to participate in training courses in gender equality and non-discrimination, following NATO and UN recommendations.
- **Institutionalize mentoring and professional development programmes** by developing a mentoring programme for women in the military, similar to practices in Canada. Leadership and management courses for women should also be introduced and promoted, ensuring women's participation and monitoring the impact on promotion to management positions.
- **Monitor career advancement barriers** by establishing a system for collecting and analyzing gender-disaggregated data on promotion, participation in professional development courses and other relevant issues. The system should also encourage the regular publication of reports on gender equality in the defense sector, in order to monitor progress and identify areas for improvement.

## 2.4. Working hours

**The internal framework does not provide for reasonable working hours for military personnel.** Although the Labour Code of the Republic of Moldova stipulates a series of measures for reasonable working hours, in particular cases to meet special needs (such as part-time work, work flexibility schemes and breaks for feeding the child), these measures do not apply to military personnel.

Although recommendations for change were offered, until currently, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Moldova No. 2327/2009 (approving the military regulations) and subsequent regulations within the Armed Forces do not provide for measures to make work schedules more flexible for military personnel (male or female) with children of pre-school age. Moreover, as mentioned, Law No. 162/2005 exempts military personnel from specific provisions of the Labour Code regarding part-time work, additional breaks, teleworking, or other forms of flexibility. Aspects related to the work regime of military personnel are regulated by:

- **"Regulation on the manner of performing military service in the Armed Forces"**, approved by Government Decision No. 941 of 2006.
- **"Regulations of the Internal Service of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Moldova"**, approved by Decree of the President of the Republic of Moldova No. 2327 of 2009.
- **"Regulation on the organization and conduct of the educational process in the Military Academy of the Armed Forces Alexandru cel Bun"**, approved by order of the commander (rector) No. 439 of 28 December 2017.

**Moldova's lack of explicit provisions and institutionalized policies on reasonable accommodation disproportionately affects women.** In the context of the current provisions, military personnel on active duty may benefit from leave granted by the military unit commander, according to internal regulations. The commander's obligation to establish and comply with the leave regime is provided for in point 135(22) of the Internal Service Regulations. Also, employees with family responsibilities may submit reports to the commander to adjust their work schedules. The decision to approve or reject these requests is at the commander's discretion. Unfortunately, the institution does not have statistical data on the number of women and men who benefited from flexible work schedules or requested adjustments to their work schedules for family reasons.

Also, according to Article 14, Paragraph 2 of Law No. 162/2005, contract soldiers engaged in fulfilling obligations outside the weekly duration of service time are granted compensatory time "in the manner established by the commander." However, this is without establishing clear criteria or award procedures.

It is important to note that the academic course has no flexibility provisions. Thus, according to point 29 of the "Regulation on the organization and conduct of the educational process in the Military Academy of the Armed Forces Alexandru cel Bun", students must attend all lessons, and absence is allowed only when exercising service obligations. This provision does not consider situations that may arise during pregnancy, childbirth, or maternity leave, such as when a female military woman may need medical breaks or a certain flexibility in the schedule. Without exceptions or accommodation measures, there is a risk of expulsion (or loss of access to studies) for women who are unable to participate in all academic activities physically.

#### References in international standards:

- **CEDAW:** Article 11 (1) provides that States Parties must ensure the same rights at work for women and men, including the right to fair career opportunities and working conditions.
- **ILO:** Maternity Protection Convention No. 183 of 2000, Recommendation No. 191 suggests additional measures for maternity protection, including flexibility of working hours and reasonable accommodation of working conditions.
- **NATO:** The Committee on Gender Perspectives recommends that Member States implement work-life balance policies to facilitate the recruitment and retention of female staff and ensure reasonable working hours for staff with family responsibilities.
- **European Social Charter (revised):** Article 27 respects the right of workers with family responsibilities to equal opportunities and treatment, including adaptation of working hours and access to childcare services.

### International positive practices:

- **France:** The Ministry of Defense provides daycare and kindergarten services for the children of military personnel, thus facilitating the combination of professional and family life. Additionally, pregnant women and parents with young children can be exempt from working night shifts or request an adjustment to their work schedule.
- **Germany:** Up to 156 weeks of parental leave are available and transferable between parents, allowing families to better manage their care responsibilities. Military personnel with family responsibilities can also benefit from flexible work schedules and the possibility of reducing their working hours.
- **Canada:** The Canadian Armed Forces has implemented policies that allow military personnel to adjust their work schedules based on family needs, and in certain positions, military personnel can work remotely or benefit from telework arrangements.
- **Sweden:** Employees have the legal right to request work schedule adjustments until the child turns eight years old.

### Recommendations:

- **Introduce reasonable accommodation provisions into military legislation** by amending Law No. 162/2005 to allow specific categories of military personnel to adapt their work schedules (e.g., pregnant and breastfeeding women and military personnel with family responsibilities, such as those caring for young children or sick family members). To ensure the implementation of these rights, it is necessary to develop standardized procedures that allow military personnel to request and obtain work schedule adjustments, thus reducing exclusive dependence on the commander's decision.
- **Implement flexible work programmes in military units**, which may include: (I) individualized work schedules, setting the start and end times of the programme according to individual needs; (II) part-time work, especially for military personnel returning from maternity leave or who have family responsibilities; and (III) teleworking and remote work, depending on the specifics of the position.
- **Make studies more flexible for exceptional situations** by supplementing point 29 of the "Regulation on the organization and conduct of the educational process in the Military Academy of the Armed Forces Alexandru cel Bun" with the following paragraph: "Reasonable accommodation measures may be established for female students as well as master's and doctoral students during pregnancy, childbirth or maternity leave, as well as in other justified medical situations. These measures may include exemptions, rescheduling of teaching activities and/or adapted forms of study based on medical recommendations."
- **Clarify and make compensatory time more flexible** by amending Article 14 (2) of Law No. 162/2005, introducing this explicit wording: "Contracted military personnel are granted compensatory time by mutual agreement with the military personnel, taking into account, to the extent possible, their needs and preferences, especially in situations that concern the care of children, sick family members or other family responsibilities." A regulation to implement this article must also be introduced and approved.
- **To support military parents**, create childcare facilities by providing employees with nursery and kindergarten services within or near military units. If the institution does not have the capacity or infrastructure for such facilities, provide vouchers or subsidies for childcare services, similar to practices in other countries.
- **Protect the rights of pregnant and breastfeeding women** by amending internal regulations to (I) exclude them from tasks that may pose risks to their health or the child's, and (II) enable them to adjust their work schedule or temporarily transfer to less demanding positions. For those with small children, breaks for feeding the child should be ensured, similar to the provisions of the Labour Code.

- **Conduct statistical data collection and analysis** regarding the number of military personnel requesting and benefiting from work schedule adjustments and the impact of these measures on personnel performance and retention.

## 2.5. Family responsibilities

**Law No. 162 of 2005 on the status of military personnel** regulates the rights and obligations of military personnel in the Republic of Moldova, including leave for employees with children. Regarding family responsibilities, childcare leave is also regulated in the "Regulation on the manner of performing military service in the Armed Forces", approved by Government Decision No. 941/2006. According to statistical data, the number of men benefiting from childcare leave in 2021-2023 was much higher than that of women.

In 2024, however, that number decreased sharply. This trend is explained by the recently approved legislative provisions, which establish the childcare allowance based on the salary of the parent whose amount is higher, not that of the parent who goes on childcare leave. Before, however, because men's salaries are usually higher, fathers would take childcare leave to receive a higher allowance. In reality, according to the statements of several military personnel, they would go to work abroad.

In addition to those outlined above, the current legislative framework provides that military personnel under contract have the right to 14 calendar days of paternity leave, granted within the first 56 days after the birth of the child (Article 141, Paragraph (2)), which entered into force on 1 January 2019. Although there is no systematized statistical data on this, ministry representatives interviewed for this study stated that military personnel under contract have benefited from this right since its introduction in 2019, without any cases of refusal.

**TABEL 7:**  
**Beneficiaries of childcare leave (2021-2024)**

Year	Beneficiaries of childcare leave	
	Men	Women
2021	49	19
2022	61	26
2023	59	22
2024 (November)	18	30

**Currently, no dedicated policies or programmes support work-life balance in the defense sector.** The current regulations do not provide for special policies or programmes such as: (I) adjustment of work schedules during maternity or paternity leave, (II) support for single parents, (III) flexible work programmes for parents, or (IV) mentoring programmes for women with family responsibilities. At the current stage, no data has been collected on the number of women who have quit their jobs due to difficulties in combining work and family life. Nor is there feedback from employees on the effectiveness of support programmes, which would reveal the extent of impact caused by the lack of these support provisions. There are also no facilities such as nurseries or kindergartens within military units. At the same time, during the evaluation process, the ministry representatives mentioned that Draft Law No. 281, already approved in the second reading by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, will allow for childcare leave during military service. This change will positively impact the career advancement of military personnel who take parental leave.

In the context of improving the legislative framework, the Draft Law No. 329/2024, approved in the first reading on 5 December 2024, which amends Law No. 162/2005 on the status of military personnel, is relevant. Among its key provisions are the right of military personnel to refuse deployment in situations of pregnancy, single-parent care of a minor child, credible family reasons, or medically confirmed health conditions. This initiative could improve the ability of pregnant women and those who are their family's sole support to maintain a balance between their work and family obligations.

It is worth mentioning that, at the legislative level, Law No. 5/2006 on ensuring equal opportunities between women and men includes an institutional implementation mechanism (coordinating groups and gender units) applicable to central public authorities. In practice, however, this mechanism is not fully functional in other institutions or the Ministry of Defense, which substantially reduces the possibility of mainstreaming gender into policies regarding the reconciliation of family and professional life. In this context, it becomes appropriate to carry out an ex-post analysis of Law No. 5/2006 to identify gaps and propose measures to streamline its application in the defense sector.

#### International positive practices:

- **Canada:** The Canadian Armed Forces offer part-time work opportunities, flexible work schedules, and generous parental leave to support work-life balance.
- **Germany:** The government offers up to 36 months of parental leave, which can be shared between both parents, thus encouraging fathers to be involved in childcare. The German Armed Forces have also adopted policies that include crèche services, flexible working schedules, financial support for childcare, and the possibility of working part-time.
- **Sweden:** The government offers 480 days of paid parental leave, which can be shared between both parents. A portion is reserved exclusively for fathers to encourage their active participation.

#### References in international standards:

- **CEDAW:** Article 11 (2), letter c) stipulates that states must encourage the provision of social services necessary to enable parents to combine family and professional responsibilities, including by promoting the creation and development of childcare services.
- **Other UN Frameworks:** The Guide to Work-Life Balance recommends that Member States adopt policies allowing for flexible working hours, part-time work, parental leave, and childcare facilities.
- **ILO:** Convention No. 156 concerning Workers with Family Responsibilities (1981) recognizes the need to support workers with family responsibilities in balancing work and family obligations. Recommendation No. 165 concerning Workers with Family Responsibilities (1981) also recommends flexible working hours, parental leave, childcare facilities, and equal opportunities in employment and promotion.
- **EU:** Directive 2019/1158 on "work-life balance for parents and carers" ensures the right to paternal leave of at least 10 working days and encourages the equal sharing of family responsibilities between women and men.

#### Recommendations:

- **Develop and implement support policies for family responsibilities** by developing a legislative and regulatory framework that provides for specific policies and programmes to support parents in the defense sector, including: (I) flexible work programmes – introducing the possibility of working part-time, flexible working hours or teleworking, where possible; (II) childcare facilities – creating nurseries and kindergartens within or near military units, or offering vouchers for childcare services; (III) mentoring programmes – for women with family responsibilities, to support them in their career development.
- **Ensure that childcare leave is counted toward military service seniority** through the adoption of legislative amendments, including retroactive application to leave taken before the new regulations entered into force, so that such periods are fully recognized and do not hinder career advancement.

- **Actively promote the right to parental leave** by conducting information campaigns and encouraging men to be actively involved in childcare, which will also address stereotypes that discourage men from requesting paternal or childcare leave.
- **Carry out monitoring and evaluation on work-life balance among employees.** It is recommended to develop a data collection system on the number of women and men who benefit from parental leave, the number of requests for adjustment of working hours for family responsibilities, and the reasons why staff quit their jobs. As a result, systematic analyses should be carried out to determine the effectiveness of implemented programmes and policies and to identify areas that require improvement.

## 2.6. Infrastructure

**For the most part, military infrastructure in Moldova is used equally by women and men, without adapted facilities.** For example, women and men use the sports infrastructure equally, and the facilities are identical. Regarding infrastructure for military personnel during international missions and operations, Moldova is not responsible for the infrastructure of the military bases where the National Army contingents are stationed in international missions (e.g., Kosovo, Lebanon and Bosnia and Herzegovina). In the case of individual missions (Somalia and the Central African Republic), each soldier rents his own home or is accommodated by the mission.

The evaluation process found that, at the institutional level, there are no specific provisions regulating the reasonable accommodation of infrastructure to the needs of both sexes, and, respectively, no obligation to allocate financial resources for the modernization of infrastructure from a gender equality perspective. However, the institution's representatives mentioned some ongoing projects: (I) capital repairs in military units to create adequate facilities for both men and women (e.g., separate toilets and changing rooms) and (II) the creation of a new military unit near the commune of Bacioi, which has been built from scratch and according to modern standards to ensure adequate infrastructure for both sexes.

### References in international standards:

- **NATO:** The Committee on Gender Perspectives recommends that Member States ensure that military equipment and infrastructure are adapted to meet the specific needs of women and men, including uniforms, protective equipment and accommodation facilities.
- **ILO:** Convention No. 155 concerning the Safety and Health of Workers states that states must ensure a safe and healthy working environment for all workers, taking into account the specific needs of different categories of employees.
- **EU:** Directive 2006/54/EC on equal opportunities and treatment between men and women prohibits discrimination based on sex and calls for measures to ensure fair working conditions.

**According to the information provided, military women do not need accommodation in military units because, under Law No. 1245/2002 ("the preparation of citizens for the defense of the Fatherland"), women are not incorporated into military service on a term basis.** Thus, the issue of separate accommodation for women in military units is not considered relevant in the current context. However, the lack of accommodation facilities may impede women's participation in specific missions or trainings that require their presence in the unit for extended periods. Additionally, it is noted that there are no educational and care facilities for the children of military employees within military units. Also, there are no breastfeeding facilities or rooms designed for pregnant women in military units.

#### International positive practices:

- **Germany:** Military units are equipped with separate and appropriate facilities for women, including bedrooms, toilets and showers.
- **Sweden:** In some units, nurseries or childcare services are available to support service members with family responsibilities.

**Although there are some specific elements for women in military uniforms, it is insufficient to claim that uniforms are universal.** On 29 December 2023, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Moldova No. 1287-IX on "the military uniform and distinctive signs of the National Army personnel" was approved. This decree describes the military uniform, including some elements specific to the female uniform. Ceremonial uniforms are sewn individually for each soldier, thus ensuring adaptation to specific anthropometric parameters. Training uniforms are mass-produced, according to standard sizes. Each soldier (male or female) can adjust the uniform independently if necessary. And military equipment is currently unisex, used equally by both men and women, which can create inconvenience for women, especially for those who are pregnant or in the postpartum period.

#### International positive practices:

- **Canada:** The Canadian Armed Forces offers specially designed uniforms for pregnant women, ensuring comfort and safety. The Canadian government also established in its procurement rules that military equipment must meet both men's and women's needs. This includes uniforms, protective vests, footwear and other essential equipment.
- **Germany:** The Bundeswehr, Germany's armed forces, has gradually replaced all equipment so that new acquisitions are available in sizes and shapes suitable for users, regardless of gender.
- **Sweden:** The Swedish Armed Forces use modular equipment that can be adjusted according to body size and shape, thus ensuring comfort and efficiency for all soldiers.

#### Recommendations:

- **Adapt military equipment and uniforms for women** by introducing a requirement into the procurement procedures that they be available in sizes and shapes appropriate for women. This should include the option for pregnant women to receive individual tailoring.
- **Modernize infrastructure to meet women's needs** by providing all military units with separate and adequate toilets, showers and changing rooms for each gender. It is also recommended to evaluate the possibility of creating nurseries or childcare services near military units or providing financial support for childcare services.
- **Embrace gender-sensitive budgeting** while planning and allocating the necessary financial resources for infrastructure modernization and purchasing adapted equipment. This sensitivity must also be ensured while implementing expenditure monitoring mechanisms to ensure funds are used to promote gender equality.
- **Conduct a systematic analysis of the differentiated needs of military women and men** by collecting feedback from military women on the quality of infrastructure and equipment as well as their specific needs. Additionally, analyze the impact of work infrastructure on the performance and professional satisfaction of employees in the defense sector.

- **Create a department or office to coordinate gender policies.** It is necessary to establish a specialized structure (such as a department, office, or directorate) within the Ministry of Defense, responsible for coordinating and monitoring gender equality policies. This unit should benefit from dedicated human and financial resources to develop, implement and evaluate gender equality strategies and action plans within the ministry.
- **Hire gender officers in military units.** To ensure effective implementation of gender policies and strategies at the local level, gender officers should be appointed in each military unit. These officers should be trained in gender equality and human rights, with the main tasks of monitoring, advising and reporting on gender equality situations. By involving these officers, the concrete problems of female personnel can be more easily identified, and solutions adapted to the context of each unit can be proposed.
- **Conduct an ex-post analysis of Law No. 5/2006.** Given the role of this law in ensuring equal opportunities between women and men and the institutionalization of gender policies at the national level, it is necessary to assess how its mechanisms (coordinating groups, gender units) are operational and relevant for the defense sector. This ex-post analysis should highlight current dysfunctions and contribute to proposing amendments or additional regulations aimed at streamlining the integration of the gender perspective within the Ministry of Defense.

## ANNEX NO. 2.

### Level of implementation of reasonable measures to ensure gender equality in the Ministry of Defense

Level of implementation of reasonable measures to ensure gender equality in the Ministry of Defense		
1. Correlation of physical requirements with determining professional requirements		
1	<b>Existing barriers</b> <i>(all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</i>	<b>Different number of control exercises and different requirements</b> (3,000 meter run for men/1,000-2,000 meters for women). This approach leads to weaker physical training for women compared to men.
	<b>Legal provision</b> <i>(legal provisions regulating the requirements mentioned)</i>	<b>Military Physical Training Regulations, Order of the Minister of Defense No. 100 of 05.03.2015</b>  The control scale, provided in Annex no. 21 of the Regulation, certain exercises such as "climbing by force" (Exercise no. 5 of Annex no. 21); "lifting the small dumbbell (snatch)" (exercise no. 10); "lifting the small dumbbell (push)" (exercise no. 11) are provided only for men
	<b>International standards</b> <i>(the international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</i>	More than 60% of NATO member states require identical physical requirements for women and men, as shown in the NATO Annual Report for 2017. Notable examples in this regard are Canada or Germany. See also Tanja Kreil v. Bundesrepublik Deutschland, para.22, similar to Johnston in para.37 and Sirdar in para.25.  Also, the UN Strategic Policy and Development Section of the Police Division, Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI), Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), <a href="#">United Nations Police Gender Toolkit</a> , Project Tool 68: Checklist for physical tests and medical examination.
	<b>Relevant indicators</b> <i>(relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</i>	Number of people experiencing difficulties in completing control exercises.
	<b>Proposals for amendment</b> <i>(recommendations for legislative framework amendment, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</i>	Amending the Military Physical Training Regulations (2019) to ensure a minimum level of physical training for both women and men. The control scales must take into account the biological differences between women and men when performing certain exercises. However, the exercises must be relevant to the tasks of soldiers in a modern army and help women and men achieve a certain level of physical training that allows them, without discrimination, to fulfill the mission assigned to the military position.  Thus, different requirements for distance running must be ruled out, taking into account biological differences in the Control Scale.
	<b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b>	It is noted that the recommendation to eliminate unjustified differences between women and men in terms of physical requirements has not been fully implemented. Despite the amendments made to the Military Physical Training Regulation (Order of the Minister of Defense No. 91/2020), it continues to contain provisions that establish different scales, for example: women must run 2,000 meters, while men 3,000 meters. At the same time, certain exercises (such as "power climbing," "lifting a small dumbbell – snatch/push") remain reserved exclusively for men, without clear professional reasons being specified.  <b>Assessment of the degree of implementation</b>  <b>The provisions of the current Regulation (Order No. 91/2020):</b>  It mentions the need for minimal physical training for military personnel and introduces "hanging horizontal bar pull-ups" for women but maintains notable discrepancies: shorter running for women (2,000 m vs. 3,000 m), the existence of exercises dedicated exclusively to men.  It invokes "anatomical differences" for adapting the evidence but does not present an objective substantiation regarding the connection of these differences to actual operational requirements.

		<p><b>Consequence:</b> Approximately 47% of female candidates to the Military Academy fail the physical tests, compared to 24% of male candidates, proof that the standards are not calibrated to support the training and integration of women.</p> <p>Women are tested on a smaller number of exercises (3 out of 4), and strength exercises (with dumbbells or powerlifting) remain inaccessible, which may limit their training and level of practical preparation.</p> <p>The underrepresentation of women in teaching materials (only one image of women out of 124 illustrations) perpetuates the stereotype of the “all-male army” and may discourage the recruitment and retention of female personnel.</p> <p><b>Conclusion:</b> <i>Although the Regulation has introduced some measures to accommodate women (e.g. the variant of the fixed bar pull-ups from the lying down position), the lack of correlation between physical requirements and actual professional requirements persists. The differences remain too large, not being justified by risks, specific skills or concrete missions.</i></p>
2	<p><b>New recommendation</b></p> <p><i>(all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</i></p>	<p><b>Reformulating and adapting physical requirements based on objective professional criteria, so that women and men are tested fairly, in relation to the effective missions of the National Army.</b></p> <p><b>1. Reintroduction of excluded exercises and adjustment of scales</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate tests such as "power climbing", "lifting a small dumbbell (snatch/push)" for women as well, with adaptation (if necessary) of weights or number of repetitions, so that the operational standard is not compromised.</li> <li>• Set the running distance at a single level (e.g. 2,400 m) or adopting a time limit on the same distance for both sexes, with slight adjustments based on objective criteria (age, type of mission).</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Additional physical training programmes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create and publish pre-admission training guides and introducing practical courses/workshops, aimed at increasing the level of strength and endurance among candidates, especially since they do not intensively practice such tests in pre-university education.</li> <li>• Provide infrastructure and resources (gyms, equipment, specialized coaches) to facilitate physical progress before taking official tests.</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Including a gender perspective in training materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise the Military Physical Training Regulations and teaching materials so that balanced visual representations appear women demonstrating strength and endurance exercises, female models in various operational roles.</li> <li>• Involve female staff as trainers or mentors to provide direct examples of success and encourage new candidates.</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Eliminating discrimination in medical requirements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the rules of medical-military expertise (Government Decision no. 897/2003), so that pregnant women are not completely banned from the recruitment process but rather have an individualized medical assessment and options for rescheduling physical tests, if the medical situation requires it.</li> </ul> <p><b>5. Periodic evaluation and international collaboration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a review schedule (e.g. every 2 years) of scales and types of evidence, based on internal feedback and by consulting NATO/UN practices.</li> <li>• Collaborate with international experts and specialized organizations to establish performance indicators and ensure that physical tests remain relevant to current missions.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Existing barriers</b></p> <p><i>(all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</i></p>	<p><b>Control exercises ("push-ups from a lying position") are provided only for men.</b> This approach leads to weaker physical training of women compared to men.</p>

<p><b>Legal provision</b> <i>(legal provisions regulating the requirements mentioned)</i></p>	<p>Military Physical Training Regulations, Order of the Minister of Defense No. 100 of 05.03.2015.</p>
<p><b>International standards</b> <i>(the international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</i></p>	<p>See above also the instruments developed by the UN, Strategic Policy and Development Section of the Police Division, Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI), Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), <a href="#">United Nations Police Gender Toolkit</a>. See also the cases of Tanja Kreil v. Bundesrepublik Deutschland, para. 22, similar to Johnston in para. 37 and Sirdar in para. 25.</p>
<p><b>Relevant indicators</b> <i>(relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</i></p>	<p>Number of people experiencing difficulties in completing control exercises.</p>
<p><b>Proposals for amendment</b> <i>(recommendations for legislative framework amendment, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</i></p>	<p>Other exercises, which currently exclude women, should be provided for both sexes. Ensuring equitable representation of women within the Military Physical Training Regulations (2019) by the appropriate inclusion of the image of women in the illustrations used for different types of exercises.</p>
<p><b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b></p>	<p>It is noted that the recommendation to include control exercises ("push-ups from lying support") for women has not been implemented satisfactorily. Although the Military Physical Training Regulation, approved by Order of the Minister of Defense No. 91/2020, has made some adjustments (e.g. replacing pull-ups on the fixed bar with the "hanging lying" variant), the exclusion of women from other fundamental strength exercises, such as push-ups from lying support, persists, thus maintaining a deficit in specific physical training.</p> <p><b>The provisions of the current Regulation (Order no. 91/2020):</b></p> <p>It maintains different testing structures between men and women, without presenting a clear professional or operational justification.</p> <p>Even though in other armies (according to the <a href="#">United Nations Police Gender Toolkit</a>, Project Tool 68 and the CJEU/ECHR jurisprudence in cases such as Tanja Kreil and Sirdar) the basic tests have been unified, currently, "push-ups from a lying position" remain a test intended only for men.</p> <p><b>Consequence:</b></p> <p>Women do not develop their core strength in their arms/torso to the same level, although such exercises can be essential in military missions.</p> <p>There is a risk of perpetuating the idea that women cannot meet the same effort requirements, which contributes to limiting their access to certain military positions or specialties.</p> <p><b>Conclusion:</b></p> <p><i>The current form of the Regulation does not fully capitalize on women's potential to support complex strength exercises, maintaining unequal physical training and affecting their chances of integration and advancement.</i></p>
<p><b>New recommendation</b></p>	<p><b>Expanding control exercises to women, including "lying push-ups," to ensure equity and increase fitness levels.</b></p> <p><b>1. Revision of the Physical Training Regulations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate separate lists of exercises that exclude women (e.g., bench press), giving all service members access to the same set of tests.</li> <li>• Justify any adaptations (weight, number of repetitions) through real biological differences, without limiting women's access to basic exercises.</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Creating a unified system of scales</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce a common scoring system, with objective adjustments (e.g. age category, type of mission), so that both men and women reach a minimum standard of strength, clearly correlated with the actual tasks in the field.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the practice of push-ups and other functional exercises to develop the strength and endurance necessary for missions.</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Equitable representation in training materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update the manuals and Regulations with illustrations that also show women performing push-ups, pull-ups, and other complex strength exercises.</li> <li>• Involving female staff as instructors or models in physical training sessions.</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Correlation with international standards</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult the tools developed by the United Nations Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI), Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), as well as the practices of other NATO states, to unify physical evidence on professional grounds, not strictly on gender considerations.</li> <li>• Conduct a periodic evaluation of scales with a comparison to international trends (e.g., every 2 years), to maintain the relevance and fairness of physical evidence.</li> </ul> <p><b>5. Continuous monitoring and reporting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect gender-disaggregated data on performance in all strength exercises, including push-ups, to analyze progress, identify any significant differences, and adopt additional training policies where necessary.</li> </ul> <p>Implementing this recommendation will ensure women have access to the same types of basic exercises, contributing to equitable physical training and the development of military skills equally, regardless of gender.</p>
3	<p><b>Existing barriers</b> <i>(all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</i></p>	<p>Women who are pregnant at the time of submitting their admission documents will not be certified by the Medical-Military Expertise Commissions, both for admission to educational institutions in the field of military service as well as joining military service by contract. This discourages women from entering the military career and may result in discrimination in hiring and admissions.</p>
	<p><b>Legal provision</b> <i>(legal provisions regulating the requirements mentioned)</i></p>	<p>The "Regulation on medical-military expertise in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Moldova," approved by GD 897/2003.</p> <p>The medical scale for determining suitability for military service, Annex No. 2, p. 79.</p>
	<p><b>International standards</b> <i>(the international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</i></p>	<p>According to the CJEU, arguments such as "the protection of the biological condition of women and the special relationship that exists between a woman and her child" do not allow "the exclusion of women from certain types of professions on the grounds that they should be granted greater protection than men against risks that are different from the point of view of the specific protection needs of women such as those explicitly mentioned." (Tanja Kreil v. Bundesrepublik Deutschland, C-285/98, para. 30, citing Johnston para. 44).</p>
	<p><b>Relevant indicators</b> <i>(relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</i></p>	<p>Number of women declared unfit for enrollment in educational institutions military education due to pregnancy.</p> <p>Number of women declared unfit for military service under contract due to pregnancy.</p>
	<p><b>Proposals for amendment</b> <i>(recommendations for legislative framework amendment, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</i></p>	<p>Amendment of point 79 of Annex No. 2 of the "Regulation on medical-military expertise in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Moldova," approved by Government Decision No. 897/2003, in order to repeal the discriminatory provisions against pregnant women both upon admission to military educational institutions and upon incorporation into military service by contract.</p>

<p><b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b></p>	<p>It is noted that the recommendation regarding the elimination of restrictions for pregnant women on admission to military institutions or military service under contract has not been fully implemented. The Regulation on military medical expertise (GD no. 897/2003) continues to stipulate that pregnant women are not certified, which excludes their access to a military career from the outset and contradicts the principles of non-discrimination.</p> <p><b>The provisions of the current regulation (GD no. 897/2003, Annex no. 2, p. 79):</b></p> <p>It provides that pregnant women are declared "unfit" for admission to military educational institutions and for employment in military service under contract, without individualized medical evaluation.</p> <p>There is no objective justification, only the generic protection of pregnant women being invoked. European jurisprudence (e.g. Tanja Kreil vs. Germany) shows, however, that the simple argument of "protection of women and children" cannot be tantamount to total exclusion from a profession.</p> <p><b>Consequence:</b> Pregnant women are forced to give up the opportunity to join the military system, even when their pregnancy and health would allow for adapted physical exercises or rescheduling of tests. Discrimination based on maternity is perpetuated, limiting access to military education and careers, despite international standards that encourage reasonable protective measures, not total exclusion.</p> <p><b>Conclusion:</b> <i>The recommendation to eliminate discriminatory provisions for pregnant women has not been implemented. It remains necessary to adapt the legislation to allow for assessment and possible medical accommodations, rather than automatic exclusion.</i></p>
<p><b>New recommendation</b></p>	<p><b>Repealing discriminatory restrictions and introducing individualized medical assessment for pregnant women.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amend the Regulation on military medical expertise: revision and repeal of point 79 of Annex no. 2 to GD no. 897/2003, so that pregnant women are not declared "unfit" en masse, but are subjected to an objective medical evaluation.</li> <li>• Establish the possibility of rescheduling physical tests and postponing the selection period when pregnancy or health conditions require it, instead of definitive exclusion.</li> <li>• Develop guidelines/methodologies through which medical personnel can determine the type of physical activities allowed depending on the stage of pregnancy, avoiding major risks.</li> <li>• Explicitly include, in military regulations, the right of pregnant women to adapt physical exertion and to adequate protection, in accordance with the recommendations of military medical specialists.</li> <li>• Ensure that members of the Medical-Military Expertise Commissions receive training in gender equality and non-discrimination, in order to correctly handle cases involving pregnant women.</li> <li>• Introduce a standardized assessment protocol so that decisions are uniform and do not depend exclusively on the subjective interpretation of a single doctor.</li> <li>• Collect data on the number of pregnant women requesting admission/ placement and how cases are resolved.</li> <li>• Periodically publish reports highlighting the impact of the changes made to the Regulation to assess whether the rate of exclusion of pregnant women is reduced and whether the process is becoming fairer.</li> </ul>

## 2. Encouraging gender equity in recruitment/employment by introducing recruitment quotas

1	<p><b>Existing barriers</b> (all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</p>	<p><b>Admission committees for military educational institutions are predominantly represented by men.</b></p> <p>Lack of women/unfair representation of women in admissions committees can lead to the automatic exclusion of women in certain situations: pregnancy, childbirth, divorce, as well as discrimination against women in various forms, including harassment.</p>
	<p><b>Legal provision</b> (legal provisions regulating the requirements mentioned)</p>	<p>Regulations for organizing the recruitment, selection and admission of candidates to military educational institutions.</p> <p>47. The composition of the commissions is designated annually by order of the commander of the military educational institution and will include: 1) the chairman of the commission – the commander of the military educational institution; 2) the responsible secretary and members of the commission – teaching/research staff, sociologists-psychologists, officers of the education department of the respective institution. The composition of the admission commissions may also include highly qualified specialists from other educational institutions in the country, as well as from among the specialists of the military structures for which the military educational institution trains military personnel. The secretariat with the tasks of technical assistance to the activity of the commission shall operate within the admission commission.</p>
	<p><b>International standards</b> (the international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</p>	<p>UN, Strategic Policy and Development Section of the Police Division, Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI), Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), <a href="#">United Nations Police Gender Toolkit</a>.</p>
	<p><b>Relevant indicators</b> (relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</p>	<p>The proportion of women and men in admission committees</p>
	<p><b>Proposals for amendment</b> (recommendations for legislative framework amendment, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</p>	<p>Amendment of point 104 of Government Decision No. 941 of 17.08.2006 for the approval of the Regulation on the manner of performing military service in the Armed Forces (Composition of the commissions for attestation of contract servicemen) in order to ensure, as far as possible, an equitable representation of women in the attestation and admission commissions.</p>
	<p><b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b></p>	<p>It is noted that the recommendation to ensure equitable representation of women in admission and attestation committees at military educational institutions is not fully implemented. According to data for 2024, men dominate numerically in most of these committees, and women occupy a significantly smaller number of positions.</p> <p><b>The provisions of the current regulatory framework:</b></p> <p>According to the Regulation on the organization of recruitment, selection and admission of candidates to military educational institutions, the composition of the commissions is designated annually by order of the commander of the institution, without any explicit requirement regarding gender balance.</p> <p>Government Decision No. 941/2006, which approves the Regulation on the manner of performing military service in the Armed Forces, does not contain provisions aimed at ensuring the participation of women in attestation committees.</p> <p><b>Consequence:</b> There is a risk that decisions regarding the admission and evaluation of military personnel may not reflect the perspective of both genders, which may contribute to the maintenance of stereotypes and the perpetuation of discrimination.</p> <p>Women who apply or are evaluated may feel a lack of confidence in the impartiality of the process, especially in situations related to maternity, harassment, or other forms of discrimination.</p>

		<p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p><i>The recommendation to amend the legislation (e.g. point 104 of the Regulation on the manner of performing military service) to impose gender balance and training of commission members in the field of equality is not yet effectively implemented.</i></p>
	<p><b>New recommendation</b></p>	<p><b>Increasing the share of women in admission and certification committees, by explicitly introducing the obligation of equitable representation and continuous training in the field of gender equality.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update p. 47 of the Regulation on the organization of recruitment, selection and admission of candidates to military educational institutions, to include a minimum quota of women in the composition of the commissions.</li> <li>• Revise p. 104 of the Regulation on the manner of performing military service (GD no. 941/2006), by introducing a requirement for parity or, at a minimum, a significant representation (e.g. 30–40%) of women in admission and attestation committees.</li> <li>• Impose a requirement for members of admission and certification committees to attend training courses in gender equality, harassment and discrimination prevention.</li> <li>• Conduct periodic (at least annually) training workshops, presenting the latest international practices and the national anti-discrimination framework.</li> <li>• Establish recruitment campaigns that directly target women, emphasizing their essential role in the military and promoting examples of female success.</li> <li>• Establish selection criteria for committees that take into account the participation of a significant number of women, including teachers, officers, and specialists with psychological or sociological training.</li> <li>• Create a system for monitoring the composition of committees (admission, certification) and publishing annual statistics on the proportion of women and men.</li> <li>• Develop a periodic report that highlights progress in achieving equitable representation and proposes corrective measures if targets are not met.</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Existing barriers</b> <i>(all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</i></p>	<p>In practice, the recruitment process in military educational institutions is oriented towards boys and men. This approach discourages women.</p>
	<p><b>Legal provision</b> <i>(legal provisions regulating the requirements mentioned)</i></p>	<p>"Regulations for organizing the recruitment, selection and admission of candidates to military educational institutions".</p> <p>10. The recruitment process includes specific activities.</p> <p>[...] 3 information campaigns mainly aimed at target groups (students and graduates of pre-university education institutions) and support groups (teachers, family members, parents, etc.), emphasizing the advantages offered during schooling in military education institutions and the subsequent exercise of the military profession.</p>
	<p><b>International standards</b> <i>(the international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</i></p>	<p>The UN's Strategic Policy and Development Section of the Police Division, Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI), Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), <a href="#">United Nations Police Gender Toolkit</a>.</p>
	<p><b>Relevant indicators</b> <i>(relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</i></p>	<p>Number of people sensitized, disaggregated by gender.</p>

<p><b>Proposals for amendment</b> <i>(recommendations for legislative framework amendment, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</i></p>	<p>Amending point 47 of the Regulation on the organization of recruitment, selection and admission of candidates to military educational institutions (Composition of admission committees to military educational institutions) to ensure, as far as possible, an equitable representation of women in the attestation and admission committees. Taking into account the significant under-representation of women in the sector, it is recommended to include in the Regulation on the organization of recruitment, selection and admission of candidates to military educational institutions, approved by Order of the Minister of Defense No. 124 of 4 May 2009 of measures aimed at recruiting girls and women as an eligible group for admission to studies in the field.</p> <p>It is also recommended to implement positive measures aimed at ensuring a more equitable representation of women. One of these measures would be the establishment of a minimum quota for girls and women in admission for studies.</p>
<p><b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b></p>	<p>It is noted that the recommendation to more clearly target recruitment processes and information campaigns toward women has not been fully implemented. Even though the "Regulation on the organization of recruitment, selection and admission of candidates to military educational institutions (point 10)" mentions information campaigns, in practice they have mainly targeted young people (students, men), without a specific strategy to attract girls and women.</p> <p><b>Provisions of the regulatory framework (point 10):</b></p> <p>The recruitment process includes information activities but does not expressly establish the obligation to include girls/women as a priority target group.</p> <p>The gender-neutral approach perpetuates the idea that the military field is for boys, a fact also confirmed by the higher failure rates for female candidates (47%) compared to male candidates (24%) in the physical tests, or by the underrepresentation of women on admission committees (1 woman to 8 men at the Military Academy).</p> <p><b>Consequence:</b></p> <p>Women interested in a military career do not receive sufficient information or specific encouragement, which leads to low enrollment and the perpetuation of stereotypes. The lack of a targeted approach discourages girls in high schools from applying and reduces gender diversity within military institutions.</p> <p><b>Conclusion:</b></p> <p><i>The recommendation to reorient the recruitment process to explicitly target women is not being implemented satisfactorily. Information and promotion efforts remain largely focused on men, and regulatory frameworks do not contain express provisions on gender balance.</i></p>
<p><b>New recommendation</b></p>	<p><b>Creating dedicated recruitment campaigns and amending the Regulation to ensure women's representation in the sphere of promoting the military profession.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the Regulation on the organization of recruitment, supplementing point 10 to explicitly include "information campaigns also aimed at girls/women" (e.g. events in mixed high schools, promotion of military careers for female students, involvement of successful military personnel in information sessions).</li> <li>• Set clear objectives (e.g. increasing the number of female candidates at military academies by X%) and periodically monitoring progress.</li> <li>• Develop brochures, posters, video spots with female military personnel, presenting career opportunities and concrete benefits (scholarships, specializations, command opportunities).</li> <li>• Organize "open days" dedicated to female students, with practical demonstrations and dialogue sessions with senior female staff.</li> <li>• Amend p. 47 (Admissions Committees).</li> </ul> <p><b>Ensuring equitable representation of women on admissions committees</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce an annual committee training plan, with gender equality and non-discrimination modules.</li> </ul>

		<p><b>Information campaigns supported by the Ministry of Defense</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve the Communication and Public Relations Department (or similar structure) in the development and dissemination of promotional materials, including on online and social media platforms, so as to maximize visibility.</li> <li>• Cooperate with specialized NGOs and educational institutions to offer interactive workshops, competitions, and discussion forums on women in the military.</li> <li>• Create a database on the number of candidates and reasons for withdrawal or failure, broken down by gender, to identify where bottlenecks occur (physical tests, written test, interview, etc.).</li> <li>• Publish an annual report showing progress in attracting and recruiting women, as well as additional measures needed.</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Existing barriers</b> <i>(all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</i></p> <p><b>Legal provision</b> <i>(legal provisions regulating the requirements mentioned)</i></p> <p><b>International standards</b> <i>(the international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</i></p> <p><b>Relevant indicators</b> <i>(relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</i></p> <p><b>Proposals for amendment</b> <i>(recommendations for legislative framework amendment, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</i></p> <p><b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b></p>	<p><b>Candidates must complete at least three tests: pull-ups; 100 meter run and a 3 kilometer run.</b></p> <p>The pull-up is impossible for most women to perform; therefore, this seemingly neutral provision has the effect of excluding women.</p> <p>Regulations for organizing the recruitment, selection and admission of candidates to military educational institutions.</p> <p>53. To determine physical aptitude (physical development), candidates must take at least three tests: pull-up on a fixed bar; 100 m run; 3 km run. At the decision of the educational institution, a swimming test may be added to these tests.</p> <p>See the list of identical requirements established regardless of the gender of the candidates in the UN's Strategic Policy and Development Section of the Police Division, Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI), Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), <a href="#">United Nations Police Gender Toolkit</a>.</p> <p>Number of people who have not taken the tests in the last 2 years.</p> <p>Amending point 53 of the "Regulation on the organization of recruitment, selection and admission of candidates to military educational institutions" to bring the requirements regarding the determination of physical aptitudes in line with the new Regulation on Military Physical Training (2019).</p> <p>It is noted that the recommendation regarding the adaptation of the pull-up test on the fixed bar for women has not been explicitly implemented at the regulatory level. Although the Military Physical Training Regulation (Order No. 91/2020) introduced the option of "pull-ups on the fixed bar from hanging lying down" for women, this is not properly reflected in the Regulation on the organization of recruitment (point 53). Further, the regulatory act only mentions "pull-up on the fixed bar" and excludes the necessary adaptations for female candidates.</p> <p><b>The provisions of the current Regulation (point 53):</b></p> <p>Any candidate (male or female) must pass at least three tests, including pull-ups on the fixed bar – a difficult exercise for most women, generating high failure rates in the physical exam. No option adapted for women is mentioned (e.g. lying hanging pull-ups), although this exists in the Military Physical Training Regulations.</p>

		<p><b>Consequence:</b></p> <p>By exclusively maintaining pull-ups, a significant obstacle is created for female candidates, directly affecting their promotion rate and, in the long term, their interest in a military career. The difference between the regulations causes confusion, and the unadapted test may be applied in practice, which amplifies the risk of indirect exclusion of women.</p> <p><b>Conclusion:</b></p> <p><i>The recommendation to correlate the physical fitness requirements with the new Military Physical Training Regulation and to explicitly introduce the adapted test (hanging pull-ups) for women has not yet been integrated into the Recruitment Organization Regulation (point 53).</i></p>
	<p><b>New recommendation</b></p>	<p><b>Amendment to the Military Physical Training Regulation (Order no. 91/2020)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Align the text with the Military Physical Training Regulations by updating point 53 to introduce the express mention that the pull-up test for women can be performed in the form of "pull-ups on the fixed bar from hanging lying down", according to Order of the Minister of Defense no. 91/2020.</li> <li>• Specifying distinct evaluation scales and conditions, so that women are not disadvantaged, but still meet a minimum level of strength relevant to military missions.</li> <li>• Preparing a comparative table with sample and scale (men vs. women), easy to consult, to ensure transparency in the application of exam rules.</li> <li>• Official publication in the Recruitment Regulation and on the websites of military institutions, so that future candidates can prepare themselves with knowledge of the facts.</li> <li>• Organizing pre-admission training sessions for candidates, specifically trained on the technique of hanging pull-ups.</li> <li>• Creating videos, brochures and tutorials that guide step by step the necessary physical training.</li> <li>• Collecting gender-disaggregated data on the promotion of this test and periodically publishing the results, to track whether there are significant improvements.</li> </ul> <p>Adjusting the scales regularly, based on feedback received and international trends (NATO/UN).</p>
<p>4</p>	<p><b>Existing barriers</b> <i>(all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</i></p>	<p>There is a lack of reasonable accommodation for female candidates in the event of pregnancy, childbirth or maternity in order to determine physical fitness. The lack of reasonable accommodation leads to the exclusion of women.</p>
	<p><b>Legal provision</b> <i>(legal provisions regulating the requirements mentioned)</i></p>	<p><b>Regulations for organizing the recruitment, selection and admission of candidates to military educational institutions.</b></p> <p>points 50-51 "if the candidate, due to health or for another reason, cannot appear for the competition admission, he is obliged to notify the admission committee (educational institution) before the start of the competition.</p> <p>The candidate who has presented valid reasons will be rescheduled to take this test until the start of the next test or no later than the last day of conduct of the aptitude tests, otherwise he will be eliminated from the competition."</p>

<p><b>International standards</b> <i>(the international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</i></p>	<p>The case of Tanja Kreil v. Bundesrepublik Deutschland, C-285/98, para. 30, citing Johnston para.44. See also Checklist in UN, Strategic Policy and Development Section of the Police Division, Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI), Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), <a href="#">United Nations Police Gender Toolkit</a>.</p>
<p><b>Relevant indicators</b> <i>(relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</i></p>	<p>No. of people/candidates (women and men) who gave up taking the tests for various reasons.</p>
<p><b>Proposals for amendment</b> <i>(recommendations for legislative framework amendment, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</i></p>	<p>Amending points 50-51 of the Regulation on the organization of recruitment, selection and admission of candidates to military educational institutions with provisions that would allow the postponement of the test to determine physical abilities in the event of pregnancy, childbirth and childbirth, provided that the other tests have been successfully completed.</p>
<p><b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b></p>	<p>It is noted that the recommendation on reasonable accommodation measures for pregnant women, during childbirth or maternity leave has not been effectively implemented in the Regulation on the organization of recruitment, selection and admission of candidates to military educational institutions. Paragraphs 50 and 51 only provide for the rescheduling of the physical test "until the start of the next test or no later than the last day of the aptitude tests". This approach ignores situations where women require a longer and flexible postponement for medical reasons or reasons related to pregnancy, childbirth or maternity leave.</p> <p><b>The provisions of the current regulatory framework (points 50-51):</b></p> <p>If the candidate cannot appear "due to health or other reasons," it can only be rescheduled within a very short period of time. There is no explicit provision granting the right to a reasonable postponement, correlated with situations of pregnancy, childbirth or maternity, so that women are not automatically eliminated from the competition.</p> <p><b>Consequence:</b></p> <p>Pregnant or lactating women are objectively unable to take the physical tests within the very limited time frame established, which leads to their exclusion before they can demonstrate their theoretical, psychological or other skills.</p> <p>This situation can lead to indirect discrimination, limiting women's access to military careers and perpetuating the stereotype that "the army is not for women."</p> <p><b>Conclusion:</b></p> <p><i>The recommendation to amend points 50-51 to allow for the real and adapted postponement of physical tests for pregnant or lactating women is not implemented in the regulatory act.</i></p>
<p><b>New recommendation</b></p>	<p><b>Introducing reasonable accommodation measures for pregnant women, those giving birth or in labor, so that they can take physical tests at a medically appropriate time.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amend points 50–51 of the "Regulation on the organization of recruitment, selection and admission of candidates to military educational institutions" by adding an express provision stipulating that pregnant women, those who have recently given birth or are in the maternity leave period benefit from the postponement of physical tests for an appropriate period (e.g. several months), based on a medical certificate.</li> <li>• Eliminate the requirement to take physical tests "no later than the last day" of the aptitude tests, allowing rescheduling if the medical situation requires it.</li> <li>• Establish a protocol through which military medical personnel can periodically assess the candidate's condition, proposing the optimal time for taking the physical tests.</li> <li>• Provide advice and information on exercises allowed during pregnancy and after birth.</li> <li>• Establish a clear procedure through which candidates can notify the admissions committee about their pregnancy/nursing, accompanied by medical documents, without being penalized.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a flexible deadline (e.g. until the start of the next academic year) for making up any outstanding physical exam arrears.</li> <li>• Provision that if a candidate has successfully passed the other exams (theoretical, psychological, medical), the respective results remain valid until the rescheduled date for the physical tests.</li> <li>• Collect data on the number of pregnant or lactating women requesting test postponement and their subsequent outcomes.</li> <li>• Publish an annual report on how accommodation measures are applied, to assess their effectiveness and propose possible adjustments.</li> </ul>
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### 3. Introduction of promotion quotas for management positions

<b>1</b>	<p><b>Existing barriers</b> <i>(all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</i></p>	<p><b>Gender imbalances in attestation commissions and promotion processes can affect the objectivity of decisions and equal access to leadership positions.</b> There are no explicit rules regarding the gender composition of these commissions.</p>
	<p><b>Legal provision</b> <i>(legal provisions regulating the requirements mentioned)</i></p>	<p><b>Principles: Equal opportunities (pt. 9(3)), transparency, and merit-based selection (pt. 9).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandatory training includes gender equality/non-discrimination (pt. 13; course modules – pt. 44(4)).</li> <li>• Personnel procedures: J1 manages appointments/promotions (pt. 18); attestation commissions operate at all levels (pts. 20–21).</li> <li>• Promotion/competition: Selection is based on commission recommendations; for command/leadership positions, competitions are organized, ensuring compliance with gender equality (pt. 60).</li> <li>• Transparency and equal opportunities: The Superior Attestation Commission (pt. 61) ensures a unified framework, ranking, and selection for positions filled through competition (Annex 2).</li> <li>• Annual planning: Annual Human Resources Management Plan (pt. 58).</li> </ul>
	<p><b>International standards</b> <i>(the international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</i></p>	<p>NATO/UN good practices on gender balance: diverse commissions, anti-bias training, periodic monitoring. (Informative references; Guide No. 590/2021 remains the applicable normative framework.)</p>
	<p><b>Relevant indicators</b> <i>(relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</i></p>	<p>The gender distribution in attestation commissions (by level). The success rate in competitions by gender (registered candidates vs. those promoted). The share of women in command/leadership positions (compared to their share in total personnel). The number/share of commission members trained annually in gender equality.</p>
	<p><b>Proposals for amendment</b> <i>(recommendations for legislative framework amendment, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</i></p>	<p>The Guide enshrines the principle of equal opportunities and requires its observance in competitions (60–61), but it does not establish minimum gender quotas for the composition of commissions and does not mandate compulsory quantitative gender-related reporting indicators.</p> <p><b>Option 1 – Internal order (based on points 13, 18, 57–61) which:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establishes a balanced composition of commissions (e.g., at least 30% from the underrepresented gender, where personnel is available);</li> <li>• makes annual training in gender equality/anti-bias mandatory for all commission members (aligned with points 13 and 44(4));</li> <li>• standardizes the evaluation matrix and structured interview (based on the criteria in point 59);</li> <li>• introduces quarterly reporting on the above indicators, aggregated by J1 (points 18, 58).</li> </ul>

		<p><b>Option 2 – Initiating a process to amend the Guide to include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explicit tie-break criteria in case of equal scores in competitions, aimed at reducing underrepresentation while preserving merit and minimum requirements (Chapter V: 59–61);</li> <li>• minimum gender composition requirements for attestation commissions;</li> <li>• an obligation for annual public gender-based monitoring. (This requires a separate normative procedure.)</li> </ul>
	<b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b>	<p><b>The key mechanisms in the Guide</b> (principles, competitions, commissions, the role of J1/the Superior Commission) are established, but without thresholds/quotas or mandatory gender-related indicators. The implementation of the above recommendations can be carried out immediately through internal orders and integration into the Annual Human Resources Management Plan (point 58).</p> <p>The risk of unequal gender outcomes in promotions persists, which is difficult to diagnose and correct in the absence of balanced commission composition, anti-bias training, and systematic monitoring.</p>
	<b>New recommendation</b>	<p><b>Adopting an internal package (without amending the Guide) in three parts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rules on the composition of commissions (target of at least 30% from the under-represented gender, where possible);</li> <li>• Annual training program for commission members (gender equality/anti-bias – in line with points 13 and 44(4));</li> <li>• Minimum set of indicators and quarterly reporting to J1, with an annual summary at the level of the Superior Commission (points 18, 58, 61).</li> </ul> <p><b>If a structural solution is pursued, initiate a subsequent amendment of the Guide in Chapter V (59–61) and Annexes 2/3 to codify tie-break criteria and gender composition requirements.</b></p>
<b>4. Vertical segregation</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>Existing barriers</b> <i>(all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</i>	<p>Promotion to command and leadership positions is carried out through competition, with respect for gender equality (point 60). The decision to promote among multiple candidates is made based on the recommendations of the attestation commissions (points 60–61).</p> <p><b>However, there are exceptions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• positions within the Military Intelligence Agency and its operationally subordinated structures are not subject to competition (point 64).</li> <li>• In urgent situations, appointments may be made “by derogation” (point 65). These cases may reduce transparency and equal treatment, requiring additional monitoring.</li> </ul>
	<b>Legal provision</b> <i>(legal provisions regulating the requirements mentioned)</i>	<p><b>Military Career Guide approved by Minister of Defense Order No. 590/2021:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principles: competitiveness, transparency, equal opportunities (points 9–10).</li> <li>• Mandatory training in gender equality and non-discrimination for those involved in career management (points 13, 24).</li> <li>• Role of commanders and attestation commissions (points 18, 20–21, 23).</li> <li>• Annual Human Resources Management Plan (point 58).</li> <li>• Promotion criteria (point 59).</li> <li>• Promotion through competition with respect for gender equality (point 60).</li> <li>• Superior Attestation Commission and transparency (points 61–63).</li> <li>• Exceptions: points 64–65. Mandatory minimum functions/stages: Annex 3.</li> <li>• Positions filled through competition: Annex 2.</li> </ul>
	<b>Internal regulatory standards</b>	<p><b>The Military Career Guide approved by Minister of Defense Order No. 590/2021 establishes internal standards:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• equal opportunities and non-discrimination (point 9 paragraph 3);</li> <li>• transparency of processes (points 9, 61–63);</li> <li>• objective promotion criteria (point 59);</li> <li>• and competitive selection for command/leadership positions with respect for gender equality (point 60).</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Relevant indicators</b> <i>(relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of competitions organized in accordance with points 60–63.</li> <li>• The share of leadership positions filled through competition versus by derogation (points 64–65).</li> <li>• The proportion of promotion decisions based on recommendations from attestation commissions (points 60–61).</li> <li>• The participation rate of military personnel in mandatory career courses (Chapters IV–VII).</li> <li>• The share of human resources staff/commission members trained in gender equality (points 13, 24).</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Proposals for amendment</b> <i>(recommendations for legislative framework amendment, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction, through departmental instructions, of internal procedures for verifying and documenting gender compliance in recruitment processes (pt. 60).</li> <li>• Establishment of a requirement that derogations (pt. 65) and AIM appointments (pt. 64) be accompanied by justification notes and compliance checks with the principles outlined in pts. 9–10.</li> <li>• Clarification, through J1 instructions (pts. 18, 63), of the format for public information regarding recruitment processes.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Normatively, the Guide provides sufficient mechanisms (principles pts. 9–10, criteria pt. 59, recruitment pts. 60–63, annual plan pt. 58).</li> <li>• However, the exceptions (pts. 64–65) may undermine transparency and equality if not strictly monitored.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>New recommendation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rigorous application of pts. 60–63 (recruitment + gender equality) and periodic internal audits of promotion/appointment files.</li> <li>• Ongoing training in gender equality/non-discrimination for commanders, career managers, and selection committees (pts. 13, 24).</li> <li>• Use of the Annual HRM Plan (pt. 58) for early scheduling of recruitment processes, rotations, and career development courses, thereby enhancing equal opportunities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>Existing barriers</b> <i>(all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</i></p>	<p>Periods of leave for child care have not been retroactively recognized as years of service or pensionable contribution, due to the lack of alignment between Government Decision No. 78/1994 and Law No. 1544/1993 with the amendments introduced by Law No. 248/2024.</p> <p>The absence of flexible mechanisms for physical fitness tests for pregnant women or those returning after childbirth leads to lost career opportunities (courses, exams, promotions).</p> <p>Professional reintegration after parental leave is not supported by a formal program; returning service members must adapt on their own to organizational and technological changes.</p>
	<p><b>Legal provision</b> <i>(legal provisions regulating the requirements mentioned)</i></p>	<p>Law No. 162/2005 on the status of military personnel, as amended by Law No. 248/2024, provides for the recognition of child care leave as time in service.</p> <p>The Military Career Guide (OMAp No. 590/2021) enshrines the principles of equal opportunity and non-discrimination (pts. 9, 13, 23), establishes objective criteria for promotion (pt. 59), mandates compliance with gender equality in competitions for command/leadership positions (pt. 60), and outlines the role of certification committees and the Annual HRM Plan (pts. 58–63).</p> <p>Government Decision No. 78/1994 and Law No. 1544/1993 (still in force) have not been amended, creating a contradiction between the primary legal framework (amended Law No. 162/2005) and the secondary legislation.</p>
	<p><b>International standards</b> <i>(the international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</i></p>	<p>The principles of military career management (Guide, pts. 9–10): competitiveness, transparency, equal opportunity.</p> <p>The obligation to provide training and implement gender policies (Guide, pts. 13 and 24).</p> <p>Parental leave neutrality in performance evaluation and promotion—derived from the principle of equality and from interpretations of CEDAW and the ECHR, which must be applied in correlation with the Guide.</p> <p>The national agenda on Women, Peace and Security (2018–2027): the state's commitment to eliminating structural barriers to women's participation in the security sector.</p>

<p><b>Relevant indicators</b> (<i>relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements</i>)</p>	<p>The number of military personnel (women and men) who have benefited from parental leave and its impact on years of service and pension entitlements.</p> <p>Cases in which promotion or participation in career development courses was postponed due to parental leave or inability to pass physical fitness tests.</p> <p>Participation rate in courses and exams after returning from leave.</p> <p>Proportion of promotion decisions based on objective criteria (pt. 59) versus cases where absence due to parental leave was interpreted as lack of performance.</p> <p>Existence and implementation of reintegration measures (briefings, mentoring, adapted rotations).</p>
<p><b>Proposals for amendment</b> (<i>recommendations for legislative framework amendment, with a view to reasonable accommodation</i>)</p>	<p>Harmonization of the legal framework: amendment of Government Decision No. 78/1994 and Law No. 1544/1993 to reflect the changes introduced by Law No. 248/2024, ensuring retroactive recognition of parental leave as time in service and in pension calculations.</p> <p>Flexibilization of physical fitness tests: introduction of a mechanism for rescheduling and recovery (6–12 months after return), organization of special sessions, and the possibility of temporarily adapting postpartum benchmarks.</p> <p>Formal professional reintegration program: implementation of a mandatory program including update briefings, mentoring, accommodation placements, and temporary rotations in less demanding positions immediately after return.</p> <p>Career non-discrimination guarantees: explicit stipulation in internal regulations that absence due to parental leave is neutral in professional evaluations and cannot negatively affect promotion.</p> <p>Monitoring and transparency: annual collection and publication of data on parental leave, career impact, promotion rates, and access to courses, with reporting aligned to the objectives of Resolution 1325 and the Military Career Guide.</p>
<p><b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b></p>	<p>The proposed measures have only been partially implemented, and significant gaps remain.</p> <p>At the end of 2024, the legislature amended the Statute of Military Personnel: through Law No. 248/2024, the provision introduced in 2014 that excluded child care leave from time in service was repealed. As of 2025, the period of parental leave is, in principle, recognized as uninterrupted service in the National Army.</p> <p>However, the practical effects of this amendment are limited. The issue stems from the fact that related normative acts—Government Decision No. 78/1994 and Law No. 1544/1993 on pension entitlements for military personnel and command staff—have not been amended. The social insurance authorities (CNAS) continue to refuse the inclusion of prior periods in the pensionable contribution record. The CEDAW Committee emphasizes that the exclusion of care periods constitute a form of discrimination that violates the right to equal opportunities, recommending that states ensure the recalculation of pension rights for all persons in similar situations. Despite this partial legislative progress, Moldova has not yet provided a remedy for past inequalities, maintaining an unjustified difference in treatment of female military personnel. This situation also contravenes the case law of the European Court of Human Rights, which has confirmed that defense institutions must ensure equality in the exercise of parental rights: gender-based restrictions on the granting of parental leave have been declared discriminatory (Konstantin Markin v. Russia, 2012 and Gruba and Others v. Russia, 2021), with the Court rejecting traditional stereotypes and emphasizing that both women and men have the right to exercise their parental role without professional penalties.</p> <p>Other institutional barriers remain virtually unchanged. Pregnant military women are still unable to take mandatory physical tests (both in the third trimester of pregnancy and immediately after giving birth), which means that if promotion exams, courses, or professional qualifications take place during that period, these individuals miss them. In practice, no formal mechanism for recovering or postponing physical fitness tests has been established to date; there are no special sessions or temporary exemptions allowing military personnel returning from maternity/paternity leave to demonstrate their physical fitness after a period of recovery. As a result, important career development opportunities may be lost solely for biological and maternity protection reasons—a situation contrary to the spirit of equal opportunity.</p>

	<p>Furthermore, the process of reintegration after childcare leave remains difficult. No dedicated professional reintegration programme has been created for military personnel returning after a long absence. In practice, upon their return, women often face the need to catch up on organizational, technological, or tactical changes that have occurred, without structured support from the institution. Law no. 162/2005 on the Status of Military Personnel does not explicitly require that a female service member be reinstated to the same position or an equivalent one after maternity leave. At the same time, Draft Law no. 329/2024, approved in its first reading on December 5, 2024, introduces the right for service members to refuse reassignment in cases of pregnancy, single-parent care of a minor child, compelling family reasons, or medically confirmed health conditions. These provisions aim to reduce the additional burden on female personnel returning from leave, support the maintenance of a balance between professional duties and family responsibilities, and encourage the full exercise of parental rights without fear of career stagnation. The WPS Agenda emphasizes the need to eliminate all forms of gender discrimination in the security sector and to adopt measures that facilitate the balance of professional and family life. However, the current reality indicates that women in the National Army still experience negative consequences of motherhood on their professional development, signaling that the recommendations made have not yet been fully implemented in practice.</p>
<p><b>New recommendation</b></p>	<p>Given the persistence of these problems, a renewed approach focused on human rights and WPS standards is needed to ensure de facto equality for women in defense institutions. The following courses of action are required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Retroactive legislative and administrative redress:</b> The authorities should identify a solution to remedy the inequalities that occurred between 2005 and 2024. Specifically, it is recommended that an interpretative rule or legislative amendment be adopted to clarify that all childcare leave granted to contract military personnel, regardless of the period, constitutes length of service (including for pension calculation purposes). This measure must be accompanied by the alignment of subsequent normative acts, namely Government Decision No. 78/1994 and Law No. 1544/1993 on pension entitlements for military personnel and members of the command corps and internal affairs troops, which have not yet been harmonized with the amendments introduced by Law No. 248/2024 to Law No. 162/2005. The CEDAW Committee, in the case of Natalia Ciobanu v. Moldova, explicitly emphasized the obligation to provide remedies to all women affected by excluded care periods, not just to change the law in the future. In the spirit of that decision, the Republic of Moldova should ensure that no female soldier suffers losses in seniority or pension due to maternity, regardless of when the leave took place.</li> <li>• <b>Flexibility in physical and professional training requirements:</b> It is imperative to introduce flexible and non-discriminatory procedures for assessing the physical condition of military personnel in the context of maternity. Pregnant women and those who have recently given birth should be supported, not penalized. We recommend allowing mandatory physical tests to be taken on alternative dates (specially organized sessions) so that a candidate can meet the physical requirement as soon as her medical condition allows. A post-maternity leave grace period could also be established — for example, 6-12 months — during which newly returned military personnel could make up for missed physical tests before being required to pass them in order to access courses or advancement exams. At the same time, assisted physical training programmes (under the guidance of sports doctors and physical therapists in the army) could be developed to help people returning after childbirth get back into shape. Another complementary measure would be to temporarily adjust the physical test standards (where operationally feasible) for female military personnel in the post-partum recovery phase, so that they can gradually achieve the standards without the stress of immediate failure. The purpose of these adjustments is to ensure that no career opportunities are missed due to objective conditions related to maternity.</li> </ul>

- **Structured professional reintegration programme:** The Ministry of Defense, together with the General Staff, should develop a reintegration programme for employees (women or men) returning from parental leave. This programme may include: a briefing to bring employees up to date (on new legislation, tactics and technology that have emerged during their absence), the opportunity to participate in refresher courses or exercises, and the assignment of a mentor (an experienced colleague) to guide the person's reintegration into the unit. A temporary rotation to a position or structure that allows for gradual reacclimation (e.g., avoiding immediately physically demanding missions in the first months after return) may also be provided. Such a formal programme would reduce the anxiety of those returning from leave and demonstrate that the institution values their experience and wants to bring them back to their full potential as quickly as possible. In addition, assisted reintegration would counteract the tendency of new parents to exclude themselves from certain roles, strengthening their loyalty to the institution and their motivation to aspire to higher ranks and positions.
- **Guarantees against career stagnation and discrimination:** It is necessary to codify explicit protections against adverse treatment related to maternity. Any evaluation for promotion must be objective and not count absence due to parental leave as a lack of performance. In this regard, training for evaluation committees and decision-makers is essential: annual staff evaluations should include methodological guidelines stipulating that maternity/paternity leave is neutral (it does not lower the evaluation average, as it is not considered an unjustified absence, but a legally protected situation). At the same time, we propose introducing the principle of "no career setback due to maternity" into internal policies. In practice, this would mean that, upon return to work, military personnel have the right to resume either the exact position previously held or one equivalent in terms of level and prospects—and they cannot be transferred or demoted against their will as a result of leave. If, however, operational requirements necessitate a move to another position, this change must be accompanied by guarantees (e.g., salary and rank are maintained, the possibility of returning to a position similar to the original one, priority access to training courses, etc., depending on the case). In addition, men should be encouraged to take parental leave, allowing them to enjoy their parental rights without fear of repercussions. An organizational culture that values the role of parents equally in women and men will reduce stigma and share the impact on careers more equitably, removing the exclusive pressure on female staff.
- **Monitoring, evaluation and ownership of the WPS agenda:** To ensure the sustainability of these changes, the implementation of a robust monitoring mechanism is recommended. The Ministry of Defense should collect and publish annual data on the number of employees (women and men) who have taken maternity/paternity leave; the average duration of their absence; their positions and their professional development after returning; the promotion rate before and after leave; and the participation of returnees in courses and exams. These relevant indicators will allow for an assessment of the real impact of the measures adopted. In addition, internal inspectorates or other competent bodies could periodically verify compliance with the new provisions (e.g., whether opportunities to retake physical tests were offered, whether there was discrimination in the assessment, etc.). The results should be linked to the objectives of the National Programme for the Implementation of Resolution 1325 (2018-2027), which provides for increasing the representation and participation of women in the security sector, including by creating conditions for balancing professional and family life.

#### Conclusion

*Removing barriers related to maternity in the military career requires not only principled reforms, but also the harmonization of secondary legislation (Government Decision No. 78/1994 and Law No. 1544/1993) with Law No. 248/2024 and international standards (CEDAW, ILO, ECHR jurisprudence).*

*Only through such alignment can the National Army become a fair and inclusive environment, where the potential of every service member is valued regardless of gender or parental status.*

## 5. Flexibility of working hours and night shifts

1	<b>Existing barriers</b> <i>(all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</i>	The work regime based on functions from the perspective of the right to part-time work disadvantages women and men who care for pre-school children.
	<b>Legal provision</b> <i>(legal provisions regulating the requirements mentioned)</i>	Decree of the President of the Republic of Moldova No. 2327 of 03.09.2009 on the approval of the military regulations of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Moldova.
	<b>International standards</b> <i>(the international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</i>	The prohibition of discrimination, including indirect discrimination, is articulated by the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and reaffirmed in UN Security Council resolutions No. 1325 of 2000, No. 1889 of 2009, No. 2122 of 2013, No. 2242 of 2015 and No. 2467 of 2019.
	<b>Relevant indicators</b> <i>(relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</i>	No. of employees who benefited in the last 2 years.
	<b>Proposals for amendment</b> <i>(recommendations for legislative framework amendment, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</i>	Establishing measures for reasonable accommodation of working hours, in particular cases when necessary for the exercise of parental rights: pregnant women, women during maternity leave, parents caring for children with disabilities, parents caring for children of pre-school age. The measures could be established both by amending the Regulation on the Internal Service of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Moldova, approved by Decree of the President of the Republic of Moldova No. 2327 of 2009, as well as to level of orders of military unit leaders who establish the internal regulations of military units.
	<b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b>	<p>Currently, the Internal Service Regulations of the Armed Forces (approved by Decree No. 2327/2009) do not contain provisions regarding part-time work or other forms of flexible work for military personnel with young children (pre-school age). Although the Labor Code and civil legislation allow, under certain conditions, reduced working hours or other forms of adaptation of the schedule, these regulations do not apply to military personnel. Thus, women and men with family responsibilities – especially those with young children or caring for people with disabilities – are unable to benefit from a work regime adequate to family needs.</p> <p><b>Current situation:</b></p> <p>Contract soldiers do not have formal access to reduced work hours or other forms of accommodation, with only approvals at the commander's discretion, without clear criteria.</p> <p>No data is collected on how many military personnel would like or have officially requested a flexible/fractional work regime.</p> <p><b>Consequence:</b></p> <p>Women and men with young children may be discouraged from remaining in military service or may give up their careers, finding it impossible to reconcile work and family life.</p> <p>A gender imbalance is perpetuated because the absence of flexible work facilities disproportionately affects women, who typically take on the majority of family responsibilities.</p>

		<p><b>Conclusion:</b></p> <p><i>The recommendation to establish reasonable work schedule accommodation measures for military personnel, especially for parents with pre-school children, has not been integrated into the current legal framework (Decree No. 2327/2009 and internal regulations of military units). Thus, the potential benefits of part-time or flexible work remain unexploited, with a negative effect on retention and personal inclusion.</i></p>
	<b>New recommendation</b>	<p><b>Adaptation of internal regulations and Decree No. 2327/2009 to establish a flexible work framework (part-time, adapted schedule) in justifiable situations of caring for a child or family members.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amending the Internal Service Regulations and internal orders by introducing explicit provisions allowing part-time work or other forms of flexible working hours for: pregnant women, women in labor, military personnel (men and women) with pre-school children, military personnel caring for disabled people in the family.</li> <li>• Establish a standard procedure through which military personnel can request, based on a report, a temporary reduction in working hours (e.g. 4/6 hours per day) or the choice of flexible working hours.</li> <li>• Identify functions and positions where a part-time schedule or other type of flexibility is possible without affecting the operational capacity of the unit (e.g. administrative, logistical, training functions). For strictly operational functions, alternative formulas can be adopted (e.g. short shifts, exchanges with other staff).</li> <li>• Collecting data on the number of military personnel (women/men) requesting flexible working hours, the number of approved/rejected requests, and the motivation for these decisions.</li> <li>• Annual reporting of this data to assess the effectiveness of new measures and propose improvements.</li> <li>• Disseminating the new provisions to all units so that servicemen know the right to reasonable accommodation and the steps to follow to obtain it.</li> <li>• Training of personnel (commanders, HR managers) on the concept of "flexible work" and non-discrimination.</li> </ul>
2	<b>Existing barriers</b> <i>(all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</i>	<p>The work regime by function from the perspective of reasonable accommodation for pregnant women.</p> <p>Disadvantages pregnant women</p>
	<b>Legal provision</b> <i>(legal provisions regulating the requirements mentioned)</i>	Decree of the President of the Republic of Moldova No. 2327 of 03.09.2009 on the approval of the military regulations of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Moldova.
	<b>International standards</b> <i>(the international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</i>	The prohibition of discrimination against pregnant women is articulated by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) and in Recommendation 2000 (No. 191). The prohibition of discrimination on the basis of maternity, including indirect discrimination, is articulated in the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and reaffirmed in UNSC resolutions 1325 of 2000, 1889 of 2009, 2122 of 2013, 2242 of 2015 and 2467 of 2019.
	<b>Relevant indicators</b> <i>(relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</i>	Number of employees who benefited in the last 2 years.
	<b>Proposals for amendment</b> <i>(recommendations for legislative framework amendment, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</i>	x

<p><b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b></p>	<p>Currently, the Internal Service Regulations of the Armed Forces (approved by Decree No. 2327/2009) and subsequent regulations do not contain explicit provisions on the adapted work regime for pregnant women. Although national legislation and international standards (e.g. ILO Conventions) emphasize the need for protective measures and reasonable accommodation for pregnancy and post-pregnancy, these principles are not fully applied in the military field. In the absence of clear rules, pregnant women are, de facto, integrated into a general work regime, which may be incompatible with the specific needs of pregnancy protection.</p> <p><b>Current situation:</b> Pregnant women may be exposed to types of tasks that involve intense physical exertion, operational risks, or the specifics of military training.</p> <p>There are no clear provisions that allow pregnant women to temporarily reduce their effort or refocus on functions appropriate to their condition.</p> <p><b>Consequence:</b></p> <p>Pregnant women may be discouraged from remaining in military service, perceiving the incompatibility between military pregnancy and maternity protection.</p> <p>Stereotypes are perpetuated according to which pregnant women cannot work in the military, being exposed to either discrimination or tacit exclusion.</p> <p><b>Conclusion:</b></p> <p><i>The recommendation to establish an adapted work regime (reasonable accommodation) for pregnant women is not implemented in the current legal framework nor in the internal regulations of military units. Without these facilities, a high potential for discrimination on the basis of maternity remains.</i></p>
<p><b>New recommendation</b></p>	<p><b>Introducing reasonable accommodation provisions for pregnant women, by amending Decree No. 2327/2009 and the internal orders regulating the internal service.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the obligation of commanders and military medical personnel to carry out, upon detection of pregnancy, a risk assessment (physical exertion, extended duty hours, exposure to harmful substances or stressful situations).</li> <li>• Re-evaluate the function and duties of the military in charge, in order to temporarily adapt the missions and program.</li> <li>• Create an official procedure through which pregnant women can be temporarily transferred to less demanding positions (administrative, theoretical training), without losing salary rights or military seniority.</li> <li>• Clarify that this transfer is made with the consent of the military and based on medical recommendations, avoiding discrimination (through exclusion or informal sanctioning).</li> <li>• Explicitly provide for the possibility for pregnant women to benefit from reduced working hours (e.g. 6 hours/day), additional breaks, as well as more flexible tasks that require physical effort.</li> <li>• Training of management staff and responsible officers in the field of maternity protection, according to international standards (ILO, UN).</li> <li>• Disseminate practical guides on the rights of pregnant women in the military (including administrative steps, medical recommendations).</li> <li>• Create a data collection system on the number of pregnant women who benefited from programme adaptations, temporary transfer or other forms of accommodation.</li> <li>• Annual reporting at ministry/staff level, to assess the effectiveness of measures and identify potential obstacles.</li> <li>• Ensure that, during pregnancy, any adaptation of the position/schedule does not imply a reduction in salary or other benefits (bonuses, allowances), in order to avoid indirect discrimination.</li> <li>• Clearly establish that the adapted work interval is considered full for the calendar length of military service.</li> </ul>

3	<b>Existing barriers</b> <i>(all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</i>	<p>The work regime by functions from the perspective of flexible work regime.</p> <p>Disadvantages women and men with pre-school children.</p>
	<b>Legal provision</b> <i>(legal provisions regulating the requirements mentioned)</i>	<p>Decree of the President of the Republic of Moldova No. 2327 of 03.09.2009 on the approval of the military regulations of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Moldova.</p>
	<b>International standards</b> <i>(the international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</i>	<p>The prohibition of discrimination, including indirect discrimination, is articulated by the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and reaffirmed in UNSC resolutions No. 1325 of 2000, No. 1889 of 2009, No. 2122 of 2013, No. 2242 of 2015 and No. 2467 of 2019.</p>
	<b>Relevant indicators</b> <i>(relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</i>	<p>Number of employees who benefited in the last 2 years.</p>
	<b>Proposals for amendment</b> <i>(recommendations for legislative framework amendment, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</i>	<p>x</p>
	<b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b>	<p>Currently, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Moldova No. 2327/2009 (approving the military regulations) and subsequent regulations within the Armed Forces do not provide for measures to make the work schedule more flexible for military personnel (male or female) with children of pre-school age. Moreover, Law No. 162/2005 exempts military personnel from certain provisions of the Labor Code regarding part-time work, additional breaks, teleworking or other forms of flexibility.</p> <p><b>Current situation:</b></p> <p>Military personnel with family responsibilities – caring for young children, sick relatives, etc. – do not have an explicit legal basis to request some form of adapted work schedule.</p> <p>The military schedule, which often involves training, missions, or extended shifts, becomes difficult to manage for parents with pre-school children (0-3 years old).</p> <p><b>Consequence:</b></p> <p>The lack of flexible work policies (e.g., short-time work, teleworking, part-time work) discourages women and men with young children from remaining in the system or joining the military.</p> <p>Inequities arise for military personnel with family responsibilities, who may be forced to leave military service or face major difficulties in combining professional and private life.</p> <p>The effect is felt more intensely by women, who generally take on a greater share of childcare responsibilities.</p> <p><b>Conclusion:</b></p> <p><i>The absence of flexible working arrangements for parents and military personnel caring for pre-school children constitutes a form of indirect discrimination, as it disproportionately affects those with family responsibilities. This gap reduces the retention and attraction of young and qualified personnel to the military and runs counter to both international recommendations (UN Security Council Resolutions 1325, 2122, 2242, etc.) and gender equality objectives.</i></p>

	<p><b>New recommendation</b></p>	<p><b>Establishment of flexible working measures in Decree No. 2327/2009 and internal regulations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amend Decree No. 2327/2009 and internal orders by introducing an express provision allowing, exceptionally and for a fixed period, a flexible or reduced work schedule (6 hours/day) for military personnel with pre-school children.</li> <li>• Establish clear criteria (e.g. child's age, child's health, number of children) and approval procedure at commander level.</li> <li>• Where the specifics of the position allow, forms of teleworking (planning activities, study, research, reports) or an individualized work schedule (later start of the programme, making up some hours, etc.) can be adopted.</li> <li>• Any adjustment to the schedule (part-time work, teleworking) should not diminish the rights to compensation, seniority in military service, and advancement in rank.</li> <li>• It will be clearly stipulated that participation in refresher courses, physical fitness exams (where applicable) or mandatory exercises can be rescheduled, so that the rights to training and promotion are not violated.</li> <li>• In parallel, develop childcare centers (nurseries, mini-kindergartens) near military units or offer childcare allowances, especially for personnel who opt for a flexible schedule.</li> <li>• Commanders of military units should receive specific training on the management of flexible work programmes and the objective criteria for approving or rejecting requests.</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Existing barriers</b> <i>(all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</i></p>	<p>Work schedule by function from the perspective of breaks for feeding the child.</p> <p>Disadvantages women during breastfeeding.</p>
	<p><b>Legal provision</b> <i>(legal provisions regulating the requirements mentioned)</i></p>	<p>Decree of the President of the Republic of Moldova No. 2327 of 03.09.2009 on the approval of the military regulations of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Moldova.</p>
	<p><b>International standards</b> <i>(the international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</i></p>	<p>The prohibition of discrimination, including indirect discrimination, is articulated by the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and reaffirmed in UNSCR 1325 of 2000, 1889 of 2009, 2122 of 2013, 2242 of 2015 and 2467 of 2019.</p>
	<p><b>Relevant indicators</b> <i>(relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</i></p>	<p>Number of women who benefited in the last 2 years.</p>
	<p><b>Proposals for amendment</b> <i>(recommendations for legislative framework amendment, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</i></p>	<p>x</p>

	<p><b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b></p>	<p>Currently, Presidential Decree No. 2327/2009 and subsequent military regulations do not expressly provide for breastfeeding breaks for female military personnel, although the Labor Code and general legislation grant this right to mothers returning to work after giving birth. In the military system, the rigid work schedule and regime make it difficult for women returning from maternity leave to exercise their right to breastfeeding breaks. This gap leads to indirect discrimination against women who return from maternity leave and breastfeed their child.</p> <p><b>Consequence:</b></p> <p>Military women may be forced to return to a full schedule without the necessary breaks for breastfeeding, causing physical discomfort and stress. The rigid military schedule does not integrate the needs of motherhood (breaks and spaces suitable for breastfeeding), which can lead to either early weaning of the child or quitting the service.</p> <p>The lack of clear regulations on breaks for feeding children makes it impossible to claim a right already recognized in other sectors.</p>
	<p><b>New recommendation</b></p>	<p><b>Introducing breaks for feeding children in military regulations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amend Decree No. 2327/2009 and the Internal Service Regulation, by including an express provision whereby military women (and, in certain cases, men who feed their children with formula milk) benefit from breastfeeding or feeding breaks, according to legal standards (2 hours/day or fractional) for a determined period of time (e.g. until the child reaches 1 year of age).</li> <li>• Clarify the procedure for requesting and approving breaks, to avoid abuses or arbitrary interpretations.</li> <li>• Establish the obligation for military units to arrange appropriate spaces for breastfeeding (a clean, ventilated room with privacy) and for storing breast milk in hygienic conditions.</li> <li>• In the internal reporting system (e.g. gender officer) include an indicator on the number of women who requested and benefited from breastfeeding breaks.</li> </ul> <p>Any refusals should be justified in writing, and the military woman should be able to appeal the decision to a higher echelon (legal/human resources).</p>
<p>5</p>	<p><b>Existing barriers</b> <i>(all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</i></p>	<p>Compensatory time for fulfilling military service obligations, offered at the discretion of the commander. In the absence of clearer provisions that would take into account the point of view, will, needs, preferences of the beneficiary, the commander could decide arbitrarily; women with pre-school children will be particularly affected.</p>
	<p><b>Legal provision</b> <i>(legal provisions regulating the requirements mentioned)</i></p>	<p>Law No. 162/2005 on the Status of the Military.</p> <p><b>Article 14. Working time and the right to rest</b></p> <p>(2) Contract servicemen engaged in fulfilling military service obligations outside the weekly duration of service time shall be granted rest time on other days of the week, in the manner established by the commander (chief), and in the event of impossibility of granting rest time, the period fulfilling military service obligations beyond the established limit can be added to annual leave.</p>
	<p><b>International standards</b> <i>(the international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</i></p>	<p>The prohibition of discrimination, including indirect discrimination, is articulated by the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and reaffirmed in UNSC resolutions No. 1325 of 2000, No. 1889 of 2009, No. 2122 of 2013, No. 2242 of 2015 and No. 2467 of 2019, as well as in the European Convention on Human Rights in Article 14 and Additional Protocol 12.</p>

<p><b>Relevant indicators</b> (relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</p>	<p>Number of compensatory time beneficiaries.</p> <p>Number of beneficiaries who reported that the time provided took into account their needs and preferences.</p>
<p><b>Proposals for amendment</b> (recommendations for legislative framework amendment, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</p>	<p>Amendment of Article 14(2) of Law no. 162/2005 on the Status of the Military to contribute to ensuring work-life balance. Compensatory time must be offered in agreement with the military member through a contract, taking into account, to the extent possible, his possibilities, needs and preferences.</p>
<p><b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b></p>	<p>Article 14 para. (2) of Law No. 162/2005 on the Status of Military Personnel provides that contract servicemen, engaged in fulfilling military service obligations outside the weekly duration of the duty time, are granted rest time on other days of the week “in the manner established by the commander (chief)”. However, the vague wording – “in the manner established by the commander” – may lead to arbitrary decisions, especially in the case of servicemen with family responsibilities (women with small children, single parents, etc.). Where there are no transparent criteria, some people may be disadvantaged, especially women with pre-school children, who need a certain pattern of free time.</p>
<p><b>New recommendation</b></p>	<p><b>Clarifying and making compensatory time more flexible</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amend Article 14 (2) of Law No. 162/2005 by introducing this explicit wording: "Contracted military personnel are granted compensatory time by mutual agreement with the military personnel, taking into account, to the extent possible, their needs and preferences, especially in situations concerning the care of children, sick family members or other family responsibilities."</li> <li>• An internal order (e.g. at the level of the Ministry of Defense) may approve a regulation implementing Article 14(2). This would specify:</li> <li>• Compensatory time request procedure (written report, response deadline).</li> <li>• Develop objective approval/rejection criteria (e.g. urgency of missions, minimum volume of personnel required).</li> <li>• Prioritize people with family responsibilities, especially women with pre-school children, single parents or those caring for dependent relatives.</li> <li>• If a refusal is imposed, it should be documented and contain objective motivation (e.g., operational requirements). The serviceman should have the right to appeal or request rescheduling.</li> <li>• At the level of each military unit, data should be collected on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of servicemen who requested compensatory time.</li> <li>• The approval rate and reasons for rejections.</li> <li>• A breakdown by gender and family situation (e.g., how many have pre-school children).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The gender officer or human resources department can produce quarterly reports to identify possible indirect discrimination (e.g., women with children receive approval less often than single men).</li> <li>• Organize training courses for commanders on the importance of work-life balance, so that there is no longer a perception that requesting compensatory time by women (or men with children) would be a disadvantage or an abuse.</li> </ul>

## The possibility of promoting paternity

1	<b>Existing barriers</b> <i>(all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</i>	Parental leave is not promoted and recommended among men.
	<b>Legal provision</b> <i>(legal provisions regulating the requirements mentioned)</i>	<p>Law No. 162 of 22.07.2005 on the status of the military.</p> <p>Article 14 – 1. Social leave. (2) Social leave maternity leave, including for the spouse of the military serviceman under contract who is dependent on him, sick leave, paternity leave, partially paid leave for caring for a child up to the age of 3, leave for caring for a sick child up to the age of 10 and leave for care for a child up to 18 years old who suffers from an oncological disease or is disabled due to the condition Intercurrent benefits are granted to military personnel by contract according to general provisions.</p>
	<b>International standards</b> <i>(the international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</i>	<p>Project Tool 76: Checklist on implementing family-friendly policies, <a href="#">United Nations Police Gender Toolkit</a>.</p> <p>For example, in Germany parental leave is 156 weeks and is transferable between parents – source: <a href="#">Raportul anual NATO pentru 2017</a>.</p>
	<b>Relevant indicators</b> <i>(relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</i>	No. of men who have benefited from paternal leave in the last 2 years.
	<b>Proposals for amendment</b> <i>(recommendations for legislative framework amendment, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</i>	<p>Identifying options for additional remuneration for contract soldiers who perform additional tasks and functions in place of the full-time soldier who benefits from the 14-day paternity leave.</p> <p>Actively promote the right to paternity leave within the defense sector.</p>
	<b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b>	<p>According to the provisions of Article 14 of Law No. 162/2005 on the status of military personnel, contract military personnel benefit from 14 days of paternity leave in the first 56 days after the birth of a child. However, data and observations from the defense sector show that this right is not sufficiently promoted, and the number of men who actually take paternity leave remains low. At the same time, there is a stereotype that childcare is primarily the mother's responsibility, which discourages fathers from taking paternity leave.</p> <p>This situation not only perpetuates gender inequalities, but also reduces the quality of family life, preventing fathers from being actively involved in the first weeks of their child's life.</p>
	<b>New recommendation</b>	<p><b>Active promotion of paternity leave and facilities for fathers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ministry of Defense, in collaboration with internal communication structures, should develop information campaigns on the right to benefit from paternal leave, emphasizing: (I) Benefits for the child and mother and (II) Benefits for the father (early bonding with the child, support for the partner, reduction of family stress).</li> <li>• Create a practical guide (brochure or online document) that explains:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to request paternity leave.</li> <li>• To whom is the request addressed?</li> <li>• What are the necessary documents?</li> <li>• What is the payment method and the impact on salary/compensation?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Explore the possibility of offering financial incentives or facilities (e.g., allocation of a place in a military nursery/kindergarten) for fathers who choose to take paternity leave.</li> </ul>

- In cases where additional tasks are imposed on other colleagues during the father's absence, the option of additional payment or supplementing the staffing scheme during the leave should be analyzed, so that there is no collective pressure against granting paternity leave.
- Organize short workshops for commanders and human resources staff to clarify: The importance of paternity leave and its benefits; How to manage the situation when a soldier requests leave.
- Eliminate any punitive or discriminatory attitude towards men who wish to take paternity leave.
- Encourage senior military leaders (including men) to speak publicly about their experience with paternity leave or support for their wives.

## 6. The possibility of increasing access to personal hygiene infrastructure

1	<p><b>Existing barriers</b> <i>(all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</i></p>	<p>Military uniforms and other standard military devices that do not take into account certain characteristics of the person.</p> <p>It disadvantages women, particularly pregnant women. The service uniform in particular is masculinized.</p>
	<p><b>Legal provision</b> <i>(legal provisions regulating the requirements mentioned)</i></p>	<p>Decree No. 580 of 06.10.2010 for the approval of the military uniform, insignia distinctive signs and the rules for their wearing by the military within the National Army and the institutions of the Ministry of Defense.</p> <p>P. 12 Service uniform.</p>
	<p><b>International standards</b> <i>(the international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</i></p>	<p>For example, the Canadian government has established in its bidding rules that the equipment purchased must meet the needs of both men and women – <a href="#">Raportul anual NATO pentru 2017</a>.</p> <p>See also UN, Strategic Policy and Development Section of the Police Division, Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI), Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), <a href="#">United Nations Police Gender Toolkit</a>.</p>
	<p><b>Relevant indicators</b> <i>(relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</i></p>	<p>Number of uniforms adapted to the requirements of pregnant women.</p>
	<p><b>Proposals for amendment</b> <i>(recommendations for legislative framework amendment, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</i></p>	<p>Amendment to Annex No. 2 of the Decree of the President of the Republic of Moldova No. 580-V of October 6, 2010 on the approval of the military uniform, distinctive insignia and the rules for their wearing by the servicemen of the National Army and the institutions of the Ministry of Defense to ensure (I) that military uniforms will take into account certain particularities of the person; (II) the introduction of gender-disaggregated components for uniforms for students of military institutions.</p>
	<p><b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b></p>	<p>Currently, military uniforms and standard equipment for military personnel (including military students) do not adequately take into account the differences in conformation and peculiarities of individuals, especially women. The situation is especially felt by pregnant or postpartum women, who need more space and additional adaptations to be able to properly wear their service uniform.</p> <p>In addition, the lack of gender-disaggregated components — from clothing cut to waist adjustment options, and ergonomic accessories — can create discomfort and implicitly convey the message that the defense sector is "exclusively male."</p>

	<p><b>New recommendation</b></p>	<p><b>Adapting uniforms to meet the needs of women (including pregnant women)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amend Annex No. 2 to Presidential Decree No. 580-V by introducing explicit provisions regarding the obligation for all categories of uniforms (ceremonial, service, training, etc.) to have appropriate cuts for women, taking into account: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Different anthropometric parameters.</li> <li>The needs of pregnant women (uniforms with stretch panels, pants with adjustable waists, etc.).</li> <li>Adapted accessories (e.g. adjustable tactical vest for people with a larger bust).</li> </ul> </li> <li>In the technical specifications, size and shape requirements should be mentioned so that a diverse range of sizes is available for women, including in the context of pregnancy. Introduction of gender-disaggregated components.</li> <li>It is recommended to review the design for essential pieces (jacket, pants, shirt, vest) so that there are distinct female and male versions, adapted according to international standards (e.g. as the armed forces of Canada, the USA, the UK have done).</li> <li>For pregnant women, a special model will be developed with a wider shape in the waist area and the possibility of adjustment as the pregnancy progresses.</li> <li>In the orders and regulations of the Ministry of Defense regarding the procurement of uniforms, clauses should be introduced regarding the testing and validation of uniforms on a sample of female personnel, including pregnant military personnel if applicable, before final contracting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The existence of a set of sizes adapted for women.</li> <li>The comfort and quality of the materials (e.g. fabric breathability, durability, etc.).</li> <li>Safety and ergonomics (freedom of movement, possibility of adjustments in the chest or abdomen area).</li> <li>User piloting and feedback</li> </ul> </li> <li>Officers responsible for uniform inventory and distribution must be trained to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get to know the new models and sizes available.</li> <li>Advise female staff on existing options.</li> <li>Send feedback and periodic reports on stocks and requests for customized uniforms.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>It is recommended to annually evaluate how adapted uniforms meet the requirements of female staff and pregnant women.</p>
<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>Existing barriers</b> <i>(all requirements regarding physical training will be indicated in detail: regulations, standards, etc.)</i></p>	<p>Rigid infrastructure arrangements that do not take into account the specific needs of employees (daycare centers, mini-kindergartens, etc.). Disadvantages parents (predominantly women) with pre-school children.</p>
<p><b>Legal provision</b> <i>(legal provisions regulating the requirements mentioned)</i></p>	<p>Decree of the President of the Republic of Moldova No. 2327 of 03.09.2009 on the approval of the military regulations of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Moldova. Provisions missing.</p>	
<p><b>International standards</b> <i>(the international standards regarding the mentioned requirement and which could serve as good practices for Moldova)</i></p>	<p>Project Tool 76: <a href="#">Checklist</a> on implementing family-friendly policies.</p>	
<p><b>Relevant indicators</b> <i>(relevant indicators for the mentioned requirements)</i></p>	<p>No. of employees on parental leave.</p>	

<p><b>Proposals for amendment</b> <i>(recommendations for legislative framework amendment, with a view to reasonable accommodation)</i></p>	<p>Within the limits of available resources, identify measures for reasonable accommodation of sanitary blocks for women.</p> <p>Within the limits of available resources, initiating a pilot project (daycare center or mini-kindergarten) near a military unit (possibly Bălți) to facilitate the return to work of military personnel under contract with pre-school children.</p>
<p><b>Evaluation of the level of implementation</b></p>	<p>The infrastructure in most military units in the Republic of Moldova is designed and managed without specifically considering the needs of parents with pre-school children. Currently, there are no daycare centers, mini-kindergartens, or other types of childcare facilities even in the vicinity of the units. This particularly affects servicemen (women, but also men) returning from parental leave and not having access to affordable childcare services or more flexible work schedules.</p> <p>In the absence of infrastructural and institutional adjustments, parents with young children face difficulties in reconciling professional and family life. In the medium and long term, these constraints may lead to abandonment of military careers, increased stress or increased reluctance of women to join the defense sector.</p>
<p><b>New recommendation</b></p>	<p><b>Creating and piloting a day care center (mini-kindergarten) in a military unit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the first phase, the Ministry of Defense, together with each military unit, should evaluate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of parents with pre-school (0-3 years old) or preschool (3-6 years old) children.</li> <li>• Spaces available within or in close proximity to military units that can be adapted for a care center.</li> <li>• The necessary financial and human resources (including the possibility of attracting external funding or public-private partnerships).</li> <li>• Identification of the pilot military unit (e.g. Bălți area)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Based on personnel density and interest, a military unit in Balti (or another region with a significant number of parent personnel) can be selected to launch a pilot project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The existing building/center should be minimally adapted (children's furniture, play areas, appropriate restrooms).</li> <li>• Partnerships can be established with local authorities (city hall, social departments) or even NGOs specializing in early education.</li> <li>• Regulation of the operation of the mini-kindergarten</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The regulation of establishment and operation will be developed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who can benefit (priority for military personnel on contract who have children aged 0-4).</li> <li>• Operating schedule and registration method.</li> <li>• Necessary human resources (educators, auxiliary staff).</li> <li>• Coordination with the local Education Department to ensure minimum standards.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• After establishing the daycare center, the Ministry of Defense should collect feedback from parents and staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degree of satisfaction, number of effective beneficiaries, impact on retention of women and parents in the military unit.</li> <li>• Possible improvements related to the program, early childhood education curriculum, additional staff, etc.</li> <li>• Preparing a pilot report after a minimum of 6-12 months of operation, which should include recommendations for expanding the programme to other units, within the limits of available resources.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



Photo credit: UN Women/Anna Galatonova

## National Penitentiary Administration

### 3.1. Physical requirements

**The National Penitentiary Administration (ANP) does not apply mandatory physical requirements for most staff.** Within the Psychosocial Assistance Service (SAP), a mandatory physical test for employment and promotion is only required for the Special Purpose Detachment (DDS) "Pantera," which is differentiated by age and gender. The lack of general physical tests may indicate an inclusive approach and could facilitate women's access to the ANP; however, it is essential that the recruitment criteria are relevant to the job duties and do not indirectly discriminate. At the same time, it is also crucial to ensure that staff are physically prepared to deal with specific situations that may arise in the penitentiary environment, which can be demanding.

**Although the ANP does not impose physical requirements that directly discriminate against women, there are gaps in the training and physical assessment of staff,** which can affect operational efficiency and safety in prisons. The ANP does not require physical tests for employees working in high-risk environments. Likewise, the institution does not impose specific physical requirements for positions that involve direct interactions with prisoners. This approach can be problematic, given that direct interaction with prisoners can involve tense or violent situations. It is therefore essential that all employees have an adequate level of physical training, adapted to their specific roles.

**In maximum security prisons, staff face a heightened exposure to risks.** Yet, the ANP has no specific physical tests or adjustments for this setting. This highlights the urgent need to tailor physical training and assessments to this environment, ensuring that staff entering maximum security prisons are adequately prepared. At the same time, physical training requirements and programmes must be relevant to the actual tasks of staff. For women, this may mean adapting exercises and techniques to suit the different roles they perform in prison. In general, the lack of tailored physical training requirements or programmes can endanger staff and prisoners' safety, leading to inefficiency and operational risks.

#### References in international standards:

- **UN Office on Drugs and Crime:** The UN's Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (i.e., the Mandela Rules) stresses the importance of well-trained and qualified staff in prison administration.
- **CEDAW:** Calls on states to ensure equal opportunities and treatment in the field of employment, including with regard to hiring and promotion criteria.
- **EU:** Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on equal treatment between men and women in matters of employment prohibits direct and indirect discrimination in recruitment procedures.

#### International positive practices:

- **United Kingdom:** The Prison Service of England and Wales has adapted its physical requirements for prison officers, introducing physical standards relevant to specific tasks, with differentiations based on roles and responsibilities, not gender.
- **United States:** The Federal Bureau of Prisons requires a standardized physical test for all correctional officers, which is the same for men and women but is designed to assess skills relevant to prison work.
- **Germany:** In some states, staff working in maximum security prisons undergo additional training programmes, including physical assessments tailored to specific risks.

**The gaps in the physical training of ANP employees are also fueled by poor infrastructure.** At the moment there are positive initiatives to provide continuous physical training to employees, but the insufficiency of infrastructure limits uniform access to these programmes. Although the annual professional training programme provides physical training for all SAP employees, not all subdivisions have the necessary conditions for holding sports classes (sports halls, stadiums, showers, etc.). Only some penitentiaries have created conditions, such as Penitentiary No. 12 Bender, which opened a weight room for male and female employees.

#### References in international standards:

- **The Council of Europe:** The "Recommendations on Prison Staff" emphasizes the need for adequate initial and ongoing training, including in physical skills and conflict management techniques.

#### International positive practices:

- **Norway:** The Norwegian Prison Service offers physical and tactical training programmes for all employees, with facilities available in all units, thus ensuring uniform training of staff.

#### Recommendations:

- **Develop and introduce adapted physical requirements and training programmes** specific to roles in the ANP, ensuring that staff are prepared for the challenges of the penitentiary environment. To this end, it is recommended that particular tasks be analyzed and the necessary physical skills identified. Mandatory physical training programmes for operational staff (including those who directly interact with prisoners) should also be implemented and adapted to each role, without being discriminatory. In developing and reviewing policies on physical requirements, it is imperative to actively involve women employed within the ANP by integrating them into working groups and collecting employee feedback.
- **Adapt requirements for pregnant women or women in post-natal medical recovery** by providing alternatives or exceptions to physical demands during this period. It is also necessary to develop clear policies on workplace adaptation for this category of employees.

- **Equipment and uniforms should be adapted to suit women's specific needs to ensure comfort and efficiency.** Employees must be consulted on their needs and the necessary facilities to achieve this.
- **Improve the infrastructure for physical training** so that all subdivisions have adequate facilities (investment in sports infrastructure and physical training in all prisons) and ensure equal access to these facilities for all employees.
- **Develop criteria for evaluating and monitoring physical performance** that are fair and relevant to the specific tasks. The assessment should be carried out according to performance standards based on competences, not gender.
- **Provide training and development opportunities** to improve employees' physical and tactical skills by organizing specific training and workshops and encouraging participation in professional development programmes.

### 3.2. Recruitment and admission

**The ANP complies with Moldova's laws regarding recruitment and promotion, without discrimination based on gender.** According to the institution, the recruitment and promotion process is open to all candidates who meet the legal conditions, without discrimination on certain criteria. This is in line with the principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination. However, no proactive measures or specific strategies are mentioned to promote the recruitment of women in operational positions, especially in maximum security prisons.

#### References in international standards:

- **CEDAW:** Article 11 requires states to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of work and to ensure de jure and de facto equality between women and men.
- **UN Office on Drugs and Crime:** The UN's Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (i.e., the Mandela Rules) encourage gender diversity in prison staff and recognizes women's contributions in this field.

#### International positive practices:

- **Canada:** The Correctional Service of Canada has implemented recruitment programmes targeting women, including outreach campaigns and events to increase women's representation in operational positions.
- **Norway:** The Norwegian Correctional Service actively promotes the recruitment of women in all roles, including in maximum security prisons, through gender equality policies and mentoring programmes.

**At the institutional level, there are no policies or measures to eliminate gender discrimination in the recruitment process.** The ANP describes the legal procedures for recruitment and promotion, which are open to all candidates without discrimination. The publication of vacancies on the official website and compliance with legal provisions ensure transparency in the process. However, there are no specific policies mentioned to eliminate gender discrimination or to promote equal opportunities between women and men at any stage of the recruitment and admission process, which may limit alignment with international standards. There are also no dedicated programmes for recruiting women in management positions, which may lead to the underrepresentation of women in key positions and limit diversity in leadership.

#### References in international standards:

- **EU:** Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on equal treatment between men and women in matters of employment prohibits direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of gender in recruitment, promotion and working conditions.
- **ILO:** Convention No. 111 concerning Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) calls on states to promote equality of opportunity and treatment in matters of employment and occupation.

#### International positive practices:

- **United Kingdom:** The Prison Service introduced recruitment policies that include training human resources staff in identifying and eliminating gender bias. Competency-based selection processes have also been introduced to ensure equity.

#### Recommendations:

- **Review recruitment and selection criteria and processes** to ensure they are relevant, non-discriminatory and based on the skills needed for specific roles. Assessing the current criteria will identify potential barriers for women and eliminate non-essential requirements that may indirectly disadvantage them.
- **Implement proactive recruitment programmes** to attract women to careers in the ANP, especially in operational and management positions, by organizing recruitment campaigns and events. This can be accomplished by collaborating with educational institutions and organizations that promote gender equality and showcasing positive female role models who have succeeded in operational and management positions.
- **Train human resources staff** in gender equality and inclusive and fair recruitment processes. To this end, it is recommended that training on gender discrimination and unconscious bias be organized, standardized competency-based assessment procedures implemented, and recruitment materials reviewed to ensure inclusive language and images.
- **Promote women in leadership positions** by implementing mentoring and professional development programmes and establishing institutional objectives to increase the number of women in leadership positions.
- **Monitor and evaluate progress** by collecting and analyzing gender-disaggregated data on recruitment, promotion and retention; publishing periodic reports on this subject; and adjusting policies based on results.

### 3.3. Job promotions and vertical segregation

**Half of the management positions within the ANP are held by women**, which indicates that the institution has managed to promote women to decision-making positions. Still, no specific policies are mentioned that led to this result. At the same time, the institution reports an equal representation of women in the evaluation committees, which presents a positive practice, contributing to the objectivity and fairness of the promotion process. Although the ANP reports an equal representation of women in management positions and ensures balance in the evaluation committees, a more proactive and systematic approach is needed to ensure alignment with international standards.

#### References in international standards:

- **CEDAW:** Article 7 requires State Parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in public and political life, ensure their right to hold public office, and exercise all public functions at all levels of government.

- **UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:** Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 aims to ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.
- **EU:** Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on equal treatment between men and women in employment recommends measures to ensure equal opportunities in selection and promotion processes.

**International positive practices:**

- **Norway:** Company boards introduced gender quotas, and the government implemented various policies promoting gender equality in public office, which has led to a significant increase in the representation of women in leadership positions.
- **Canada:** In federal services, diversity is encouraged in selection and promotion committees, including balanced gender representation, to ensure fair and inclusive processes.

**Monitoring progress in increasing the number of women promoted is carried out through statistical records by the Human Resources Department.** The collection of statistical data is essential for monitoring progress and identifying trends. However, no details were provided about analyzing this data or how it is used to inform promotion policies and practices. There is also no data available on the adjustment of promotion criteria, the management of women's promotion in maximum security prisons, feedback from female staff, access to leadership positions in remote areas, etc.

**References in international standards:**

- **ILO:** Convention No. 111 concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation recommends collecting and analyzing gender-disaggregated data to identify and eliminate discrimination in employment.

**International positive practices:**

- **Australia:** The Australian Public Service publishes annual diversity and inclusion reports, which include data on the representation of women in leadership positions and measures taken to improve the situation.

**Recommendations:**

- **Adjust promotion criteria and procedures** to identify elements that may indirectly disadvantage women and remove any potential barriers. Ensure that performance evaluation is based on measurable competencies and results, without discrimination.
- **Implement mentoring and professional development programmes** for women aspiring to leadership positions. These can be complemented by organizing workshops and courses to develop leadership skills. An example would be the United States, where the Federal Bureau of Prisons offers leadership development programmes for female employees to support them in career advancement.
- **Ensure access to leadership positions in all prisons**, including high-security or remote areas. This can be achieved by assessing and adapting working conditions to be attractive and accessible to women and/or providing incentives or logistical support for female employees in remote areas.
- **Train human resources staff and evaluators in gender equality** and inclusive and fair recruitment processes by organizing training on gender discrimination and unconscious bias and implementing standardized competency-based assessment procedures.

- **Combat vertical segregation and promote professional mobility** by ensuring equal access to advancement opportunities for employees in all departments, regardless of position held. Encourage transfers and staff rotation to diversify experience.
- **Collect and analyze employee feedback**, which involves creating effective channels for female employees to express their concerns and proposals regarding the promotion process (by organizing surveys and confidential interviews and forming a gender equality committee to analyze feedback and propose measures).

### 3.4. Working hours

**The ANP introduced work schedule flexibility measures for employees with family responsibilities.** This positive measure can contribute to work-life balance, especially for women, who often have significant roles in caring for the family. According to the data, over the past three years, the number of employees benefiting from flexible working arrangements increased from nine in 2022 to 17 in 2024. However, no gender-disaggregated data were provided, which limits the ability to analyze the impact of these measures on women and men.

#### References in international standards:

- **EU:** Directive 2019/1158/EU on work-life balance encourages the private sector to promote the use of flexible working arrangements to support employees with family responsibilities.

#### International positive practices:

- **Sweden:** The government has offered generous flexible work policies, allowing public sector employees to adjust their working hours according to family needs.

**At the ANP, adapting employees' work schedules to their individual and specific needs is fragmented.** There are several positive measures. For example, the ANP offers employees the opportunity to request a reduced work schedule in accordance with labour legislation to support work-life balance. The institution also establishes a day or week of partial work for employees with children below age 10 or children with disabilities (including those under guardianship, following a medical certificate). Likewise, the ANP responds positively to all requests to modify work schedules for women in management positions and those working in maximum security prisons.

However, there are no known measures to adapt working hours for women with family responsibilities who work night shifts or those working in rural or remote areas. The ANP has taken important steps in introducing flexible working hours measures and supporting employees with family responsibilities. However, there is room for improvement, especially in monitoring the impact of these measures, providing training for managers and developing policies tailored to the specific needs of female employees.

#### References in international standards:

##### ILO:

- **Convention No. 171** on Night Work provides special protective measures for night workers, including adaptations for those with family responsibilities.
- **Convention No. 183** on Maternity Protection provides for the right of pregnant women to adapted working conditions and special protection.
- **Convention No. 156** concerning workers with family responsibilities requires states to promote policies that enable workers to exercise their right to equal opportunities and treatment.

#### International positive practices:

- **France:** The government limits working hours/shifts for night workers and compensates them adequately. It also offers alternative options for employees with family responsibilities.
- **Germany:** Employees with children under 18 or family members who require care have a legal right to request reduced working hours.
- **United Kingdom:** The Penitentiary Service offers training for managers on ensuring work-life balance among employees.

#### Recommendations:

- **Collect and analyze gender-disaggregated data** and implement a reporting system to monitor the effectiveness of flexible work programmes and identify gender disparities.
- **Assess the impact of flexible work schedules** to understand how they influence employee retention, performance and satisfaction, especially among women (through surveys and interviews with employees).
- **Provide managers with training** on the importance and management of flexible work schedules to ensure the correct and uniform application of policies. Develop guides and information materials for managers.
- **Develop special policies and programmes for employees** in rural or remote areas to meet their specific needs. These could include measures such as teleworking or adjustments to working hours.
- **Implement clear policies to prevent indirect discrimination** in providing flexible work schedules and ensuring equal opportunities. In this regard, it is recommended that policies and practices be periodically reviewed to identify and correct any biases or barriers. A mechanism for reporting and resolving discrimination-related complaints should also be established.
- **Actively promote rights and available options** by periodically informing employees about internal policies and offering information sessions and individual counseling.

### 3.5. Family responsibilities

#### **The ANP's current practices to support women with family responsibilities present certain positive aspects.**

For example, the ANP implements flexible work schedules as a support measure for women with family responsibilities. The institution also provides access to breastfeeding breaks for women who have returned from maternity leave. This is a positive practice, allowing employees to adapt their work schedule to family needs; however, no specific measures are specified to ensure their access to promotion opportunities. Under its policies, the ANP offers leave for both women and men, ensuring equal treatment in terms of maternity, paternity and childcare leave rights. Additionally, women on care leave are not seconded, a practice that is in line with international standards and national legislation, protecting their rights.

**Despite these measures, there are still significant gaps in alignment with international standards, particularly:** (I) the lack of adjustments made to policies to prevent women on care leave from being disadvantaged in promotion processes and losing opportunities due to temporary absence; (II) the absence of childcare facilities at workplaces; (III) the lack of information sessions and mentoring programmes for women with family responsibilities, which may lead to ignorance of the rights and options available to employees with family responsibilities, limiting their ability to benefit from existing measures; (IV) the failure to implement anti-discrimination policies in relation to parental leave; and (V) the lack of additional financial support for employees on maternity or parental leave, especially if legal allowances do not fully cover their needs.

#### References in international standards:

- **EU:** Directive 2019/1158/EU on work-life balance requires the private sector to allow flexible working arrangements for employees with families, including parental leave for both parents. It also encourages Member States to improve access to childcare services to support working parents.
- **ILO:** Convention No. 183 on maternity protection provides for the protection of women against dismissal and other actions that could negatively affect them during maternity. Likewise, Convention No. 156 concerning workers with family responsibilities calls on states to promote policies that allow employees with family responsibilities to fulfill both their professional and family obligations.
- **EU:** Directive 2006/54/EC prohibits discrimination based on sex and provides that maternity-related absences must not affect promotion rights.

#### International positive practices:

- **Sweden:** The government offers extensive flexible working options and generous parental leave for both parents, thus allowing work-life balance.
- **United Kingdom:** Women on maternity leave are entitled to legal protections, ensuring their right to be informed of promotion opportunities and participate in selection processes.
- **Iceland:** The government introduced equal and non-transferable parental leave for both parents, thus promoting father involvement in childcare.
- **France:** Many public institutions offer workplace nurseries or childcare subsidies, thus facilitating the balance between work and family life.
- **Norway:** The government implemented a parental leave system that includes a quota reserved for the father, encouraging the participation of both parents in childcare.
- **Germany:** Parents are entitled to additional government allowances and the option of working part-time during parental leave with appropriate financial support.

#### Recommendations:

- **Review internal regulations to ensure equality in promotion.** Policies must ensure that maternity-related absences do not negatively affect performance evaluation. Conducting a review will ensure that internal policies inform employees on maternity leave about job promotion opportunities and include them in selection processes.
- **Create childcare facilities in the workplace** by establishing nurseries or partnerships with childcare centers to support employees with young children. To this end, financial and logistical feasibility will be assessed, and employees will be consulted to determine specific needs.
- **Implement mentoring and training programmes** for women who want to advance in their careers, including training sessions and support networks for employees with family responsibilities.
- **Develop and implement anti-discrimination policies** that prevent discrimination against women who request parental leave or other support related to family responsibilities. These policies must be in line with international standards. Furthermore, managerial staff must be trained to recognize and prevent discrimination.
- **Analyze the impact of family responsibilities** on retention by collecting data and employee feedback.
- **Depending on budgetary possibilities,** implement financial support programmes for employees on maternity or parental leave (such as additional allowances or subsidies).

### 3.6. Infrastructure

The ANP has implemented infrastructural adjustments by providing separate restrooms for women and men. This is a basic measure that respects female employees' privacy and hygiene needs. The ANP has also ensured equal access to sanitary and hygiene facilities for women and men, a positive practice essential for promoting gender equality. However, no other adjustments are mentioned that could improve women's working conditions, such as separate changing rooms, accommodation facilities, facilities for pregnant women, private breastfeeding spaces, dedicated breaks, rest rooms for night shifts, etc.

#### References in international standards:

- **The UN Office for Drugs and Crime:** The UN's Minimum Standards for the Treatment of Prisoners (Mandela Rules), Rule 74(3), provides that female staff must have adequate facilities that address their specific needs.
- **ILO:** Convention No. 155 on Occupational Safety and Health stipulates that the working environment must be safe and healthy for all workers.

#### International positive practices:

- **Norway:** Public prisons have implemented separate and adapted facilities for female staff, including changing rooms, showers and rest areas.
- **Canada:** The Canadian prison system has implemented high standards for sanitary facilities, ensuring adequate equipment and hygiene products for female staff.

Although the ANP has implemented certain measures to adapt the infrastructure to the needs of women, internal practices need to be aligned with international standards. In particular, these relate to: (I) limited access to adequate personal protective equipment, including uniforms and tactical equipment adapted to women's anatomy, thus putting their safety at risk; (II) lack of adequate sports facilities (many institutions do not have the minimum conditions for practicing sports, such as a sports hall, stadium, shower, equipment), which negatively affects the ability of employees to maintain their physical condition, which is essential in the penitentiary environment; (III) lack of consultation and involvement of employees in the infrastructure modernization processes; and (IV) failure to carry out systematic assessments to identify and remedy deficiencies affecting women.

#### References in international standards:

- **ILO:** Convention No. 155 on Occupational Safety and Health stresses the need to provide adequate personal protective equipment to all workers, tailored to individual needs.
- **The UN Office for Drugs and Crime:** The UN's Minimum Standards for the Treatment of Prisoners (Mandela Rules), Rule 74(1), emphasizes the importance of physical training for prison staff.

#### International positive practices:

- **United Kingdom:** The Penitentiary Service provides uniforms and personal protective equipment adapted for women, including anti-stab vests and footwear in appropriate sizes.
- **Germany:** German prisons offer modern sports facilities for staff, encouraging physical activity and offering tailored fitness programmes.
- **Australia:** The government conducted gender audits in the prison system to identify the specific needs of women and implemented appropriate measures

### Recommendations:

- **Provide personal protective equipment adapted to the anatomy** and specific needs of female employees. This will be achieved by conducting an inventory of existing equipment, identifying needs and collaborating with suppliers to purchase equipment adapted for women.
- **Modernize sports facilities and infrastructure for physical training**, including gyms, locker rooms, and showers, to encourage physical activity among employees. Ensuring equal access to these facilities for all employees is crucial.
- **Consult employees in modernization processes** by involving them in the planning and implementing infrastructural adjustments, organizing meetings and surveys to collect feedback, and integrating the proposals and needs identified into modernization plans.
- **Conduct an infrastructure audit from a gender perspective.** This involves systematically assessing the infrastructure to identify deficiencies affecting women and developing an action plan based on the audit's findings.
- **Ensure access to childcare facilities** by creating nurseries or establishing partnerships with childcare centers to support female employees with family responsibilities.
- **Implement additional safety measures** for women who work in high-risk environments. To this end, employees must be trained in self-defense techniques and risk management, and alarm and monitoring systems must be installed in vulnerable areas.



Photo credit: UN Women/Anna Galatonova

## State Protection and Guard Service

### 4.1. Physical requirements

Within the State Protection and Guard Service (SPPS), physical requirements are adapted to consider biological differences between women and men, ensuring equitable treatment. According to the SPPS, employees, regardless of gender, must have high physical endurance to respond to situations of prolonged stress. Physical requirements are established to ensure the ability of employees to perform specific tasks and operational roles, which include the protection of dignitaries and other activities requiring physical endurance and specialized training. Personalized and adapted training programmes are available in this regard. The SPPS ensures that physical requirements reflect specific activities to avoid discrimination and promote operational efficiency. Physical requirements for women are adapted to be equitable and without compromising the standards necessary to fulfill SPPS missions. Also, strength tests may have different standards for women and men, without lowering the critical requirements for real interventions. For example, women are subject to different norms for covering distances with less weight. Recognizing biological differences is essential to ensure equal opportunities and avoid indirect discrimination.

#### References in international standards:

- **ILO: Convention No. 111** concerning Discrimination in Employment and Occupation (1958) prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and promotes equal opportunities.
- **The UN's Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Personnel** emphasizes the need for staff to be properly trained to carry out specific tasks.

#### International positive practices:

- **United Kingdom:** The British police have implemented Job-Related Fitness Tests, which are tailored to specific roles and take into account individual differences.
- **Canada:** The Royal Canadian Mounted Police uses the Physical Requirements Assessment (PARE), a standardized test that simulates the physical demands of operational work and is designed to be fair to all candidates, regardless of gender.

**The SPPS's current practices regarding physical assessment are largely compatible with international equal opportunity standards.** The institution's physical assessments (for combat and/or self-defense skills testing) emphasize technique and efficiency, taking into account body size and mass rather than strength. Physical testing includes measures based on weight and height and is less focused on fixed standards that would disadvantage certain groups. The assessment of women's physical performance compared to men is based on tests focused on functional skills and considers biological differences. At the same time, women are also assessed based on their ability to work in a team. This functional skills-based assessment promotes a holistic and equitable approach, consistent with the principle of equal opportunities. This allows women to demonstrate competencies relevant to operational missions, without being disadvantaged by non-essential physical requirements for the role.

#### References in international standards:

- **EU:** Council Directive 76/207/EEC on equal treatment between men and women as regards access to employment and vocational training recommends that selection requirements be relevant and necessary for the performance of the tasks.

#### International positive practices:

- **Australia:** The Australian Federal Police has reviewed physical requirements to remove undue barriers for applicants, introducing tests that assess the capabilities explicitly required for operational roles.

**Women can benefit from adapted physical training.** Female employees involved in protection and security missions benefit from daily physical training hours under the strict supervision of instructors trained to provide the necessary assistance. Women who experience difficulties can attend sports classes with an instructor twice weekly, with less demanding exercise programmes. SPPS female employees who perform physically demanding activities in high-risk missions benefit from an adjusted programme that provides flexibility in training attendance, recovery and rest. These measures show the SPPS's commitment to supporting female employees in achieving the necessary standards. This can contribute to increasing the participation of women in operational functions and improving performance.

#### References in international standards:

- **World Health Organization (WHO):** The institution recommends adapting work schedules to prevent burnout and promote employee well-being.

#### International positive practices:

- **United States:** Many law enforcement agencies offer pre-recruitment training programmes for women to help them meet the physical requirements.
- **Australia:** The Australian Defense Force offers tailored physical training programmes for women and upgraded sports facilities to encourage their participation.

**The SPPS offers support measures for different categories of employees.** Women who face difficulties due to family or medical responsibilities can benefit from less demanding exercise programmes and can attend a gym of their choice outside of working hours. Pregnant women are exempt from special physical training and can be transferred to administrative tasks that are less physically demanding. Women in management also benefit from an adapted programme that allows them to attend physical training classes according to an individual or more relaxed schedule, without being disadvantaged compared to men, to ensure equity and non-discrimination. These measures demonstrate the institution's sensitive approach to meeting the individual needs of female employees, in line with international standards on supporting workers with

family and managerial responsibilities. The study found that SPPS's internal practices align with relevant international standards; however, there are opportunities to formalize and improve policies and processes. Although women are involved in assessing and adjusting physical requirements at the institutional level, this process must be formalized and documented to ensure transparency and monitor progress.

#### References in international standards:

- **ILO:** Convention No. 156 concerning workers with family responsibilities (1981) encourage the adoption of policies that allow workers to fulfill both their professional and family responsibilities. Convention No. 183 on Maternity Protection (2000) provides for the right of pregnant women to special protection during pregnancy and after childbirth.

#### International positive practices:

- **Norway:** Security institutions use formal feedback and consultation mechanisms with employees to improve organizational policies and practices.

#### Recommendations:

- **Develop and implement internal policies regarding physical requirements** by creating official documents detailing the applicable physical criteria and standards, each adapted for women and men. This ensures transparency and avoids discrimination. To develop domestic policies, it is recommended that international organizations and experts in the field collaborate to implement best practices and align SPPS policies with international standards. Participation in global networks and initiatives on gender equality in the security and defense sector would strengthen the domestic policy framework.
- **Develop physical and tactical training programmes (pre-recruitment) for female candidates** who wish to join the SPPS, reducing barriers to entry and promoting equal opportunities. Collaborating with educational institutions and organizations promoting gender equality is recommended to attract more women to operational positions.
- **Improve infrastructure and equipment** by continuing to adapt equipment and uniforms to women's specific needs, ensuring equal access to resources, and modernizing infrastructure (locker rooms, training rooms) to ensure the comfort and safety of all employees.
- **Create a formal monitoring mechanism** that assesses the impact of physical demands on the recruitment, retention and performance of women in operational roles and reports on progress regularly.
- **Organize training sessions on gender equality**, non-discrimination and the importance of adapting physical requirements, which will help promote an inclusive organizational culture.
- **Implement transparent procedures** for performance evaluation based on objective criteria relevant to specific roles. Monitor promotion processes to ensure that women have the same opportunities as men.

## 4.2. Recruitment and admission

The SPPS has taken active measures to promote the recruitment of women and ensure equal opportunities, focusing on changing perceptions and promoting female role models in operational roles. To this end, the institution has organized information and awareness campaigns, open days, gender equality training, established collaborations with NGOs, and used social media to reach a wider audience. A relevant example in this regard is provided by the United Kingdom, where the Metropolitan Police has launched recruitment campaigns targeting women and minorities, including through social media and community events. These strategies aim to encourage women to pursue careers in the SPPS.

**The institution has introduced inclusive practices in its recruitment process, but further actions are needed.** The SPPS ensures transparency and fairness by placing inclusive recruitment advertisements. It has also adjusted its recruitment criteria and re-evaluated job requirements to eliminate potential discriminatory obstacles or barriers that could prevent women from accessing positions. Gender-balanced representation is ensured within the institution's recruitment committees, and their members receive training on gender equality, which may reduce prejudice in the selection process. Implementing clear and objective criteria and anonymous assessments are SPPS practices that may reduce discrimination and ensure equal opportunities. However, the institution's internal policies do not reflect these measures, so they may not be applied consistently. Additionally, the institution has not conducted a gender audit of its assessment criteria or procedures for recruiting women to operational positions, which increases the risk that discriminatory barriers or practices remain unidentified and unresolved. Furthermore, the SPPS has not implemented special measures for recruiting women in electronic surveillance and security.

#### References in international standards:

- **CEDAW:** Article 11 requires State Parties to take measures to eliminate discrimination against women in employment. Furthermore, the CEDAW Committee recommends the adoption of temporary special measures, including quotas, to accelerate de facto equality between men and women (General Recommendation No. 25).
- **EU:** Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation underlines the importance of non-discriminatory selection processes.
- **The Council of Europe:** The Council's Recommendations encourage institutions to conduct gender audits to identify and eliminate structural discrimination.

#### International positive practices:

- **Norway:** The government implemented gender quotas on the boards of public companies and promoted support networks for women in the public sector, significantly increasing women's representation.
- **United States:** Studies within law enforcement agencies have shown that mixed gender teams often demonstrate superior performance.

#### Recommendations:

- **Conduct a gender audit of the recruitment process and selection criteria** to assess the impact of current criteria on gender diversity, identify existing barriers that prevent women from accessing operational functions, and design and implement corrective measures based on the findings of this study.
- **Implement gender quotas in recruitment and promotion** by establishing a minimum percentage of women in operational and management positions. Several countries have implemented gender quotas in security and defense structures as temporary positive measures to increase the number of women. Introducing gender quotas does not cancel the principle of competitiveness and performance. Gender quotas are constantly reviewed and modified, depending on the progress made.
- **Review and update internal policies and practices** to ensure their alignment with international standards and national legislation. Internal policies should include additional measures and good practices in recruitment, selection and employment of staff, so that they provide fair opportunities for integration into the system.
- **Implement mentoring and professional development programmes at the institutional level.** These aim to support women in their roles and career advancement. An additional tool could be the creation of

support networks for women in the SPPS and providing leadership and skills training opportunities. Canada provides an example of this: the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) offers mentoring programmes for women to help them advance in their careers.

- **Hold training sessions on gender equality and inclusion for all staff**, including human resources managers directly involved in the recruitment and hiring processes. This will help foster a more inclusive organizational culture.
- **Implement special measures for recruiting women in specific fields**, such as developing targeted campaigns for areas where women are underrepresented, such as surveillance and electronic security, and offering training programmes to develop the necessary skills.

### 4.3. Job promotions and vertical segregation

**Within the SPPS, promotion in positions is carried out based on a meritocratic evaluation system**, which considers competencies, performance and leadership skills. Performance evaluation is conducted based on objective and transparent criteria, including performance in physical, theoretical training, shooting, foreign languages, and other areas. Women can access leadership positions in protection and security missions if they meet the required experience and training. Experience is gained through delegation in various missions with varying degrees of risk, but it is unclear to what extent the institution ensures equal access to these opportunities. According to the SPPS, women's access to promotion opportunities is based on need and demand, especially depending on the gender of the protected persons. This conditionality may limit opportunities for women.

#### References in international standards:

- **CEDAW**: Article 7 requires State Parties to take measures to ensure the participation of women in decision-making and at leadership levels.
- **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**: SDG Goal 5, Target 5.5, aims to ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities in leadership positions.
- **EU**: Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on equal opportunities and equal treatment between men and women in matters of employment underlines the importance of non-discriminatory promotion criteria and assessments based on objective criteria relevant to the job in question.

#### International positive practices:

- **Canada**: The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) ensures transparency in its promotion process and highlights the successes of female leaders within the organization.

**At the institutional level, specific affirmative measures are being implemented to promote women;** however, they require further development to be effective. Within the SPPS, coaching and mentoring programmes have been implemented to support women in accessing management positions. These aim to help employees in the early stages of their careers, developing their leadership skills. Women in operational positions also benefit from professional development programmes, including training, workshops, and courses to develop leadership skills. Additionally, protection officers are encouraged to participate in training programmes offered by the Institute of Public Administration, where management skills are developed. At the same time, employees can access visible and strategic operational projects or roles that allow them to demonstrate their skills and promote them in positions. Although certain institutional measures are implemented to encourage women in decision-making positions, they are not formalized or carried out systematically. There are no formal mentoring mechanisms or other positive measures to support women in career advancement at the institutional level.

#### References in international standards:

- **CEDAW:** In General Recommendation No. 25, the CEDAW Committee encourages State Parties to adopt temporary special measures (including affirmative action) to accelerate de facto equality between men and women.

#### International positive practices:

- **United Kingdom:** The Metropolitan Police offers mentoring programmes for women, designed to support them in their career advancement.

**Regarding the SPPS's internal policies, it is necessary to strengthen the institution's processes and interventions to ensure gender equality.** The institution has revised promotion criteria to eliminate requirements that could unduly favor men, implemented flexible working arrangements, and introduced competency-based and performance-based evaluation processes. These measures are aligned with international recommendations for preventing indirect discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities. However, the institution does not formally monitor these measures' impact, collect disaggregated data to estimate existing discrepancies, or implement formal mentoring mechanisms. The SPPS has also not conducted a gender audit of internal processes, which may mean that certain barriers or discriminatory practices remain unidentified. An audit could confirm the level of equity in this regard or identify areas for improvement.

#### References in international standards:

- **EU:** Directive 2006/54/EC prohibits indirect discrimination and calls for measures to prevent such practices.
- **The Council of Europe:** The Council recommends monitoring and reporting gender-disaggregated data to identify potential inequalities.

#### International positive practices:

- **Sweden:** Public institutions periodically conduct gender audits to identify and eliminate inequalities.

#### Recommendations:

- **Conduct a gender audit in the promotion process** to identify potential barriers that prevent women from equal access to leadership positions. This process requires systematic collection and analysis of statistical data on gender-based promotion to identify potential inequalities.
- **Implement formal mentoring programmes for women** who want to advance in their careers. This mechanism should be institutionalized through internal policies to ensure access and consistency.
- **Organize regular employee training programmes** on gender equality, human rights, inclusion, harassment prevention, etc. Include these trainings as an integral part of mandatory professional development programmes.
- **Implement flexible work arrangements**, allowing employees to balance professional and family responsibilities. Ensure equal access to flexible working arrangements for women and men.
- **Review internal policies to align them with international provisions** and best practices in gender equality. Involve employees in the review process to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of the measures.

## 4.4. Working hours

**The SPSS allows adjustments to working hours, but there is a significant gap between its current practices and international standards in the field.** According to the institution, it may change the start and end time of service among female employees with family responsibilities, but such adjustments are only permitted if the time is offset by reducing the duration of the lunch break. The institution does not offer part-time or reduced-time work options, only flexibility for specific hours. The work schedule for operational functions is fixed, according to the plan and calendar of events. The rigidity of this schedule, the lack of part-time work options, or other forms of flexibility can represent a barrier for employees with young children, affecting their ability to balance family and professional responsibilities. At the same time, limiting the adjustment of the schedule to the lunch break provides insufficient flexibility, which may not meet the real needs of employees. Data on the use of flexible arrangements also confirm this.

Over the past three years, only two people within the SPSS have benefited from flexible working hours, which suggests that this option is not widely promoted or accessible. The lack of data disaggregated by gender and job position prevents a detailed analysis of the degree of use and impact on different categories of staff. The lack of policies that facilitate flexibility without disadvantaging female employees can lead to indirect discrimination.

**Certain support measures for women are being implemented at the institutional level, but they need to be strengthened.** Women working extended shifts have a 24-hour break the following day and a day for professional development, and women in protection are involved in daytime missions and less so on weekends or at night. Ensuring a rest period after extended shifts is in line with international working time standards. However, if not adequately managed, limiting women's involvement in night or weekend missions may generate certain inequities or indirect discrimination.

Women involved in high-risk missions can benefit, upon request, from a more flexible schedule for family matters. However, these measures are not formalized in the institution's internal policies, preventing their consistent application. Pregnant women and those with young children benefit from some flexible time for mandatory medical examinations. Furthermore, pregnant women are not involved in protection missions, but in administrative work to avoid overload. There are no additional mechanisms to respond to the special needs of employees with family or medical responsibilities. Part-time work options or other forms of flexibility that could better support employees with family responsibilities have not been implemented within the institution. To prevent indirect discrimination against women who request adjustments to the work schedule, the institution resorts to delegating tasks through rotation and involving everyone, according to a schedule established and agreed upon with employees in advance. Women involved in operational missions are replaced during demanding periods in order to benefit from rest time.

### References in international standards:

- **EU:** Directive 2019/1158/EU on work-life balance for parents and carers establishes the right of workers to request flexible working arrangements, such as flextime, remote work or part-time work.
- **The Council of Europe:** Directive 2003/88/EC concerning certain aspects of the organization of working time provides for minimum daily and weekly rest periods and limits working hours to protect the health and safety of workers.
- **ILO:** Convention No. 156 concerning workers with family responsibilities (1981) encourages member states to formulate and implement employment policies that support employees with family responsibilities. Convention No. 183 on Maternity Protection (2000) provides special protection for pregnant women and the right to paid maternity leave.

#### International positive practices:

- **Finland:** Labour law allows employees to adjust their work schedules to care for children under 10, and employers are required to grant these adjustments unless there are good reasons for refusal.
- **Germany:** The law on part-time work and fixed-term employment contracts allows employees to temporarily reduce their working hours to care for children or relatives.
- **Sweden:** Parents have the legal right to reduce their working hours by up to 25% until their child turns eight or finishes the first year of school.

#### Recommendations:

- **Develop and implement a formal, flexible working policy**, including options such as part-time work, flexible working hours, and other work arrangements tailored to employees' needs.
- **Train managers and senior staff in the fair management** of flexible working requests and promoting an inclusive organizational culture.
- **Conduct a periodic internal assessment to identify employee needs** and assess the effectiveness of existing policies and practices. Align these with international standards and good practices by consulting with experts and organizations specializing in labour and gender equality.
- **Conduct periodic monitoring and reporting of data** on flexible work arrangements, their impact on performance and retention, and general progress in achieving work-life balance goals.
- **Explore the possibility of providing additional facilities**, such as childcare services or subsidies for employees with family responsibilities.
- **Review the work schedule for operational functions within the SPPS** to identify ways to introduce flexibility without compromising operational efficiency.

### 4.5. Family responsibilities

**Within the SPPS, work-life balance is supported through flexible schedules, negotiations, and opportunities for compensation.** Working hours are adjusted to the needs and requirements of each woman and her family situation, applying the principle of compensation. Individual negotiations and schedule flexibility are beneficial and can help employees balance their responsibilities. Still, institutions need to have a formal, internally approved framework that ensures fairness and transparency in implementation. At the same time, an approach based on individual negotiations can lead to inequalities and inconsistencies in the application of policies, in the absence of clear internal regulations.

#### References in international standards:

- **ILO:** Convention No. 156 concerning workers with family responsibilities (1981) calls on member states to formulate and implement policies that help employees to balance work and family life, without facing workplace discrimination.

#### International positive practices:

- **Sweden:** Employees have the legal right to reduce their working hours to care for a child under age eight or until the completion of the first year of school. Employers must grant these requests unless they can demonstrate that it would cause significant hardship.
- **Germany:** The law allows employees with children under 18 to request flexible or part-time work schedules, and employers must consider these requests.

**There are minimal support measures for employees with childcare responsibilities.** The institution ensures equal access to childcare leave for all officers, which aligns with international standards and the principle of gender equality. Upon requesting the required working hours, women can benefit from additional parental leave or adjustments to their work schedules. While these are beneficial measures, the reliance on individual requests can lead to inequalities if there are no clear and transparent policies. Although SPPS encourages these requests, its lack of formalized policies makes it difficult to understand how the institution prevents discrimination or disadvantage in evaluations, promotions, or other opportunities due to absence or adjusted schedules.

**For employees taking parental leave,** the institution ensures that they retain their position until they leave and after their return. The institution also regularly organizes training courses to facilitate easy reintegration into regular activities, readaptation to job requirements, and updating skills. Other additional measures to reduce the transition or to compensate for any loss of professional development opportunities during the absence are not mentioned. **Although the SPPS encourages women to return to work after maternity/parental leave,** the infrastructure is not entirely adapted to the needs of parents. At the institutional level, there are no childcare facilities at the workplace, which may represent career barriers for employees with young children. Providing these facilities could improve employee retention and satisfaction.

#### References in international standards:

- **EU:** Directive 2019/1158/EU on work-life balance for parents and carers provides for the individual right of parents to at least four months of parental leave, of which two months are non-transferable between parents. It also guarantees the right to flexible working arrangements to support employees in balancing responsibilities.
- **ILO:** Convention No. 183 on Maternity Protection (2000) provides for the protection of pregnant women and mothers, including maternity leave and protection against discrimination.

#### International positive practices:

- **Norway:** Parental leave is divided equally between mothers and fathers, with periods reserved exclusively for each parent to encourage fathers' participation.
- **Netherlands:** Employers offer personalized reintegration programmes, which may include mentoring, coaching and specific training.
- **Germany:** Employers are encouraged to offer reintegration and skills upgrading programmes for employees returning from parental leave.
- **France:** Many public institutions and companies offer workplace daycare or partnerships with daycare centers, subsidizing the costs for employees. Employers can offer vouchers for childcare, benefiting from tax deductions.
- **Canada:** The government provides childcare support in the workplaces of certain federal departments and agencies.

**Certain positive practices within the institution could boost employee retention and performance,** but they are limited. The SPPS conducts long-term employee performance reviews, not just over recent periods, to prevent women on maternity/care leave from being disadvantaged in promotions and professional opportunities. Mentoring programmes are organized within the institution to support women in managing family responsibilities and career advancement, providing guidance and support. Additionally, information sessions are organized for protection officers on their rights to ensure they benefit from existing internal policies and practices.

Financial incentives are minimal and only provided to cover rent costs. This support may be insufficient to cover the needs of employees with family responsibilities, especially in the case of high-risk assignments involving travel or prolonged absences. Overall, there is no assessment of the needs of staff with family responsibilities at the institutional level, increasing the risk that the SPPS's measures may not be sufficient or fully meet their needs.

#### References in international standards:

- **EU:** Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on equal treatment between men and women in employment prohibits discrimination based on maternity and stipulates that employment-related rights must be maintained during maternity leave.

#### International positive practices:

- **United Kingdom:** Women on maternity leave have the right to be informed about promotion and training opportunities, and their performance evaluations must take into account the period of absence.
- **United States:** Many federal agencies have specific mentoring programmes for women, including those with family responsibilities, to help them balance their careers and personal lives.
- **European Union:** Public institutions organize information sessions on work-life balance, parental leave rights and other relevant policies.
- **Australia:** The Defense Forces provide financial and logistical support for employees with family responsibilities, including childcare subsidies and family assistance programmes.
- **Finland:** Public institutions conduct periodic work-life balance audits to improve internal policies.

#### Recommendations:

- **Formalize policies regarding family responsibilities**, detailing the rights and options available, including procedures for requesting schedule adjustments, additional leave, and other support measures.
- **Provide childcare facilities** by assessing the feasibility of establishing workplace childcare centers or partnerships with existing centers to support employees with young children.
- **Develop structured programmes for employees** returning from maternity or parental leave, incorporating professional training and skills enhancement.
- **Establish clear criteria and standardized procedures** for approving requests for schedule adjustments or additional leave, ensuring fairness and transparency.
- **Institutionalize financial support practices and additional logistics**, including childcare subsidies, transportation costs, or other financial support for employees with family responsibilities.
- **Conduct an audit of the needs of employees with family responsibilities** to identify their specific needs by collecting data and feedback, and develop appropriate policies and measures.
- **Establish key performance indicators (KPI)** to assess the impact of measures on employee retention, performance and satisfaction.

## 4.6. Infrastructure

**The SPPS has taken steps to create separate and appropriate facilities for women.** The offices are equipped with modern sanitary infrastructure (separate showers and changing rooms), addressing the specific needs of female employees, aligning with international hygiene standards. Adjustments were also made to the infrastructure of offices and command centers to ensure equal access to sanitary and hygiene facilities for women and men, which also meets the practical needs of female employees on extended missions or in risky conditions. Changing rooms, makeshift kitchens and bathrooms have also been built in offices. According to the institution, updating the office infrastructure was designed in collaboration with women, considering their special needs. However, none of the offices have been updated to meet the needs of women with small children.

### References in international standards:

- **CEDAW:** Article 11 requires State Parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment, including by ensuring just and favorable conditions of work.
- **ILO:** Convention No. 155 on Occupational Safety and Health recommends adequate sanitary and hygienic conditions for all workers.
- **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:** SDG Goal 5 promotes the full and effective participation of women in all areas, including in decision-making processes.

### International positive practices:

- **Sweden:** Employees of the Swedish Armed Forces have implemented infrastructure modernization programmes to create appropriate facilities for women, including separate changing rooms and showers, thus ensuring an inclusive work environment.
- **Canada:** The Royal Canadian Mounted Police has upgraded facilities to include separate locker rooms and showers for women as part of a commitment to promote gender equality and attract more women to law enforcement.
- **United Kingdom:** The Ministry of Defense has reviewed the infrastructure of military bases to ensure that facilities are accessible and appropriate for both men and women, including in areas of operations.
- **Germany:** The federal police have created mobile and flexible spaces for employees on extended missions, including gender-appropriate rest and hygiene facilities.
- **Netherlands:** In public institutions, employees are consulted on all major infrastructure changes to ensure staff inclusion and satisfaction.

**Although hygiene and accommodation facilities for night shifts or extended missions have been improved, women's participation in these functions is not institutionally encouraged.** All shift offices have specially arranged places for storing lunch, bathrooms and changing rooms. However, women do not participate in late-night operational missions, only daytime ones. Limiting the participation of women in night missions may indicate gender segregation and restrict their professional opportunities. At the same time, according to the institution, safety measures are equitably ensured in protection missions, but only men are involved in the most dangerous missions. Excluding women from dangerous missions can be considered discriminatory and may limit their professional opportunities.

#### References in international standards:

- **EU:** Directive 2006/54/EC prohibits discrimination based on sex in terms of working conditions, including assignment of tasks and opportunities for training and promotion.

#### International positive practices:

- **Spain:** Security forces ensure equal participation of women in all types of missions, providing adequate facilities for night shifts and extended missions.
- **Israel:** The Israeli Defense Forces allow women to participate in all types of missions, including high-risk ones, by providing the necessary training and equipment.

**The SPPS provides access to protective equipment and uniforms adapted for women.** Female employees have access to adapted protective equipment. In protection missions, women wear classic suits adapted to individual physical parameters, and for tactical activities, suits and equipment are provided that offer practicality and endurance. Personal protective equipment is essential for employee safety. Adapting equipment and uniforms to the specific needs of women not only ensures comfort but also efficiency in performing tasks.

#### References in international standards:

- **International Organization for Standardization (ISO):** In its standards regarding protective equipment, the ISO recommends that they be adapted to the sizes and body shapes of users, regardless of gender.
- **United Nations Police Gender Toolkit:** The toolkit stipulates that uniforms and equipment must be adapted to the different needs of women and men.

#### International positive practices:

- **United States:** The Department of Defense has introduced uniforms and protective gear in different sizes and cuts to better fit women in the military.
- **Croatia:** The Ministry of Interior consulted female officers in the process of designing uniforms, thus ensuring uniforms are physically adapted for women.

#### Recommendations:

- **Adjust the SPPS's infrastructure to meet the needs of pregnant or breastfeeding women.** This could include ergonomic furniture and rest areas to provide comfort and safety for pregnant women.
- **Remove restrictions that prevent women from participating in high-risk missions.** Provide them with the necessary training and equipment for balanced participation in missions with different degrees of risk. Through internal policies, ensure that the mission selection process is based on skills and availability, not gender criteria.
- **Design special areas for rest and recovery** and make them available to all employees involved in extended missions.
- **Conduct periodic audits to identify emerging needs** and evaluate the effectiveness of implemented measures.



Photo credit: UN Women/Aurel Obreja

## Customs Service

### 5.1. Physical requirements

The activity of the Customs Service is regulated by Law No. 302/2017 on the Customs Service. Still, this legislative framework does not provide for gender-differentiated physical requirements, which suggests a neutral policy within the institution from this perspective. Employee evaluation is usually carried out based on professional performance; however, this does not exclude the need to assess whether the physical requirements for specific positions are relevant for their exercise. Given that the SPPS's policies do not provide support measures for any gender, it is crucial to monitor whether this approach generates indirect barriers for women. At the same time, it is welcome that sports Spartakiads are organized annually with the participation of all employees, thus promoting physical activity and strengthening teamwork.

#### References in international standards:

- **ILO:** Convention No. 111 on Discrimination prohibits any form of discrimination in employment and calls for the promotion of equal opportunities and treatment between women and men.
- **EU:** Directive 2006/54/EC prohibits direct and indirect discrimination based on sex, including in selection and promotion criteria.

#### International positive practices:

- **Australia:** The Australian Customs Service has reviewed the physical requirements to align them with the actual demands of the positions, ensuring they are relevant and do not create barriers for women.
- **United Kingdom:** HM Revenue & Customs has reviewed the physical requirements to ensure they are directly related to the specific duties of the job and do not create unnecessary barriers.
- **United States:** Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has implemented physical training programmes that take into account biological differences and ensure that physical requirements are relevant and non-discriminatory.
- **Canada:** It provides mentoring and support programmes for women in the customs service, including in preparation for roles that require specific physical skills.

**The institution provides customs officers with special uniforms and control equipment for work at customs posts.** Although uniforms and special equipment are indispensable for the field of activity, there is no evidence that this equipment is adapted to the specific needs of women (e.g., sizes) or that adapted equipment can improve the comfort and efficiency of female employees. On the other hand, customs officers are provided with uniforms of various sizes, which can be adapted according to body parameters.

#### International positive practices:

- **Canada:** The Border Services Agency offers uniforms and protective equipment adapted for women, ensuring comfort and functionality.

#### Recommendations:

- **Review physical requirements for relevance and fairness** to ensure that they are directly related to the specific tasks of the jobs and do not create undue barriers for women, especially in the promotion process. This can be done by analyzing the jobs to identify the actual physical demands and eliminating or adjusting non-essential requirements.
- **Implement adapted physical training programmes** for employees involved in operational tasks by developing training programmes that improve the necessary physical skills for all, thus ensuring equal access to sports facilities and equipment.
- **Provide equipment and uniforms** adapted to the female body. This should be done by consulting with employees to identify specific needs, ensuring that uniforms and equipment are procured in appropriate sizes and parameters.
- **Adapt requirements for pregnant women or women in medical recovery.** It is necessary to protect the health of pregnant women and those in medical recovery by adapting the physical demands and work tasks through specific policies. Additionally, employees must be offered alternative work schedules/conditions without affecting their careers.
- **Collect and analyze feedback from employees.** To promote an inclusive work environment, ensure that internal regulations targeting employees respond to the needs of women by involving them in the development process, especially in assessing and adapting physical requirements and personnel policies. It is therefore recommended to organize surveys and meetings to collect opinions and suggestions, and the conclusions of this process should be integrated into the decision-making process.
- **Conduct training and awareness-raising activities among managerial staff.** Within the institution, it is recommended that managers be empowered and sensitized to the importance of gender equality and inclusion by organizing training on non-discrimination and diversity and promoting an inclusive organizational culture.

## 5.2. Recruitment and admission

**Employees are recruited and promoted according to the provisions of the national legal framework in force.**

There are no gender differences in the recruitment and promotion process within the institution, and women are recruited/promoted to positions without any discriminatory obstacles imposed on them in the process. However, there is no evidence that specific adjustments have been made to eliminate the barriers that may indirectly affect women. Reviewing the recruitment criteria to identify and eliminate any potential barriers, such as irrelevant physical requirements or inflexible work schedules, is important.

#### References in international standards:

- **ILO:** Convention No. 111 on Discrimination calls for the prevention of direct discrimination and the promotion of equal opportunities through proactive measures.
- **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:** SDG 5 encourages women's empowerment and calls for increasing women's participation in all areas.
- **EU:** Directive 2006/54/EC prohibits indirect discrimination and encourages the adjustment of criteria that may disadvantage a particular gender.

#### International positive practices:

- **Canada:** The Border Services Agency has implemented targeted recruitment programmes for women, including promotion campaigns and participation in career events aimed at women.
- **Australia:** The Australian Customs Service reviewed recruitment requirements to remove physical or experience requirements that were not essential to the positions and could disadvantage women.

**Transparency and fairness are ensured in the selection process by placing job notices on the institution's official website.** All information regarding the competition is made public. The winners are selected based on the results recorded, without gender difference. To promote women in institutions, the Customs Service periodically carries out reports promoting women in operational positions, which aims to inspire other women to pursue a career in the Customs Service. On the other hand, there is no evidence of specific measures/provisions within the institution to ensure fair representation of all employees (of both sexes) in selection and promotion committees.

#### International positive practices:

- **Sweden:** As part of its commitment to gender equality, the government ensures gender-balanced representation in public sector selection committees.

**Within the Customs Service, mentoring programmes are only provided for junior civil servants.** This excludes employees who wish to advance in their careers or occupy operational and management positions. In particular, this limitation may affect female employees, as they most often stated the need for such support. No other specific support measures were identified for employees of the institution who wish to advance in their careers or access another position.

#### International positive practices:

- **United States of America:** Customs and Border Protection offers specific mentoring programmes for women to support their career development and leadership roles.
- **United Kingdom:** The Revenue & Customs promotes gender equality through transparent recruitment policies, mentoring programmes, and support for employees with family responsibilities, including flexible working options.

### Recommendations:

- **Develop and implement a formal gender equality policy.** It is recommended that a formal policy promote gender equality and non-discrimination in all recruitment and promotion processes, in accordance with international standards. This policy should include clear objectives and specific measures for promoting women in all positions.
- **Review recruitment criteria and processes** to ensure they are relevant, non-discriminatory and based on the competencies required for specific positions. Any requirements that are not essential for the position or may indirectly disadvantage women should be eliminated.
- **Implement proactive recruitment programmes.** Specific campaigns and programmes should be developed to attract women to careers in the Customs Service, especially in operational and management positions. Recruitment events dedicated to women should be organized, and collaboration with educational institutions and organizations that promote gender equality should be facilitated.
- **Conduct training and awareness-raising activities on gender equality among human resources staff.** Capacity-building activities should be carried out so that staff involved in recruitment are aware of the importance of gender equality and prepared to manage the process without prejudice. Trainings on gender discrimination and unconscious bias should be organized, along with standardized competency-based assessment procedures that integrate the principles of inclusion and non-discrimination.
- **Promote women to leadership positions.** Opportunities and programmes to support women in advancing to leadership positions should be implemented, including specific mentoring and professional development programmes. Likewise, the institution should set specific goals to increase the number of women in leadership positions.
- **Ensure balanced gender representation in selection committees** by actively involving women in recruitment and selection committees to promote diversity and reduce prejudice. This should be regulated by a policy that ensures the presence of women in competition committees, and additionally, includes the obligation to train committee members on gender equality and non-discrimination.
- **Develop policies and programmes to support employees with family responsibilities** and facilitate work-life balance. Where possible, flexible working hours and teleworking options for jobs should be introduced, as well as childcare facilities or subsidies.
- **Monitor and evaluate progress in recruiting and promoting women** to assess the effectiveness of the implemented measures. Gender-disaggregated data on recruitment, promotion, and retention in the system must be collected and analyzed. The periodic publication of monitoring and evaluation reports is also encouraged, and internal policies must be adjusted based on their conclusions.

### 5.3. Job promotions and vertical segregation

#### **Professional performance evaluations are used to carry out job promotions within the Customs Service.**

The transparency of this process is ensured by placing the job notice on the institution's official website, which is public information. The winners are designated based on the results recorded, without differentiating based on gender. Representatives of the Customs Service state that the promotion is based on professional performance, which follows non-discrimination standards. However, it is unclear whether the institution reviews and adjusts the promotion criteria to eliminate indirect barriers that could affect women.

#### **References in international standards:**

- **ILO:** Convention No. 111 on Discrimination calls for the prevention of direct discrimination and the promotion of equal opportunities through proactive measures.

- **EU:** Directive 2006/54/EC encourages the adjustment of promotion criteria to eliminate indirect discrimination and ensure equal opportunities.
- **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:** SDG Goal 5 aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

**The promotion rate of women in management positions compared to men within the Customs Service is 33%.** A promotion rate of 33% indicates a sub-optimal representation of women in leadership positions. Various professional development activities in managerial and leadership skills are organized within the institution by national and international partners. Although women benefit from the same professional development opportunities as men, regardless of their position, the low promotion rate of women in leadership positions suggests a detailed analysis is needed to identify the causes of this discrepancy and implement corrective measures.

#### International positive practices:

- **Australia:** The Australian Customs Service has set targets to increase the representation of women in operational and leadership roles, reviews recruitment processes to remove barriers, and provides professional development programmes for women.
- **Canada:** The Border Services Agency has implemented mentoring and professional development programmes dedicated to women, thus facilitating their advancement into leadership positions.

#### Recommendations:

- **Implement affirmative measures**, such as setting minimum quotas for the representation of women in management positions and developing specific training programmes for women.
- **Approve specific measures to eliminate potential barriers** to promotions among underrepresented groups within the institution. These decisions should be approved through a consultative process with employees so that everyone can express their opinions on the proposed measures and become aware of the need to apply them.
- **Conduct specific mentoring and professional development programmes among staff**, with the goal of helping women advance to leadership positions.
- **Conduct a gender audit in the promotion process** by systematically evaluating promotion processes to identify and eliminate any forms of gender discrimination. This measure can be carried out by hiring external experts for the gender audit.

## 5.4. Working hours

**The Customs Service offers significant support to employees with family responsibilities**, including paternity leave for men and flexible work schedules for both genders. Employees are encouraged to take paternity leave at work, which is offered upon request. Social leave is generally provided equally to all employees in the institution's subdivisions. However, although it is stated that family responsibilities are not a career impediment, specific measures to support flexible work (especially among women) are not detailed.

#### References in international standards:

- **ILO:** Convention No. 156 on Workers with Family Responsibilities requires states to support employees with family responsibilities through appropriate policies, such as flexible work schedules, parental leave, and childcare facilities.
- **EU:** Directive 2019/1158/EU on work-life balance for parents and carers promotes measures to facilitate the participation of people with family responsibilities in the labour market and to ensure a balance between professional and personal life.
- **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:** SDG 5 aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, including by ensuring an adequate work-life balance.

**Both women and men in the Customs Service who have young children benefit, upon request, from flexible work schedules.** Over the past years, 153 employees benefited from flexible work programmes, of which 111 were women and 42 were men. The significantly higher number of women requesting such arrangements indicates the need to implement more measures to support female employees with family responsibilities. This disparity highlights the gendered division of family responsibilities and its impact on women's lives and careers.

#### International positive practices:

- **Canada:** The Border Services Agency has implemented flexible work and mentoring programmes dedicated to women, thus facilitating work-life balance and promoting women's career advancement.
- **Sweden:** The government has robust and generous flexible work and parental leave policies that encourage both parents to actively participate in raising children, thus reducing pressures on female employees.

#### Recommendations:

- **Expand flexible work schedules** by permanently introducing teleworking and flexible work options, not just for specific situations. Thus, it is recommended that clear policies be developed that stipulate employees' rights to flexible work and the procedures for requesting it, therefore ensuring access to flexible work programmes for all employees, with a special focus on the needs of women with family responsibilities.
- **Create childcare facilities** on the Customs Service premises or through partnerships with childcare centres. As a first step, identify available spaces and collaborate with local childcare providers. Implement pilot programmes to assess the effectiveness and demand for such facilities.
- **Establish transparent mechanisms to monitor** the use of flexible work schedules and assess their impact on employee performance and retention. Collect and analyze gender-disaggregated data on the beneficiaries of flexible work programmes, periodically publish progress reports, and adjust policies based on the results obtained.
- **Actively promote work-life balance** by developing initiatives to encourage flexible work schedules and promote an organizational culture that supports work-life balance. This can be achieved by organizing workshops and information sessions about the benefits of flexible work. Also, employees who effectively use flexible work schedules to promote work-life balance can be presented as positive examples for the team and even rewarded in a non-monetary form.

## 5.5. Family responsibilities

**The Customs Service offers basic measures to support women with family responsibilities, such as temporarily reassigning positions and suspending employment relationships during maternity or parental leave.**

Per the Labour Code, women on maternity leave may work up to 36 weeks of pregnancy, upon presenting a medical certificate. If a pregnant woman holds a position at a border customs post and wishes to work, she is assigned to a customs post with less intense activity and closer to home, thus facilitating her work for this period. Upon request, their service relationships are mandatorily suspended after being granted childcare leave, and they are subsequently reinstated in their position without any impediment or discrimination.

### References in international standards:

- **ILO:** Convention No. 156 on Workers with Family Responsibilities requires states to support employees with family responsibilities through appropriate policies, such as flexible work schedules, parental leave, and childcare facilities.
- **EU:** Directive 2019/1158/EU on work-life balance for parents and carers promotes measures to facilitate the participation of people with family responsibilities in the labour market and ensure work-life balance.
- **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:** SDG Goal 5 aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, including by ensuring an adequate work-life balance.

### International positive practices:

- **Germany:** The government offers various flexible work options, including teleworking, part-time schedules and on-site childcare facilities, thus supporting employees with family responsibilities.
- **United Kingdom:** The Revenue & Customs promotes gender equality through transparent recruitment policies, mentoring programmes, and support for employees with family responsibilities (e.g., flexible working options and childcare facilities).

**Customs Service employees with young children can request flexible work schedules.** However, it is unclear if the institution has evaluated the impact of work schedules on performance. Performance evaluation criteria must be assessed to ensure it does not indirectly discriminate against employees with flexible work schedules or other arrangements (i.e., maternity, paternity, care leave, etc.).

In general, monitoring the impact of support measures is crucial to assess their effectiveness and identify any necessary improvements. Without a monitoring system, it is difficult to determine how well the implemented measures respond to employees' needs and adjust policies accordingly. Such procedures ensure employees have decent working conditions and high job satisfaction.

### Recommendations:

- **Implement support programmes for employees returning from maternity and care leave to facilitate their faster reintegration into the workplace.** When the person is absent for an extended period, it is more difficult to reintegrate into the workplace. Reintegration support programmes are essential, especially mentoring and/or information sessions on the institution's latest policies or activities.
- **Conduct periodic gender audits** to evaluate the policies and measures implemented to ensure that they meet the needs of women with family responsibilities and do not create gender barriers.
- **Develop specific programmes for women in leadership positions** with family responsibilities. Such programmes should include coaching sessions and leadership trainings for women with family responsibilities. Resources and logistical support can also be provided to facilitate career advancement for these women.

## 5.6. Infrastructure

**The Customs Service has implemented basic infrastructural measures to ensure adequate conditions for its male and female employees.** Within the institutions, sanitary rooms are separate, with clear signage, and equipped with diaper changing areas for employees with small children. These rooms also have functional locks to ensure a higher level of safety. Unfortunately, the Customs Service does not provide workplace childcare facilities at customs posts, citing the lack of logistical, financial and human resources. Shift change areas are equipped with comfortable chairs, and breaks are provided.

**The infrastructure of the Customs Service institutions has several elements that ensure a degree of security for the institution's employees.** To ensure safety during night shifts, all customs posts are well lit. Also, for customs officials working during night shifts, safe and well-lit access routes are provided for checkpoints, rest areas and parking lots. Video surveillance cameras are installed throughout the post's perimeter to increase security and safety, and parking spaces are available on the property for quick and safe access. These infrastructural adjustments comply with international standards on workplace safety. Ensuring well-lit access and installing surveillance cameras are measures to protect women working in risky conditions or during night shifts.

### International positive practices:

- **Creating childcare spaces at work.** In certain customs administrations or public institutions in EU countries or other countries (e.g. Canada and Australia), nurseries or childcare spaces are offered, ensuring a better balance between professional and private life. This practice reduces absenteeism, increases job satisfaction, and supports parents' rapid return to work after maternity/paternity leave.
- **High standard of sanitary facilities.** Institutions in Nordic countries (e.g., Norway and Sweden) emphasize accessibility and comfort, offering sanitary facilities that include nursing rooms, changing tables, secure lockers, and washing and drying areas. There are also clear maintenance and sanitation procedures for a safe and healthy working environment.
- **Increased security for night shifts.** Installing complex lighting and video surveillance systems throughout the perimeter, as well as ensuring secure access routes, is a practice adopted by most customs administrations and border police in EU member states and other countries such as the U.S. and Japan. In some cases, employers provide, additional panic equipment (e.g., alarm buttons, portable devices) for staff working at night or in high-risk areas.
- **Regular training on gender equality and workplace safety.** In France, Germany and the Netherlands, public institutions organize training sessions to prevent sexual harassment and discrimination and also encourage prompt reporting of any incidents, as well as the rapid application of disciplinary policies. Trainings are also organized on the use of surveillance systems, emergency response and conflict management.
- **Promoting access to health services and counseling.** Some countries (e.g., New Zealand and United Kingdom) provide public employees with access to specialized counselors, psychologists or social workers, especially those with demanding work conditions. Access to healthcare services is also facilitated, including periodic medical examinations and reproductive health awareness campaigns.

### Recommendations:

- **Create childcare facilities for the institution's employees.** This can be achieved by identifying available spaces at customs posts and collaborating with local childcare providers, especially for employees who work shifts or are single parents.
- **Organize sports and physical training facilities** for women working at border crossing points by creating dedicated areas for sports activities within customs points.
- **Consult female employees in the infrastructure process.** It is recommended that an analysis of the infrastructure of border crossing points be carried out to identify the specific needs of employed women. This process must be organized through consultation and feedback sessions with employed women.

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**UN WOMEN MOLDOVA**

18, Maria Cebotari Str., 3rd Floor  
Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

[moldova.unwomen.org](http://moldova.unwomen.org) 

[info.md@unwomen.org](mailto:info.md@unwomen.org) 

[@unwomenmoldova](https://twitter.com/unwomenmoldova) 

[unwomenmoldova](https://www.facebook.com/unwomenmoldova) 



**UN WOMEN MOLDOVA**

18, Maria Cebotari Str., 3rd Floor  
Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

[moldova.unwomen.org](http://moldova.unwomen.org) 

[info.md@unwomen.org](mailto:info.md@unwomen.org) 

[@unwomenmoldova](https://twitter.com/unwomenmoldova) 

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