



Concept Note: Capacity building workshop on mainstreaming gender into the security sector oversight in Poland

1-2 July 2025
Hotel Verte Warsaw, Poland

Background and rationale

The OSCE promotes a security sector that provides security to the State and its people in an accountable and effective way, within a framework of democratic civilian control, rule of law, respect for human rights, and the promotion of gender equality.¹ The 1994 OSCE *'Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security'* provides that “the democratic political control of military, paramilitary and internal security forces as well as of intelligence services and the police [is] an indispensable element of stability and security”.

To effectively respond to the different needs of women and men, girls and boys, security sector institutions need to integrate a gender perspective in their work. Moreover, only if security sector institutions address discriminatory norms, prejudices and stereotypes within their own organization, they can increase meaningful participation of women in the security sector. The internal dimension of gender mainstreaming in the security sector focuses on the recruitment, retention and promotion of women and under-represented groups as well as conducive environments that are free of harassment and abuse, and working with men in the sector to support gender equality. The external dimension covers gender sensitive operations of security to the people it serves.²

Oversight mechanisms play a key role in holding security sector institutions accountable. They receive and investigate complaints, issue reports and recommendations. Oversight mechanisms vary greatly between countries and depending on institutions. In general, oversight can be divided into internal and external oversight. The former includes the presence of inspectors, auditors and investigators within security sector institutions. External oversight includes relevant ministers, parliament, the judiciary, civil society, as well as ombuds institutions and national human rights institutions (NHRIs).³ The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (WPS Agenda) act as catalysts for the advancement of gender equality in the security sector. WPS National Action Plans offer a supportive framework for a gender-sensitive and human rights-compliant security sector.

NHRIs and other internal and external oversight mechanisms can play an important role in promoting gender equality within security sector institutions. Through their monitoring and advocacy work as well as through their recommendations to improve the functioning of security sector institutions, they can promote transformative change within those institutions. This includes contributing to a more inclusive working environment within security sectors institutions, where every member of staff feels safe, respected and included. In addition, by promoting the inclusion of a gender perspective in security operations, they can play an important role to improve the security of communities, and increase the public's trust in the security sector.

¹ Guidelines https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/2/4/512470_0.pdf

² DCAF/ODIHR/UN Women, 2019, Gender and Security Toolkit – Tool 1: Security Sector Governance, Security Sector Reform and Gender.

³ DCAF / ODIHR, 2014, Integrating Gender into Oversight of the Security Sector by Ombuds Institutions & National Human Rights Institutions, Gender and SSR Guidance Note.

ODIHR's CHANGE ("Capitalizing on the Human Dimension Mandate to Advance Gender Equality") aims to strengthen the individual and collective impact on democratic institutions, policies and social norms to advance gender equality, women's human rights and women's safety. This capacity-building activity will be part of the CHANGE project output 3.2: Security sector representatives supporting gender-sensitive policies and addressing gender-based hate crimes. The two-day capacity-building workshop prepares internal and external oversight bodies of security sector institutions on how to integrate a gender perspective in their monitoring and oversight activities so as to increase their monitoring, reporting and advocacy capacity. The training session will contribute to increased human rights compliance and integration of a gender perspective into the work of oversight institutions, and in turn in the functioning of security sector institutions.

Training Objectives

The training will seek to build the capacity of external and internal oversight bodies⁴ in Poland to integrate a gender perspective into their monitoring, reporting, oversight and advocacy activities related to the security sector.

The increased capacity will contribute to a more human rights compliant and gender-responsive delivery of security.

Specific objectives for the training are to:

- raise awareness on the importance of including a gender perspective in the oversight of security sector's institutions as well as within security sector institutions themselves;
- provide practical guidance on how to incorporate a gender perspective in oversight work;
- understand how gender responsive and gender transformative approaches can be integrated;
- introduce Women, Peace and Security National Action Plans as exercise for monitoring activities;
- provide guidance on individual complaints mechanisms of human rights violations;
- understand how to conduct interviews using a trauma-informed approach.

Training Methodology

The training will be based on a curriculum developed in 2022 for in-person delivery over two days for groups of up to 30 participants from oversight mechanisms. It will be highly interactive and tailored to the needs and concerns of the oversight mechanisms in Poland. The curriculum is victim-centred and rights-based. It involves practical exercises to guide participants into identifying entry points for including a gender perspective in their work and to practice the application of gender-sensitive monitoring within the security sector. As Poland is currently developing its second

⁴ National oversight bodies include, but are not limited to, national human rights institutions (NHRIs), ombudsperson institutions, Parliament's national security and defence committees, and civil society organizations.

Women Peace and Security National Action Plan (WPS NAP), a focus will be on monitoring and overseeing the implementation of WPS NAP commitments. The curriculum will also seek to bring the learning closer to participants' realities by including gender aspects of respective mandates with examples of several security sector institutions.

Target audience for the Training

The training will benefit approximately 20-25 senior to mid-level representatives of oversight mechanisms in Poland. This will include the NHRI, as well as other external and internal oversight mechanisms.

Format of the Training

The training will take place in person in Warsaw during two days, on 1 and 2 July 2025. The working languages of the training are Polish and English and simultaneous interpretations will be provided.

Tuesday, 1 July 2025 (Day 1)	
9:00	Arrival and welcome coffee
09:15	Opening remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights OSCE/ODIHR Keynote: <i>"The Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Poland. Promoting gender equality in the security sector"</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Katarzyna Kotula, Minister for Equality
10:00	Introduction to training
	Session 1: Gender equality – concepts and terminology
	Session 2: Mainstreaming gender in security sector oversight
	Session 3: Frameworks and tools for integrating a gender perspective into oversight (incl. WPS National Action Plans)
16:00	Wrap up and review of Day 1
Wednesday, 2 July 2025 (Day 2)	
9:30	Introduction Day 2: Overview and Objectives
	Session 4: Gender-sensitive monitoring and oversight
	Session 5: A trauma-informed approach to complaint mechanisms
	Session 6: Group exercise on monitoring WPS NAP commitments
16:00	Certificates and Closure Ceremony