



**NORWEGIAN STATEMENT ON WOMEN'S ROLE IN STRENGTHENING DEFENCE
CAPACITIES AND RESILIENCE**

As delivered by Military Adviser Colonel Bjørn Gaute Herlyng at the 1110 Meeting of the
Forum for Security Cooperation,
Vienna, 18 June 2025

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Norway fully aligns with the statement delivered by the European union but allow me to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

First, let me thank our distinguished panelists for their valuable contribution to today's security dialogue on the role of women in strengthening defence and ensuring resilience. Norway fully supports the inclusion of this topic, as a staunch supporter of women's full, equal and meaningful participation in all security related matters.

Madam Chair,

Norway acknowledges the way Ukrainian women have stepped up to defend their country – in support roles and at the frontline, in leadership positions, and in vital technological and intelligence functions. They serve as medics, engineers, drone operators, commanders, and a lot more. Their contribution has been indispensable to Ukraine's remarkable resilience. We commend Ukraine for recognizing the strategic asset that women provide in their national defence and for the efforts to ensure that the organization is adapted to allow women to contribute and to reach their full potential.

Madam Chair,

The defence of Norway has for hundreds of years been based on male conscription, since 1976 with formalized voluntary participation of women. In 2015 conscription in Norway was made universal. This reflects the equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of all citizens and provides a broader recruitment basis for the Armed Forces. Women are willing, able and entitled

to a full, equal and meaningful participation in national defence efforts, be it in the Armed Forces or elsewhere as part of the total defence concept in Norway.

Integrating women in security forces demands heightened attention to identifying and addressing negative gender norms. This applies both at the individual and organizational levels. In the Norwegian Armed Forces, we have gender advisers throughout the organization who continuously review the gendered aspects of formal and informal processes. The inclusion of gender in planning, execution and evaluation of military operations increases operational effectiveness and mitigates the impact of war on the civilian population. This was expanded upon by the Norwegian panelist, and Senior Staff Officer on Gender and Non-Kinetic targeting, Lieutenant Colonel Chatrin Strømsmo during the Danish FSC Chair's Event on Full Gender Equality in Conscription 30 October 2024.

Inclusion, however, cannot come without adaptation also at the individual level. Our experiences with a major increase in women within the Armed Forces highlight the need to adjust personal equipment and training practices. For example, a soldier without personal equipment of appropriate size, form and functionality will not be able to operate efficiently, and the inclusion of more women raises the demands for appropriately adapted equipment.

Furthermore, physical training practices need to be adjusted to reduce the risk of injuries to women while ensuring that the required standards are met. In general, Norwegian soldiers are selected, tasked and lives together irrespective of sex or gender. However, in some cases, gender assessments call for adaptation. The need to differentiate has led us to temporarily run parallel physical training programs and even in a few cases to organize the units accordingly. A prominent example of this is an all-women platoon in the Norwegian Special Forces, called Jegertroppen. It was established to ensure that the Special Forces can utilize the relative strengths of women in their operations. A prime lesson learned from running it for more than ten years, is that to prevent injuries but still reach the maximum fitness level it is crucial that the progression in physical exertion for women is different from for men. These adjustments are justified by the added operational benefits of having healthy soldiers in the Special Forces.

Madam Chair,

In conclusion, a gender perspective is not only a necessary development to ensure equal opportunities and responsibilities. It is also a strategic imperative to respond effectively to the security challenges of today. The adjustments we must make to unleash the full potential of the participation of women are small in comparison to the benefits we get.

Thank you.