

Estonia

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Introduction

While Estonia's first NAP ran from 2010 to 2014, the second NAP will run from 2015 until 2019. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs led the second NAP's preparation process, involving representatives of the Ministries of Education and Research, Defence, Interior and Social Affairs, as well as the Defence Forces, Defence League, Police and Boarder Guard Board and CSOs.

The first NAP's objectives included systematising Estonia's activities related to international missions and development assistance that incorporate a gender perspective, alongside raising Estonian society's awareness on UNSCR 1325. The second NAP broadly maintained the same objectives:

- (1) Improve the situation of women in conflict and post-conflict areas by focusing on activities related to women's education and empowerment, ultimately establishing greater opportunities for women's involvement in peace process within their own communities;
- (2) Raise awareness on the impact of conflicts on women as well as of womens' roles in ensuring peace and security. Take measures to increase awareness at both the internal and external level, alongside the diplomatic and grass-roots level;
- (3) Enhance co-operation and information exchange at the national and international level.

Available budget funds from the multiple ministries responsible for NAP implementation helped finance the various NAP activities.¹

Design

The Government consulted CSOs² during the second NAP's drafting process, allowing CSOs the opportunity to provide input. The Estonian MFA hosted a meeting between CSOs and several ministerial representatives in October 2015, where participant recommendations contributed to changes to the NAP draft. Both sides also agreed to UNSCR 1325 implementation measures. The Government then sent this NAP draft to CSOs and the relevant ministries for further comments. Once all the NAP signatories agreed to the text, the ministries involved in the drafting process signed the NAP.

CSOs also sent comments in writing, some of which led to changes in the NAP. For example, the Government added a UNSCR 1325 study module to conscripts' basic training session. They also added a training module adressing gender based violence, human rights and women's roles to ensure that peace, security and gender equality enter the basic Social Studies and National Defence school cirriculum.

The MFA created a mailing list of all the contacts working on UNSCR 1325. This framework allows for frequent information exchange between ministries and CSOs, strengthening thier

¹ The voluntary contributions Estonia makes to international development cooperation and humanitarian aid organisations are available at: <http://www.vm.ee/et/voluntary-contributions-international-development-cooperation-and-humanitarian-aid-organisations>

² Consulted CSOs include the Estonian Atlantic Treaty Association, the Estonian Roundtable for Development Cooperation, the Baltic Defence College, the Estonian Women's Studies and Resource Centre, the Estonian Red Cross, the Estonian Institute of Human Rights, the Women's Voluntary Defence Organization and the NGO Mondo.

cooperation and communication capabilities. Ministry representatives and CSOs formally meet once a year to share information and monitor NAP implementation. CSOs closely cooperate with each other as well, as with various CSOs, including the Estonian Atlantic Treaty Association, to organise coordination meetings to share information and exchange views on the NAP.

CSOs, which work on peace and conflict issues, assist in planning NAP implementation activities. For example, CSOs must submit a written overview to the MFA, discussing their active contributions to NAP implementation, which the MFA incorporates into the implementation reports.

The NAP implementers are to meet at least once a year. If required, the NAP's authors will revise the plan, accounting for international developments including EU, NATO and UN measures taken towards implementing UNSCR 1325, as well as Estonia's foreign policy objectives and other circumstances.

Implementation

At the national level, one of the NAP implementation's greatest achievements included the ability for women to participate in the conscript service. The Ministry of Defence also passed the Military Service Act, which allows all Police and Boarder Guard Board (PBGB) agents to apply for international missions, regardless of gender. This has led to an increase in the percentage of women participating in international missions. As of 31 December 2013, the MFA employed 18 civilian experts: within the framework of NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) - four PBGB servants (50% women), EUPOL Afghanistan - two Rescue Board and two PBGB experts (one woman). In addition, The European Union Civil Planning and Conduct Capability Unit has also deployed one expert, who is a woman.³

Awareness regarding gender equality issues, including the protection of women's rights, has also increased among civil servants. CSO trainings and organised roundtables have helped contribute to this increased awareness.

At the international level, Estonia actively supported the establishment of UN Women and contributed financially to the Global Study on UNSCR 1325 implementation⁴.

With regard to conflict-affected countries, the achievements focus on developing co-operation projects toward women's economic and political empowerment. When granting humanitarian assistance, the Government considered gender whenever possible.⁵ CSOs played an important role in implementing development co-operation projects. Government bodies and NGOs carried out several projects focused on stopping violence against women, as well as promoting women's social and educational empowerment, mostly in the course of bilateral and multilateral co-operation in Afghanistan, Armenia, Georgia, Yemen, Kyrgyzstan, Palestine, Tajikistan and Belarus. The NAP report describes the impact of these projects.⁶ The Estonian Development Co-operation Database also possesses information on development co-operation projects.⁷

Parties involved in the first NAP's implementation formed an interdepartmental working group to monitor the implementation process. The parties met once a year. The implementing actors

³ http://www.vm.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/UN-1325_report_2013_ENG_veeb.pdf

⁴ The global study can be downloaded here :

<http://wps.unwomen.org/~media/files/un%20women/wps/highlights/unw-global-study-1325-2015.pdf>

⁵ A detailed overview of Estonia's development co-operation and humanitarian aid contribution is available on the homepage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at <http://www.vm.ee/en/taxonomy/term/55>

⁶ See <http://www.vm.ee/en/gender-perspective-conflict-situations-un-security-council-resolution-1325>

⁷ See <https://rakendused.vm.ee/akta/index.php?language=eng>

were required to submit a report of their activities within two months after the end of the reporting year (i.e. calendar year) and monitoring reports were prepared annually. The MFA also prepared a report at the end of the first NAP. CSOs were also consulted for the monitoring reports, providing input primarily through activities developed to advance UNSCR 1325's implementation.

The Estonian Parliament (the Riigikogu) also contributed to the promotion of UNSCR 1325's objectives and actions. For example, Marianne Mikko, vice-chair of the women's group in the Riigikogu and member of the National Defence Committee, was an active public speaker on issues associated with UNSCR 1325.

An official working group meets once a year to review the second NAP following the annual report's publication.⁸ Ministry representatives, NAP signatories and CSOs consulted during the NAP's design and monitoring processes, comprise the working group. To monitor the NAP, implementing institutions and CSOs will submit a written overview of their corresponding activities in the second half of both 2017 and 2019. Based on this input, the MFA prepares implementation reports. The action plan and implementing reports will then be submitted to the Government of Estonia. The MFA should also include basic NAP information in the reports submitted to the Riigikogu's committees.

The NAP links activities with indicators. The implementation reports showed that due to the introduction of reporting obligations, there is a systematic overview taking place that is focusing on the Government and NGOs' achievements, as well as on the cooperation between these parties.

Only the financial allocations for development and humanitarian aid are clearly measurable. It is difficult to establish qualitative indicators and ensure budgetary resources for NAP implementation objectives. It is equally difficult to assess the success of the awareness raising strategies developed to inform the public about UNSCR 1325. Therefore the NAP monitoring reports remain qualitative rather than quantitative.

Concluding Remarks

Civil society has played an important part in increasing awareness of women's situation during conflicts, advocating for defense sector-related gender-sensitive policies and keeping UNSCR 1325 on the national agenda. Compared to the pre-NAP era, the number of events and projects on this subject has increased significantly. However, Estonian society continues to face challenges, such as women's access to political and military leadership positions. These issues require sustained attention as changing societal norms occur over the long-term.

⁸ Annual reports are available on this webpage : <http://www.vm.ee/en/gender-perspective-conflict-situations-un-security-council-resolution-1325>