

**Fourth Meeting**

**09 June 2016, the Curragh Camp**

**Minutes: Thematic Discussion of 'Gender in Peacekeeping and Security Forces'**

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**Presentation by Barry Lavin, Department of Defence**

Mr. Lavin explained how the Department of Defence has implemented gender mainstreaming in the department. DoD staff working in the International Branch receive comprehensive training on gender. He advised that one role of the Branch is to ensure at EU level that gender is mainstreamed at the planning and preparation stage for all EU CSDP military missions. He also noted that the actions arising from the 2015 White Paper on Defence includes a number of projects which relate to gender and 1325. These projects are now beginning to be implemented and should in future help better facilitate the participation of women peacekeepers and women hoping to become peacekeepers.

**Presentation by Comdt. Eoghan McDermott, Defence Forces**

Comdt. McDermott spoke about how gender has been implemented across the Defence Forces. The Defence Forces created their own Action Plan after the publication of Ireland's 1<sup>st</sup> National Action Plan, and they use this document as a roadmap for implementation of 1325. The Defence Forces has had a Gender Advisor since 2012, and now has Gender Field Advisors in UNIFIL and UNDOF missions. The Defence Forces training for all new recruits has mandatory gender modules that train them to deal with gender sensitive issues such as sexual abuse and exploitation. The Defence Forces has implemented family friendly policies to encourage retention of women in the Army, and has now undertaken a huge recruitment drive aimed at young Irish women. This recruitment drive has already shown some benefits, as there already been a 50% increase in female applicants in 2016 over the previous year. Looking forward, Comdt. McDermott noted that the Action Plan is now being updated, and this update will reflect changes and progress made to date.

**Presentation by Capt. Deirdre Carbery**

Gender Advisor to the UN Training School (UNTSI) Capt. Deirdre Carbery addressed the Oversight Group, speaking about her role on implementing gender into UNTSI training. UNTSI facilitates Ireland's Comprehensive Approach in Action, and is based on seven 'cross-cutting' horizontal pillars, one of which is gender. UNTSI works with many other organisations, both state and non-state agencies, to partner on the implementation of a gender perspective. For example a member of the Defence Forces General Staff sits on the Consortium of SGBV. In a similar vein, UNTSI and the Defence Forces were approached by the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, in Ghana, Africa, to provide high level female peacekeepers to work with the Centre's own forces. UNTSI has implemented gender training across all aspects of its training. Not only are troops trained in SEA and SGBV awareness, but they are given situational and role play exercises.

Referencing a specific case, Michael Rowan (independent Oversight Group member) raised a question regarding the existence of policies/protocols between the Department of Defence, Defence Forces and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade which would apply should an allegation be made that an Irish soldier had impregnated a woman while deployed in a peacekeeping capacity. Defence Forces personnel responded to say that all allegations related to sexual exploitation and abuse are subject to an investigation, and that a zero tolerance policy applies. The representative

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from Department of Defence advised that he was not aware of such a protocol existing and undertook to follow up on the question. (Note: related written questions have been submitted by Mr Rowan and will be circulated along with the responses from Department of Defence and Defence Forces as soon as possible).

**Presentation by Lt. Cdr Erika O'Leary**

Lt. Cdr Erika O'Leary provided an overview of the implementation of WPS in the Irish Naval Service, and looked at how this has been implemented in the context of the on-going migration crisis. The Irish Navy are active in the Mediterranean Sea because of bilateral agreement with Italy. The Naval Service has a two-pronged approach to WPS: protection of women and girls from SGBV and the participation of women by ensuring there are female Naval officers on board. Naval staff are trained to identify the warning signs of smugglers and of women in distress. Furthermore the Naval staff are versed in how conflict affects men and women differently, and are equipped with the tools to help these women in terms of migrant handling and processing.

**Presentation by An Garda Siochana - Detective Superintendent Annmarie Cagney and Sgt Dave McInerney**

Detective Superintendent Annmarie Cagney and Sgt Dave McInerney spoke separately about Garda efforts to combat human trafficking and Garda efforts to work with migrant communities in Ireland, respectively. The Garda Racial, Intercultural and Diversity Office works with migrant communities in Ireland to stop instances of FGM and forced marriages, among other things. Sgt McInerney stressed the importance of community policing and engaging with female migrants to make them aware of their rights in Ireland.

*16<sup>th</sup> June 2016*

*Secretariat to the Oversight Group, National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2015-2018*