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Women, Peace and Security
Agenda. National Action Plan(s) of
the European NATO Member States

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Abstract:

This Opinion Paper analyses a selection of National Action Plans (NAP) for the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda. The selection criteria for these documents are primarily —but not exclusively—countries that are European NATO Member States. The selected documents are analyzed for information on: timeframe, responsible ministry, actions, worldview, funding, accountability and civil society participation. The final considerations highlight common, majority, minority, and exceptional qualities among the selected NAPs.

Keywords:

Women, Peace and Security Agenda, National Action Plan, Resolution 1325 and NATO.

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Women, Peace and Security Agenda

The WPS Agenda is organized as *UN Women*¹ points out, into four pillars: prevention, protection, participation, and relief and recovery. These pillars, in turn, are comprised of the content of Security Council Resolution 1325 and its nine complementary resolutions. As reported by the *Mediation Support Unit*², these are divided into two groups: those on the active and effective participation of women (1325/2000, 1889/2013, 2122/2013, 2242/2015, and 2493/2019) and those on preventing and addressing conflict-related sexual violence (1820/2008, 1888/2009, 1960/2010, 2106/2013, and 2467/2019).

NATO, for its part, counts with a policy for the WPS Agenda. This document is titled *NATO Policy on Women, Peace and Security*³ 2024. It has four strategic objectives: 1) Gender-responsive leadership and accountability, 2) participation, 3) prevention, and 4) protection. However, this document does not contain specific actions, as it is a policy rather than an action plan. In contrast, the *NATO/EAPC Women, Peace and Security. Policy and Action Plan* of 2018 has expected results with its respective actions for: 1) integration, 2) inclusiveness, 3) integrity, 4) public diplomacy and 5) monitoring and evaluation.⁴

Information is repeated between the two organizations. In logical order, this includes: prevention of gender-based violence, protection of women, women's participation, and accountability, all of which should be included in the respective NAP of the United Nations Member States.

As a result, six documents were selected from the following countries: Denmark, Spain, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, and Luxembourg. The objective of this analysis is to examine each NAP individually and draw comparative conclusions. To this end, this publication is

¹ UN Women (2025). What is the Women, Peace and Security agenda? <https://www.unwomen.org/en/articles/explainer/what-is-the-women-peace-and-security-agenda>

²DOP (2025). Security Council Resolutions. Mediation Support Unit. <https://peacemaker.un.org/en/thematic-areas/women-peace-security/normative-frameworks/security-council-resolutions>

³NATO (2024). NATO Policy on Women, Peace and Security (2024). <https://natolibguides.info/women>

⁴NATO (2018). NATO/EAPC Women, Peace and Security. Policy and Action Plan. <https://natolibguides.info/women>

divided into two parts: a discussion of what NAPs are and an analysis of the six selected documents, culminating in concluding remarks.

National Action Plan(s)

*WPS National platform Action Plans: Content Analysis and Data Visualization*⁵ brings together between current and expired versions, a total of 217 NAPs published up to 2024. For its part, *WPS Focal Points Network*⁶—which is another platform— reports 117 States with NAP in force as of 2025. In relation to that same year, 16 NAPs were published, among which is Denmark (a country that published the first NAP worldwide in 2005) with its fifth version, and on the other hand, Bolivia, Malaysia, Thailand and Tanzania published their first NAP, and more recently, Portugal with its fourth NAP this year 2026.

Publications on NAP

The publication *National Action Plans for Resolution 1325: Cases of Argentina, Chile, and Paraguay*⁷ explains the origin of the NAP. These documents do not appear in Resolution 1325 of 2000, but rather in Resolution 1889 of 2009, which establishes their function as implementing—implement is the exact verb—the provisions of Resolution 1325. However, the NAP as a tool first appeared at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Regarding the publication's contribution, it analyses four NAPs from three countries: Argentina (2015), Chile (2009 and 2015), and Paraguay (2015), and concludes:

As these documents are updated, the points for improvement are strongly associated with measurement (categories) and accountability, finding there a rich source to extract international good practices (...) strongly strengthening the budgets and resources allocated to the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda.⁸

⁵BIDDOLPH, Caitlin and SHEPHERD, Laura (2024). WPS National Action Plans: Content Analysis and Data Visualization. <https://www.wpsnaps.org/>

⁶WPS FOCAL POINTS NETWORK (2025). Resources. Global Map of Adopted National Action Plans. <https://wpsfocalpointsnetwork.org/resources/>

⁷SEPÚLVEDA, Daniela y RIVAS, Pablo (2016). Planes de Acción Nacional para la Resolución 1325: Casos de Argentina, Chile y Paraguay. Regional Insights, William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, N°3: 1-12.

⁸SEPÚLVEDA, Daniela and RIVAS, Pablo (2016): p.10.

In summary, United Nations Member States implement the WPS Agenda by publishing a NAP. Furthermore, these NAPs demonstrate a trajectory that, over time, should tend toward improvement related to accountability. Similarly, the academic article *Resolution 1325 of 2000: Its Implementation in Spain and NATO*⁹ evaluates the implementation of the WPS Agenda from a design perspective. While the analysis of Spain is based on primary and official sources, the sources analyzed for NATO are secondary, revealing a deficiency in the publication. Regarding the case of Spain, it asserts:

The design of a National Action Plan like Spain's, which has involved civil society organizations and allows national efforts to be directed toward compliance with the resolution (...) A review of the various public policy documents on security and defense of the Spanish Government reveals the efforts made in the area of gender that have contributed to the fulfillment of the WPS Agenda. In this sense, the recognition of the existence of the resolution and the monitoring framework is evident.¹⁰

Based on the quote, the NAP of Spain stands out for two reasons. The first is the participation of civil society in the creation of these documents; that is, the deliberative stage includes consultation with intermediary groups to complement the government's perspective. The second is accountability; in other words, if the NAP is a document for implementing the WPS Agenda, the third step—evaluation—must be taken, and subsequently the evaluation is disseminated. Relatedly, the essay *WPS at 25: National Action Plans as Mechanisms for Implementation of a Diverse Agenda*¹¹ offers insights into what a NAP is. For the authors, publishing a NAP does not necessarily guarantee success in itself:

NAPs capture both the present politics of the WPS agenda and the possibilities of what the agenda might become. This is shown both in the discussion of how NAPs serve as vehicles for the introduction of new issues into the WPS ecosystem and in the seeding of new trajectories of WPS growth in recent NAP. (NAP...) are an integral part of how the WPS agenda is given life and grows and changes over time. NAPs present and also generate the WPS priorities of UN member states, both domestically and in their foreign policies.¹²

In this case, it is observed that a NAP is presented as a reflection of issues beyond its own design. On one hand, it reflects the present and projects a future for NAP, and on

⁹TIRADO ACERO, M., CUJABANTE-VILLAMIL, X. A., & LIBRADO CASTILLO, H. (2024). La Resolución 1325 de 2000: su implementación en España y la OTAN. *Revista Científica General José María Córdova*, 22(45): pp.219-236.

¹⁰TIRADO ACERO, M., CUJABANTE-VILLAMIL, XA, & LIBRADO CASTILLO, H. (2024): 233.

¹¹ASANTE, Doris and SHEPHERD, Laura. (2024). *Twenty Years of Women, Peace and Security National Action Plans: Analysis and Lessons Learned*. *Politics & Gender*, 21(3): 681–688.

¹²ASANTE, Doris and SHEPHERD, Laura. (2024): p.686.

the other, it reveals a government's priorities in its national and international policy. Furthermore, this year the WPS Agenda will be 26 years old in October, and the first NAP—by Denmark—will be 21 years old in September. Therefore, there must be some variability inherent to the passage of time and national circumstances.

Finally, the report *Twenty Years of Women, Peace and Security National Action Plans: Analysis and Lessons Learned*¹³ proposes an ideal NAP. Based on an analysis of 128 NAPs from 81 states up to 2019, it suggests that an ideal NAP should have: a budget; objectives with deadlines for monitoring and evaluation; and the participation of civil society. The report also contributes by outlining the framework of questions applied to the reviewed sources:

1. Which pillar(s) of the NAPs are dominant? Is this changing over time?; 2. What are the dominant categories of lead, including over time and by region?; 3. To what extent are new and/or emerging security issues – such as terrorism, climate change and reproductive rights – represented in the NAPs?; 4. To what extent is a budget specified in the NAPs?; 5. To what extent do the NAPs contain provisions for monitoring and evaluation activities?; 6. To what extent do the NAPs document the participation of civil society in production and implementation?¹⁴

The questions can be organised into four groups: 1) the pillars (prevention, protection, participation, and assistance and recovery); 2) new security issues; 3) budget, monitoring and evaluation; and 4) participation of civil society in the creation of a NAP.

In summary, the analysis focuses on: temporality, responsible ministry, actions, worldview, financing, accountability, and civil society participation.

National Action Plan inside NATO

The first NAP is ***Denmark's National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security 2025-2029***¹⁵. This document was led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its most distinctive feature is that it is the only document that does not meet the essential requirement of a NAP to be considered as such: having actions to be carried out, which

¹³HAMILTON, Caitlin; NAAM, Nyibeny and SHEPHERD, Laura (2020). *Twenty Years of Women, Peace and Security National Action Plans: Analysis and Lessons Learned*. <https://www.wpsnaps.org/>

¹⁴HAMILTON, Caitlin; NAAM, Nyibeny and SHEPHERD, Laura (2020): p.02.

¹⁵DENMARK (2025). *Denmark's National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security 2025 - 2029*. <https://um.dk/en/foreign-policy/content-page/>

presents a paradox, especially since it is the fifth Danish NAP. To illustrate this paradox, the section titled “Four Thematic Areas” outlines what will be done, but without indicators or a responsible institution. Similarly, the section on “Organization and Implementation” lacks a Gantt chart (the format typically used by NAP to present their actions). Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to list the thematic areas for comparison with the other documents:

1. Strong Danish international engagement; 2. The full, equal and meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention and peacebuilding; 3. Women’s and girls’ rights and protection; and 4. Danish authorities’ national WPS priorities.¹⁶

Another paradoxically distinctive aspect is it’s the flawed presentation of the relationship between the WPS Agenda and the 10 resolutions that comprise it. Specifically, this NAP states in its “Introduction” that the four pillars of the WPS Agenda derive from Resolution 1325 of 2000, without considering the other nine complementary resolutions. These two inconsistencies are substantial, but valuable information is still provided. For example, it defines the two purposes of its document:

1. To strengthen the full, equal, secure and meaningful participation and influence of women, as well as their protection; and 2. to undertake efforts to ensure that equality, rights, vulnerabilities and needs are integrated into all areas of Denmark’s engagement in peace and security work, both nationally and internationally.¹⁷

Regarding its worldview, the following stand out: climate change, migration, gender inequality, Russia’s war against Ukraine, and Africa as a priority continent. Finally, it’s worth noting that there is no accountability for the work done between the previous and current NAP, the budget for funding the thematic areas is not explicitly stated, the participation of civil society is not detailed and NATO is referenced by its 2022 strategic concept rather than its WPS Policy of 2024.

The following document is Spain’s **III Plan Nacional de Acción de Mujeres, Paz y Seguridad 2025 – 2030**¹⁸. This National Action Plan, led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, differs from Denmark’s plan as it clearly outlines the relationship between the WPS Agenda and the 10 Security Council

¹⁶DENMARK (2025): p.15.

¹⁷DENMARK (2025): p.10.

¹⁸SPAIN (2025). III Plan Nacional de Acción de Mujeres, Paz y Seguridad 2025 - 2030.

<https://www.exteriores.gob.es/es/PoliticaExterior/Paginas/PoliticaExteriorFeminista.aspx>

resolutions that comprise it, and it fulfils the essential requirement of including specific actions to implement its plan. In this case, Spain's National Action Plan proposes five "Lines of Action":

1. Prevention of armed conflict with the equal participation of women and men; 2. Full, equal, safe, and meaningful participation of women in decision-making related to peace and security; 3. Protection of the human rights of women and girls in fragile contexts and situations of conflict and post-conflict, and zero tolerance for sexual violence; 4. Integration of a gender perspective and the empowerment of women and girls in recovery and response, as well as in humanitarian action; and 5. Institutionalization of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda in government policies and programs.¹⁹

Each of these action lines includes (with the use of a Gantt chart format) objectives, intermediate results, actions, indicators, and actors (responsible authority). A distinctive feature—not present in the other selected NAPs—is the existence of a public department within the ministry leading the NAP: the Directorate General for the United Nations, International Organizations, and Human Rights, whose mission is to coordinate and monitor the NAP's implementation. However, no funding is specified for implementing it, nor is there any information on how the sessions with participants functioned. As with the previous NAP, there is no accountability mechanism.

Its worldview includes armed conflicts, international displacement, rising conservatism, and the rise of antifeminism. Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East, West Africa, and the Sahel are its priority regions. It also refers to Russia's war against Ukraine, and unlike all the other National Action Plans reviewed, it is the only one that advocates for Palestine as the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

The third document is *Iceland's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2025-2030*²⁰. This NAP—the country's fourth—maintains the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Like Spain's document, and unlike Denmark's, it presents the WPS Agenda as comprised of 10 resolutions. The most distinctive feature of this NAP—similar to Italy's—is its lack of photographs, its laconic nature in the information it provides, and

¹⁹SPAIN (2025): p.08.

²⁰ICELAND (2025). Iceland's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2025 - 2030.
<https://www.government.is/library/?itemid=3f906eb6-1168-11f0-b890-005056bcde1f>

its limitation to actions presented in a Gantt chart. The actions proposed in the NAP are organised into "Three Key Pillars":

1. Goal 1: Full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace processes, peacebuilding and security and defence; 2. Goal 2: Address the needs of women in vulnerable situations due to conflict and instability; and 3. Iceland leads by example.²¹

In detail, each of the key pillars should be outlined, including its impact, action, indicator, and responsibility for implementing the NAP. The global perspective is limited, primarily because the NAP is focused on its Gantt chart, but there is a reference to Ukraine in relation to peacebuilding. Finally, there is no information on funding, no accountability regarding the progress made between this NAP and the previous one, and no specification of how civil society participated in its creation.

Italy's Fifth National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2025-2029)²² is the fourth document under review. Led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, it outlines its actions in the "Operational Part and Implementation Framework":

Objective No. 1. Strengthen –on a continuous and durable basis- the role of women in peace processes (...) Objective No. 2: Strengthen the promotion of the gender perspective in peace operations and enhance the presence of women (...) Objective No. 3: Strengthen the promotion of gender equality, empowerment and protection of women and girls (...) Objective No. 4: Consolidate the promotion of strategic communication and awareness-raising actions.²³

The actions for each objective and the responsible public body are specified and the annex specifies indicators in both number and percentage. Its worldview encompasses armed conflict, climate change, food insecurity, and migration, and it is the only NAP that references NATO Policy on WPS of 2024. In its laconic style, it provides no information on funding, does not report on the work done during the period following the previous NAP and only briefly describes the seminars held to create this NAP.

²¹ICELAND (2025): p.13

²²ITALY (2025). Italy's Fifth National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2025 – 2029). <https://cidu.esteri.it/en/attivita/donne-pace-sicurezza/>

²³ITALY (2025): pp.12-19.

Lithuania is the next state. In this case, its NAP is titled ***National Action Plan for the implementation of the The Women, Peace and Security Agenda for 2025-2029***²⁴. Led by the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it provides information on the WPS Agenda with its four pillars and—like Denmark's NAP—, sets a goal:

The objective of the third NAP for 2025–2029 is to increase community resilience by ensuring women's participation and integration of gender dimension at all levels of decision-making and implementation.²⁵

The actions are outlined under the heading “Areas and Indicators of Change,” which include: gender balance, elimination of systemic barriers, zero tolerance for violence, and integration of a gender perspective. Each of these areas includes objectives, actions, a timeframe, indicators, and implementing institutions. Their worldview also encompasses Russia's war against Ukraine, climate change, humanitarian aid, and migration management. There is no information on funding, nor is there accountability, nor participation of civil society.

The last NAP is Luxembourg's ***Second National Action Plan for the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) "Women, Peace and Security" 2025-2030***²⁶. This is the only NAP led by a ministry other than the one responsible for foreign affairs. In this case, it is led by the Ministries of Defense and Gender Equality and Diversity. The actions are structured under the heading “Four Pillars”:

1. Full, equal and meaningful participation. Promoting the full, equal and meaningful participation at all levels of decision-making in peace, security and conflict prevention, management and resolution;
2. Prevention. Preventing and eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, in particular sexual and gender-based violence;
3. Protection, relief and recovery. Strengthening the protection of women and girls against all forms of violence; improving access to justice, medical and psychological care and to recovery opportunities;
- and 4. Promotion. Promoting the Women, Peace and

²⁴LITHUANIA (2025). National Action Plan for the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda for 2025 - 2029.

<https://www.urm.lt/storage/main/public/uploads/2025/11/3rd-national-action-plan-for-the-implementation-of-the-women-peace-and-security-agenda-for-2025-2029.pdf>

²⁵LITHUANIA (2025): p.10.

²⁶LUXEMBOURG (2025). Second National Action Plan for the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) «Women, Peace and Security» 2025 - 2030.

<https://mae.gouvernement.lu/en/directions-du-ministere/affaires-politiques/femmes-paix-securite.html>

Security agenda and the international normative framework at the national and international level.²⁷

Each of these pillars includes objectives, actions, indicators, and a responsible ministry. Climate change, new technologies, and Russia's war against Ukraine appear in its world vision, and rarely, NATO's 2007 WPS Policy is cited, not the 2024 version. As with other documents analyzed, funding, accountability, and civil society participation are not specified.

Conclusions

The core elements of each reviewed NAP are —depending on the plan— thematic areas, lines of action, key pillars, operational plan, area, or indicators and pillars. These headings contain information specific to the WPS Agenda and the 10 resolutions that comprise it. In other words, these sections include the four pillars of the agenda and the two themes that group the resolutions. In most cases, the content is almost verbatim, and as previously mentioned, it follows the logical sequence of: prevention of gender-based violence, protection of women, and women's participation.

The selected NAPs show variability in their content:

- Common characteristics of the NAP: 1) establishing a time frame in the title of the NAP, whose deduced function is to define a timeframe for fulfilling the actions; 2) having a world view, where the most repeated issues in the analysis are the war of Russia against Ukraine, climate change and international migration; and 3) there is no information or, at least, detailed information on financing, accountability for what has been done previously, nor influence of civil society.
- Major characteristics of the NAP: 1) the Ministries of Foreign Affairs lead the NAP, except for Luxembourg where it is Defense and Gender Equality and Diversity that lead; 2) except for the NAP of Denmark, all the NAP meet the indispensable requirement of having actions to be carried out; and 3) again, except for the NAP of

²⁷LUXEMBOURG (2025): pp.20-53 .

Denmark, the information repeated in the Gantt chart are: actions, indicators and responsible parties.

- Minor qualities of the NAP: 1) only the documents of Denmark and Lithuania have a defined purpose of the document; and 2) only the NAP of Iceland and Italy do not have photographs and focus mainly on detailing their actions with a Gantt chart.
- Qualities of the NAP: 1) Denmark's NAP has a negative exceptionality by not meeting the indispensable requirement of having actions set out in a Gantt chart; 2) Spain's NAP has two exceptional qualities: making reference to the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem, and explicitly designating a public department to monitor the NAP; and 3) Italy's NAP is the only one that cites NATO's 2024 WPS Policy.

Finally, there are two suggestions regarding the NAP. First, the NAP should include supporting information on previous actions. In fact, this information should be presented in a Gantt chart format; otherwise, the NAPs become a PDF document that fail to demonstrate their effectiveness. Second, it would be helpful to include supporting information on how the NAP was developed—that is, what meetings were held, who participated, and what their positions were. Otherwise, the claim of civil society participation and/or interagency coordination is imprecise and does not provide certainty about actual participation.

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