

Italy

Luisa Del Turco (Civilian Defence Research Centre) with a contribution from the Pangea Foundation

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Introduction

Italy has developed two national action plans (NAPs) on the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. The first was adopted in 2010 for the period 2010-2013 and the second in 2014 for the period 2014-2016. The Inter-ministerial Committee on Human Rights (CIDU) has led the process, in its capacity as the NAP national focal point. An ad-hoc inter-ministerial working group is also involved, which includes *inter alia*, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and co-operation, Interior, Defence and the Department for Equal Opportunities. In the second NAP, in order to involve other stakeholders, new entities such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office in Italy have also been included.

The role and contribution of civil society in both the drafting and implementation process is formally recognised in the NAP, which includes a commitment to periodic consultations with CSOs. Furthermore, the current NAP includes a specific commitment to 'strengthen channels of communication and work' with CSOs, and to develop "a more inclusive dialogue" with non-governmental organisations, (NGOs) particularly for monitoring and reporting.

The revised NAP also includes a reference to Italy's support to various international initiatives such as the 2012 tripartite agreement between the EU, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, (UN Women) as well as initiatives developed by the EU's European External Action Service (EEAS) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Both NAPs focus mainly on the national armed forces and national police forces as well as peace support operations. Women's presence, gender perspective and training are therefore mainly considered from a military perspective. The NAP has no dedicated budget. The indicators included in the annex are the EU indicators partially adapted to national needs (e.g. Indicator 6 on the number of NAPs or other strategic, national documents or reporting procedures or indicator 3 on the number of regional level dialogues that focus attention on WPS in outcome documents, conclusions and targets).¹

The NAP presents an overall description of the Italian commitments and achievements on gender issues, sometimes generally referring to equal opportunities at national level (e.g. regarding political participation or domestic violence). It is not actually an operational policy tool as it lacks specific measurable objectives on gender, peace and security-related (GPS) issues. As with the first NAP, the current version provides a "framework" with the primary aim to 'build on the initiatives that Italy already supports or is implementing'.²

Some crucial aspects relating to peace and security, such as women's participation in peacebuilding or gender mainstreaming and analysis, are substantially lacking from the NAP.

The NAP has several positive points:

- A commitment to face the growing need to train specific personnel, including mediators and gender experts;

¹ See https://www.conilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/hr/news272.pdf

² See second Italian NAP

- The inclusion of women in peace processes and in all decision-making processes as a specific objective;
- A commitment to a more inclusive dialogue with civil society organisations (CSOs), including biannual consultations and participation in monitoring and reporting (to be ‘conducted with relevant CSOs’);
- A commitment to monitoring and reporting after one year with an outline of ‘potential’ indicators (Annex 1);
- Publication on the website of a roster of experts.

However, the NAP also presents a number of structural challenges. The first four objectives are related to peace operations and the military dimension. However, in the dedicated pages, the NAP’s approach is too broad and often focuses on equal opportunities/women’s rights at national level or international development cooperation:

- Objective 1 refers to peace and security (Enhance women's presence in the national armed forces as well as within national police forces, by strengthening their role in decision-making processes related to peace missions). It also includes norms on women’s access to the security sector as well as a reference to the ‘Guidelines on Equal Treatment, Interpersonal Relationships, Family Protection and Parenting;’
- Objective 2: (Promoting a gender perspective in peace-support operations) refers to women’s empowerment and the prevention of violence against women (VAW) but it also refers to historical aspects, with measures aimed at strengthening communication and education in developing countries, and to female genital mutilation (FGM) and women’s health in general;
- Objective 3: (To ensure specific training on the various aspects of UNSCR 1325, in particular to personnel taking part in peace operations) refers to the first training course for Gender Advisors to be organised for armed forces and *Carabinieri* (police) personnel and the new Centre of Excellence for Stability Police Units (CoESPU) course entitled ‘Gender Protection in Peace Support Operations.’ However, it also includes some education-related initiatives in the field of VAW and stalking (e.g. education for judges, teachers and experts on stalking) with reference to the NAP on violence against women (VAW);
- Objective 4 (Protection), refers to ‘women’ together with ‘children and the most vulnerable groups fleeing from conflict and/or living in post conflict zones.’ In addition to references to the international commitments to end VAW in conflict-affected areas and to the military code to be applied to military operations abroad, it also includes VAW and gender based violence (GBV) in Italy, trafficking and female genital mutilation (FGM), migration and child and maternal healthcare for foreigners.

‘Strengthen the role of women in peace processes and in all decision-making processes,’ which is at the heart of the most advanced NAPs, is finally recognised as a distinct issue in the current NAP. The role of women as ‘agents of change’ is also recognised, as well as the fundamental role of CSOs in the field is mentioned. However, this objective is not covered in great detail and includes only a generic commitment. In addition, it covers the participation of women in the armed forces, politics and company boards in Italy.

Design

In August 2012, during the first NAP’s implementation, CIDU activities were stopped due to a cut in public finances. CIDU was eventually re-established in September 2015 and later it coordinated the NAP development. Its members included staff from the OSCE and NATO Offices, the Revenue Guards Corps, the General Directorate for Development Cooperation, the Ministry of Defence and the General Command of the *Carabinieri* Corps, as well as the Ministries of Justice, Interior, Labour and Social Policies, Health, (jointly with the National Institute of Statistics – ISTAT) and the Department for Equal Opportunities at the Prime Minister’s Office.

CSOs have also been involved in drafting the new NAP. They were invited to provide inputs into the drafting of the new NAP during a meeting in December 2013. Approximately 10 representatives, from five different CSOs and a number of independent experts, participated in the meeting, with several of them provided recommendations in writing afterwards. In this context, the findings of EPLO's 2013 publication on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Europe³ were also shared with the CIDU.

Some of the recommendations, which had been made during the drafting of the first NAP, were reiterated as many of them had not been taken on board. This included the need for a timeline on the NAP's implementation, specific indicators, clear lines of responsibility, an effective monitoring system, the meaningful participation of CSOs and a dedicated budget.

A draft text was circulated in January 2014 and, following a second consultation later that month, it was adopted on 27 February. The second NAP's final version was then transmitted to the UNSC in August of 2014.

Some of the input which was provided by CSOs has been incorporated into the NAP. For example, the NAP includes a reference to training on GPS for civilian personnel next to the reference to training for the armed forces and the police. It also includes an explicit reference to the Italian Civil Peace Corps to be established during the implementation period (2014-2016). However, many CSO recommendations relating to procedures and approaches were not taken into account. As a result, when the draft was circulated for tacit final approval, the majority of CSO representatives requested that they be referred to as 'participants in the consultation' rather than as 'contributors to the NAP' in order to highlight the fact that the structural changes which they had requested had not been accepted.

The EU offered a precious input during the 2013 annual meeting of the EU informal Task Force for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325. This input led to some of the most specific provisions in the second NAP on training of personnel in mediation and most likely to the adoption of the EU indicators as indicators for the Italian NAP (see also annex 1 Relevant indicators; annex 5 "Strengthening the EU Concept on Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities"). In the "*Second Report on the EU-indicators for the Comprehensive Approach to the EU Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 & 1820 on Women, Peace and Security*" there is no explicit reference to Italy for data or achievements, and the country is only mentioned as one among the 16 EU Member States which adopted a NAP on UNSCR 1325.

Implementation and Monitoring

In October 2014 a meeting was organised to announce the initiatives to be developed during the Italian Presidency of the EU (July-December 2014): an international round-table entitled 'Women, peace and security – Minimum standards, harmonized guidelines and common policies for the European Agenda'. The event was organised to mark the launch of the second NAP on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25 November.

The CSOs consulted suggested that 31 October (the anniversary of the adoption of UNSCR 1325) would be the most suitable date for the event. Many officials from Italian ministries, the EU institutions and NATO were invited to participate in the event. Some CSOs representatives were also invited to present their perspectives on working on the implementation of UNSCR 1325. However, CSOs were only allocated a short speaking slot after the armed forces and the Italian government, EU and NATO speakers. As a result, at least one CSO representative left the meeting venue in protest and, following the event,

³ See

<http://www.eplo.org/assets/files/2.%20Activities/Working%20Groups/GPS/FINAL%20Case%20Studies.pdf>

CSOs' confidence in the possibility of a fruitful dialogue on the NAP with the various institutions decreased.

A monitoring exercise was conducted by CIDU without a significant participation from civil society. The 2015 Progress Report, which was circulated in draft form within the Inter-ministerial Working Group, focused on historical and internal issues and had no connection with indicators. As such, it did not contribute to any understanding of significant developments regarding GPS. The final version of the progress report has not been published on the CIDU website and no other information seems to be available on the overall implementation process.

Some critical aspects in monitoring and implementation should be highlighted:

- The NAP uses a narrative approach, often with a historical perspective;
- In spite of CSOs requests for experts to be included in the roster designed by the CIDU, the roster includes, according to the 2015 Progress Report, only one of the suggested experts;
- There is no support for training for the development of civilian capacity and expertise. For example the first and only training organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' on taking a gender sensitive approach to conflict and post-conflict situations' dates back to 2001;
- The indicators are designed in line with the EU indicators. However, as the main achievements refer to the implementation of the NATO and of the Development Cooperation policies, it is difficult to match the two perspectives and measure the real outcomes of the NAP. In this context, the 2015 Progress Report does not refer to the NAP indicators on the basis that the EU indicators are under revision;
- The lack of a dedicated budget represents one of the main obstacles to the development of the GPS agenda in Italy. The NAP mentions the economic crisis as one of the challenges for the lack of a dedicated budget for the NAP.

Conclusions

The lack of an adequate policy at national level contributes significantly to the widening gap between the international commitments to which Italy has subscribed and real outcomes at the operational level.

CSOs' growing lack of confidence regarding the possibility of a fruitful involvement in the process is also critical. Consultation with civil society is at best a bi-annual appointment, often without a clear agenda. These consultations are only an ad-hoc instrument for information gathering but they fail to guarantee the meaningful participation of CSOs in the NAP process. The launch of a new national CSO initiative: Women in International Security – Italy (WIIS) and supported by the Italian Parliament, could signal a renewed interest to re-engage with CSOs

Meanwhile, CSOs should reorganise their actions and possibly build a joint advocacy platform. The aim of such a platform should be to bring the multidimensional approach and the transformative potential of UNSCR 1325 to the Italian institutional and public arena.

The process for the adoption and the implementation of the third NAP should not be business as usual. The NAP should be “not simply a document or a product, but a living process” where “political leadership, line ministries, the armed forces, the police and civil society become connected, and should continue to partner on monitoring and implementation” (Mary Robinson, 2009,). “Putting policy into practice: Monitoring the implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security” - A FOKUS and UN-INSTRAW Conference - Oslo, 11-13 November 2009 - Background Paper