

TALKING POINTS

Ambassador Hans Ola Urstad, Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia

International Conference “Women in Army” Central House of Army of Serbia

Belgrade, 5 October 2006

- Acknowledge and address State Secretary of Defence, Zvonko Obradovic, Assistant Minister Markovic-Samardzic
- Welcome representatives of the Army of Serbia, the Ministry of Interior, experts and representatives of academia from Serbia and from abroad, distinguished members of the armed services from various countries participating in the conference. Special Day – 5 October – 6 Years!
- Security concerns affect society and a state as a whole, as well as lives of individuals.
- These issues should not be restricted to a narrow, male dominated circle, as is often the case.
- The notion and concept of security has evolved over time. Focus is now on the right to security, as much as the military aspects. A concept of human security, which is endorsed by the UN and by the OSCE implies that the interest of the individual, is at the center of security concerns and related decision-making.
- UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) stresses the shift from a vision of women as victims of conflicts to a vision of women as actors in conflict resolution, peace-building and peacekeeping on an equal footing with men. This suggests that gender equality and gender issues have a place at an early stage of policy definition and in its implementation, and that this should be reflected in corresponding legislation and practice.
- This new concept of security is helpful for the integration of women in the army.

- Research proves that women, representing over half of the world population, have been particularly affected in armed conflicts. They have the right and should be given the opportunity to influence policies which would prevent these conflicts or resolve them.
- Professional under-representation of women is impeding the creation of a well-functioning and trustworthy security sector, capable of providing an adequate level of security for all citizens. This is particularly important for post-conflict and transition societies.
- The multidimensional concept of security is a foundation of the OSCE. In the OSCE area, it has become increasingly evident that security, democracy, and prosperity are closely linked.
- Including women in the military education system is the first step towards making the full use of their knowledge and expertise in promoting an Army able to face new challenges in an era which requires early threat detection and emphasizes conflict-prevention.
- The first step would lead to the next ones: making women's concerns an integral part of policy making and activity implementation in setting gender equality as a prerequisite for sustainable security and stability.
- I welcome the decision to integrate women students in the Military Academy of the Army of Serbia. We also commend the efforts made so far, within the defense reform process, to appoint women in important positions in the Ministry of Defense and within the officer's corps.
- The enrollment of women students in the Military Academy will no doubt provide a sustainable basis for a long term and positive change in this respect. This will not only enhance the perception and respect of the Army, but the democratic standards of the society as a whole.
- The OSCE Mission remains prepared to continue our promotion of gender equality, by supporting the process of further promotion of gender mainstreaming in the Army. It will be very visible and in this way have a positive effect regarding gender issues in general. The army will no longer be the male bastion that it has been traditionally.
- I wish you productive work during the conference, I am sure the experiences and views shared here would go a long way towards making the armed forces of this country more advanced, more flexible, and better able to contribute to regional and international security.
- Thank you!