



WOMEN IN SECURITY AND DEFENCE, ADVANCING TOGETHER FOR PEACE, SECURITY AND GENDER EQUALITY

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INTRODUCTION

Spanish Women in International Security (SWIIS), merged in the Security and Defence Spanish Graduates Association (ADESyD) and Spanish branch of WIIS-Global, organized an event at the Parliament last 19 November, chaired by Mr. Alfonso Gómez de Celis, First Vice President of the Congress.

Following the **welcoming remarks** from ADESyD's president, Dr. María Angustias Caracuel Raya and SWIIS coordinator, Dr. Ana Belén Perianes, the event was opened by Ms. Soledad Murillo, Secretary of State for Equality at the Ministry of the Presidency, Relations with Parliament and Equality, and Ms. Ana Botella, Secretary of State for Security at the Ministry of Interior.

The event embraced briefers who are ADESyD-SWIIS associates, civilian and military or law enforcement members. By doing so, a more comprehensive, transversal and multidisciplinary approach of the subject was shown, divided in three round-table discussions along the day.

The event was closed by the most prominent senior officials of the Armed Forces and National Police, by Col. Ms. María Begoña Aramendía Rodríguez de Austria, Ministry of Defence Technical Deputy Secretary and by Ms. Pilar Allué, Principal Commissioner of the Spanish National Police and Deputy Director of Training and Human Resources.

The event was possible thanks to the Open Society Initiative for Europe (OSIFE), Open Society Foundations' grant and the collaboration of the Congress, State Secretaries of both Ministries and the Chair of History of Rey Juan Carlos University of Madrid.



OPENING



Dr. María Angustias Caracuel Raya delivered a welcome address and highlighted that the main goal of the Association is to support policies that are committed to improving the international system and the relationship between states and their people, following the mandates of the United Nations shown by WPS and 2030 Agendas.

In this context, she alluded to the national and international activities organized exclusively by ADESyD-SWIIS and others in collaboration with private and public entities. Among them, she pointed out the support for the #DóndeEstánEllas (Where is she) campaign of the European Parliament Office in Madrid and SWIIS contribution to the NATO Advisory Panel on Women, Peace and Security (#CSAP1325, @NATO1325).

Dr. Ana Belén Perianes referred in her speech to the pending challenge of participation in equal terms of women as peace building mediators and negotiators, as their role is key as agents of positive social transformation.

She also recalled the under-representation of women in public debates and conferences about foreign policy, terrorism or security and defence, as well as the need to increase the presence of women in peace operations, as they facilitate greater contact with local population and inspire local women.

Following these welcoming remarks, Secretary of State for Equality **Ms. Soledad Murillo** defended equality policies that are based on law and guarantee women autonomy, highlighting her department's good practices in stimulating social protection, as well as the role that civil society can play in getting mobilised against gender violence. According to Ms. Murillo, the access to education is key for eradicating the gender gap. In her opinion, the universality of rights must be at the heart of all policies and, above all, it must be avoided to use women bodies as war weapons. *"When violence is normalized, the country is sick"*, she assured. After pointing out some situations in different



geographical scenarios, she commented that women should be part of conflict resolution, although governments not always recognize them as full-right citizens. She also thinks that not taking women into account is an extreme lack of professionalism and *“to offer a different discourse is our obligation”*.

Then, Secretary of State for Security, **Ms. Ana Botella**, declared that working for gender equality among security forces is a moral obligation, as *“it exists an unquestionable lack; inequality, under-representation”* of women in many sectors of the society. In her analysis, the Secretary of State for Security marked out that the task of *“fully integrate women in ranks of National Police and Guardia Civil”* is still pending.

This year also commemorates the 40th anniversary of women’s participation in National Police and, after celebrating the 30th anniversary in the Guardia Civil last year, she stated that women *“have contributed and still contribute with modernity, equality, professionalism and talent to the law enforcement national bodies”*. According to her figures, women represent 14.86% of all members of National Police and 7.62% in Guardia Civil. In her opinion, *“the pace of incorporation in recent years has been slow and yields an inefficient result”*. These data reflect the urgent necessity to move forward the constructions of spaces for equality and *“to work for a greater participation, responsibility and visibility of Spanish women in police forces”*. She finished her speech pointing out that *“there are recent signs of improvement as the percentage of female students in practices in the National Police is around 25% while female Guardia Civil in practice exceeds 17%”*.

Finally, the Chairman of the welcoming panel, **Mr. Alfonso Gómez de Celis**, focused his intervention in the situation of women and girls in comparison with men in armed conflicts.

According to the First Vice President of the Congress, women are often invisible victims, raped, recruited and used as human shields, but they must change from being victims to being peacekeeping agents. To that end, 1325 and related resolutions constitute the pivotal political framework to incorporate gender perspective in prevention, management and resolution of armed conflicts.





FIRST ROUND TABLE



The first round-table, named “*Citizens in action: united for equality*”, was chaired by **Ms. Blanca Hernández Oliver**, former Delegate of the Government for Gender Violence (2012-2017) and Parliament Attorney. Invited briefers were Dr. Patricia González Aldea, International Relations Professor at Madrid’s Carlos III University; Major General Juan Antonio Moliner González, Deputy Director of the Gutiérrez Mellado Institute; Ms. Susana Lapique, Institutional Relations Director at Navantia and Ms. Celia Ferrero, Executive Vice-President of the National Federation of Self-Employed Workers (ATA in Spanish)

Dr. Patricia González analysed two events that Carlos III University has recently organized, in collaboration with ADESYD SWIIS, about Gender and Women, Diplomacy and Leadership. The briefer pointed out several facts: in 2015, just 23% of applicants to the diplomatic career in Spain were women, figure that reached just 25% in 2019. Spain has less than 20 women appointed as ambassadors and most of them are posted in Africa.

Apart from analysing the current situation in Spain, the briefer highlighted two cases: in Cyprus 50% of their diplomats are women and 20% of them are ambassadors. In Indonesia, a country with the largest Arab population, women diplomats reach 35%. Likewise, other issues were addressed during the speech, as sexual violence in armed conflicts, which was defined by Ambassador Nicolás Pascual de la Parte as “*cultural identity genocide*” because “*behind sexual violence against women there is something that goes beyond-the total destruction of a community and a minority*”. She also pointed out women as main victims of poverty and their struggle to participate in negotiation tables and enter the labour market in post-conflict situations.

Major General Moliner addressed the role of women in the Armed Forces. In 1988, 26 women joined the Armed Forces for the first time. Years later, Spanish Armed Forces were professionalized, currently having an active participation of women in all bodies and levels. For this purpose, the Armed Forces have made a great effort to adapt and



update all regulations governing this participation. According to the briefer, the situation is not perfect, but has been improving over the years. Nowadays, there are 15,000 women in the Armed Forces; some 3,000 Spaniards participate in international missions, and between 7% and 8% are women. As for the culture of defence, he stressed that more and more women are working on it. An example is that 40% of the PhD students at the General Gutiérrez Mellado's Institute (IUGM) are women, and that in its dissemination and construction "*women have a very important role to play*". In his opinion and as a conclusion, he stressed that in the Spanish Armed Forces women play a positive role and their situation is good, although it must be further improved.

Then, **Susana Lapique** explained the situation of women in Navantia. She stressed that today we find women in shipyards, which was not the case 27 years ago. However, amid the 3,900 workers that currently represent the workforce, just 500 are women (among older workers, the percentage of women is very low, but among young workers that percentage is equalized). Regarding daily tasks, 2% of blue collar, 15% of administrative workers and 24% of senior technicians are women.

To explain this data, she focused on social phenomena such as the low presence of women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and industrial FP (Vocational Training) careers and above all, the generational differences, pointing out that "*the older the age, the greater the wage gap*". Finally, the briefer pointed out two problems in which Navantia is working on: the cultural one (schools are invited to visit the shipyards so that girls find female referents) and the wage gap (This gap exists among older workers. However, it does not occur among younger workers, which is hopeful and positive. It is an indication that the company's current remuneration policies are equitable).

During the last speech, **Celia Ferrero** analysed the reality of women entrepreneurs. She suggested that women are more cautious when investing, and that 28% of new businesses led by women survive longer than those led by men entrepreneurs. Similarly, she pointed out that in crisis situations, there is a social phenomenon that repeats itself in history: women become active and enter massively into the labour market, either because they were expelled from that market and companies (first and before men), or to supplement household incomes. She insisted on the need of having female referents, indicating that women in Armed and Security Forces and Bodies are an inspiration for women entrepreneurs, and that digitalization and empowerment are helping more women to be self-employed (freelance). She advocated the essential collaboration between men and women, so that they could draw advantage from their differences and fight for equality. To conclude, she stressed that "*innovation and entrepreneurship today, must be essential ways for women to access all areas, including security and defence*".



SECOND ROUND TABLE

The second roundtable, named “**Spanish participation and influence in national and international forums**”, was shared by Ms. María Andrés Marín, director of the European Parliament Office in Spain; Col. Jesús Gil Ruiz, Women, Peace and Security Specialist at UN Women in Lebanon; Ms. Rosa Ruiz Fernández, International Section Chief at the Spanish Defence Magazine; Ms. Alla García, Senior Program Specialist at Open Society Initiative for Europe (OSIFE) and was moderated by Dr. Felipe Sahagún, ADESyD’ Honorary Council member.

Dr. Felipe Sahagún started the introduction of the round table propounding the changes suffered by women roles in journalism and generally in media, the evolution and step forward they have taken, but also pointing out how much is still left to do.

The first intervention was carried out by **Ms. María Andrés Marín**, director of the European Parliament Office in Spain, and she promptly pointed out that “*Europe is the best place in the world to be born a woman*”.

Supporting her speech with data, she focused on the importance of including gender equality into business, politics, in conflict resolution... as, according to her own words, “*is valuable and smart and we are losing so much not doing it*”.

Also, she mentioned the “glass ceiling” that women suffer and where she placed the touchstone of maternity. As she explained “*for a glass ceiling, two factors influence: conciliation and maternity and the lack of female referents. Do we have them? At the European Parliament, 41% of the parliamentarians are female for 2019-2024 legislature. According to the data, Sweden has 55% of women; France has parity because of the*



quota law; Cyprus has full male MEPs (Member of the European Parliament); regarding Slovakia, just 15% are women. These data would tell us if parity is or not an accelerator, although just quantity is not an indicator, also quality is. We have improved here in Spain. 47% of all our MEPs are women. Quotas come along with a gradual sensitivity change". María Andrés also wanted to emphasize in the campaign initiated by the European Parliament Office in Spain – #DóndeEstánEllas, *Where is She?* – through which signatory institutions commit themselves to make more room for women at conferences and panels and to avoid fully male panels.

After one and a half years since its launch, 73 institutions, including ADESyD-SWIIS, have joined the project and all together seek to give greater visibility to women.

Col. Jesús Gil, from Women, Peace, and Security Specialist, UN Women in Lebanon, started his speech reviewing Lebanon's history and the current situation in the country. Gil focused the discourse in analysing and explaining resolution 1325 of the National Plan, distinguished by: being a four-year action plan; assuring that all commitments regarding women, peace and security become a reality through policy changes and actions; including five strategic priorities with realistic, measurable and affordable interventions; and designing national institutions responsible for carrying out specific interventions.

As he explained, the plan is based on 5 principles: increase the participation of women in the decision-making process, conflict prevention, sexual and gender-based violence prevention and protection of victims, help and recovery, and finally, regulatory frameworks.

Mr. Gil also analyzed Lebanese women in the front line, based in the following concepts:

- Since the beginning of the protests, women are in the front line
- The specific and disproportionate injustices for people who have experience in the country
- Challenge for poor women, domestic migrant female workers, female refugees
- Women discriminated by national laws, economic practices and social and political norms.
- Example: Lebanese women cannot provide citizenship status to their children, leaving them stateless.

Ms. Rosa Ruiz Fernández, International Section Chief at the Spanish Defence Magazine, based her speech in the triple difficulty that women working in security and defence media face when performing their duties as equals:

- The first is conditioned by the unquestionable androcentric speech that dominates the world of information. Communication is power and the power is mainly masculine. The annual report made by Madrid's Press Association about



“The state of journalistic profession” notes that women represent 64% of the sector, but men cope 73% of the management positions.

- *“As woman, as mother and as a journalist for 30 years, covering the majority of all information regarding security and defence, I want to note how difficult is to exercise as a journalist in this area because of the unsolved incompatibilities between professional and personal life; a reality aggravated when dealing with jobs that demand time flexibility and prolonged home absences.*
- *Regarding the particularities of informing about security and defence, it is obvious that the war has been an exclusive subject for men for centuries and journalism that informs about it has also been a male issue until recently. It is also true that the number of female journalists has been increasing since late XX century and beginning of XXI century, but there are still many barriers to break. We have to stop being the exception. And the female professionals that inform and share defence sometimes feel some kind of paternalism, protection and even mistrust: what it is seen as bravery in a man, in a woman is madness and folly and, at the same time, it is doubtful that a woman can understand and have knowledge about strategic or defence topics”*

Also, she was wondering what female journalists can add to 2030 Agenda and to United Nations’ Resolution 1325 and subsequent. *“Our capability of dissemination in feminine. First, with a special sensitivity in focusing on who they are and what military do. We can and should explain to society not their job solely as professionals and why they are in places so far away from our country, but also their suffering and their experiences as fathers, mothers, partners, sons,..., as human beings often away from home and in danger.*

Regarding war victims, women are particularly repulsed by sexual violence or gender discrimination. We can contribute with a feminist consciousness that will benefit both our readers and women and girls who are the main focus of our information. Also we must give women a voice. We do not just listen to them, but we demonstrate that also they can do speak out, they can ask, they can denounce. And whatever they say is going to be disseminated, it is going to be known. Their voices can rise up and reach those who want to understand and remedy their suffering. It is more intimate woman to woman, easier to be understood, to enjoy the chat, in the proximity. We are the intermediaries to explain the world their suffering”.

Ms. Alla García, Senior Program Specialist at Open Society Initiative for Europe (OSIFE) intervened the last explaining the study she participated in about the presence of women in high-level conferences. For that purpose, 23 conferences, 122 events and more than 4,000 thematic panels have been analyzed to illustrate that, in Europe, there are few women as speakers/briefers and even less debate about gender.

As conclusions of her study, Alla highlighted that:



- *“Men not just dominate in conferences but also there are many topics considered only open for men. So, panels regarding themes as foreign affairs have 81% male speakers, figure similar to those about the European Union (80%), terrorism and security (79%), economy (78%), energy and environment (77%) or technology (76%)*
- *On the other hand, there are just two topics over 14 analyzed in which there are more female briefers men. There are those related to gender, with 78% female speakers, and discrimination (42%). But also these topics are the less frequent in high-level conferences: from over 4,600 panels analyzed in five years, barely 62 were about gender and 54 debated about discrimination.*
- *The underrepresentation in areas like gender or discrimination in these events demonstrate, according to the study, the lack of synchronism between these events and the European social and political reality”.*

She concluded establishing several recommendations:

- *“It is a structural problem that needs to be addresses from several perspectives.*
- *It is not only a matter that conference organizers do not want to invite female briefers, but also because there are less female experts for several topics.*
- *It is necessary to “empower” more women to become “experts in their own fields”*
- *It is necessary to create and appreciate the initiatives that invite briefers to decline invitations to speak in conferences without female representation.*
- *It is also important to take into account the balance between topics open for discussion and composition of briefers, followed by a better monitoring of the conference and its organizer”.*

The round table discussion ended up with open questions in which the public was able to share their experiences with the briefers, facilitating dialog and an exchange of impressions.



THIRD ROUND TABLE



The third round table of the Workshop was focused on ***the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: Towards the 20th anniversary***, and was moderated by Dr. Elena Peribañez, Director of the Human Rights Office at the Rey Juan Carlos University of Madrid. The round table counted with the participation of four outstanding speakers who with their professional experience in the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda made their interventions very enriching for the audience. The speakers of this round table were: Ms. Aída Fonseca Díaz, Professor, Department of Juridical Sciences at the European University of Madrid; Mr. Gonzalo García Galán, Commander of the Spanish Navy; Ms. Silvia Gil, Major of the Spanish Guardia Civil, and Ms. Berta Jiménez Bordés, Chief Inspector of the Spanish National Police. Both the moderator and the speakers are members of ADESyD and SWIIS.

Ms. Aída Fonseca Díaz focused her intervention on the concerns and challenges we face with respect to the sexual violence and abuse women and girls suffer in the context of armed conflicts.

The speaker pointed out that some issues should be addressed by the Spanish Public Administration in order to reinforce its commitment with the Second Spanish National Action Plan for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 for Women, Peace and Security (adopted in September 2017).

The situation of women and girls in armed conflict and post-conflict contexts is particularly serious. They face the risk of suffering high levels of illiteracy; access limitations to education; genital mutilation; healthcare access restrictions; employment discrimination; gender-based violence; forced and child marriage; the use of women and girls as instruments of war to perpetrate suicide attacks and to be sexually abused. Some worrying data was shown by the speaker: In more than 50 countries, the legal minimum age of marriage is lower for women than men; more than 200 million girls and women



around the world are victims of genital mutilation and this atrocity has dramatic physical and psychological consequences throughout their lives.

Professor Fonseca concluded her speech pointing out some key goals to meet the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda: To ensure a formal legal structure that supports gender equality; women and girls' empowerment; to increase women's participation in mediation processes; to guarantee the existence of safe spaces in refugee camps, and the creation of Mixed Courts for a better transitional justice.

Mr. Gonzalo García Galán focused his speech on the consequences of the Second Spanish National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in military operations on the ground. From his point of view, this Second Spanish National Action Plan is reaching positive global results in the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

The Speaker highlighted some key data referring to women's participation in international military operations: 278 servicewomen have taken part in this kind of missions in November 2018, representing an 8% of the total number. Almost half of them are Army members, and practically 75% are troop members, which is not a very positive fact as they are not decision makers. During 2018, from a total of 11,700 members of the Spanish Armed Forces who take part in international military operations, only 874 were women.

Gender training for members of the Spanish Armed Forces taking part in international military operations is crucial to achieve positive results in the framework of the Second National Action Plan. In this regard, the Spanish Ministry of Defence has launched its seventh edition of the National Course on Gender in Operations. It should be noted that the Spanish Ministry of Defence was declared Discipline leader on gender to train members of the Armed Forces.

Mr. García stated that the participation of servicewomen in international military operations is particularly important for women victims of armed conflicts, post-conflict contexts and violence. As women suffer violence disproportionately, and particularly, sexual abuse in such situations, the fact that servicewomen take part in field missions enable victims to contact them to share their experiences, which is essential to achieve greater success in operations.

Major Silvia Gil focused her intervention on the Guardia Civil female members' role in operations abroad. The Guardia Civil counts with female members within its organization since 1988 and they began to take part in peace operations abroad in 1995. To the present day, a total of 75 female members have participated in peace operations. It should be noted that the total number of male and female Guardia Civil members who



have taken part in operations abroad is 6,200 and that only 13.40% participate in peace operations.

It is worth mentioning that regarding these 75 Guardia Civil female members, 5.3% were officers and 94.6 % were Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO's). Given this information, Ms. Gil outlined that the situation of the Guardia Civil female members abroad is slightly better than that referred to the national territory. From the 6,000 female members currently serving in the Guardia Civil, 2.2% are officers and 97.8 % are NCO's.

The speaker shared relevant data from a survey carried out by the Guardia Civil to 534 female members of all ranks within its organization, namely 10% of the total women serving in the Guardia Civil and a representative average. In this regard, 77% endorsed the attention the Guardia Civil pays to gender equality and 75 % believed that further training on gender equality is still required. As for the integration of female members in missions abroad, according to the Guardia Civil, 80% would welcome their deployment and those who reject it, argue that this is due to personal or family reasons.

In short, Ms. Gil stressed that it is imperative that the Guardia Civil continued making progress on enhancing gender perspective in peace missions abroad because women's participation in that kind of operations is vital for their success and to move forward the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

Ms. Berta Jiménez Bordés addressed the issue of the situation of gender perspective in the Spanish National Police Force. The speaker outlined that gender mainstreaming in the field of radicalization, the use and suffering of violence, the impact of counter-terrorism measures or ensuring women leadership and empowerment is crucial for the work of the National Police Corps strategic guidelines.

The integration of women as members of the National Police Force marked 40 years in 2019. At present, the National Police is the Spanish Police Force with the greatest percentage of women in their ranks (14.85%). In this respect, at present (November 2019) the National Police Force counts with 9,636 female members within its ranks -at different levels and positions- representing 15% of the total number of police personnel. Furthermore, Ms. Jiménez pointed out some institutional developments in the National Police Force in order to move forward in gender equality. In this regard, the National Office for Gender Equality was created in 2018, which reports directly to the Director General's office. This enables gender perspective to reach the entire structure of the organization in a more adequate way. In addition, it is important to note that the National Office of Human Rights was created in 2019 and that the National Police Force counts with an Inclusive Language Guide to support the visibility of women within this Institution.



Likewise, the speaker outlined that it is essential to increase the presence of women in leadership positions so that corporate strategies enrich themselves with the perspective of both genders. In this respect, there are only 26 female Commissioners and 9 female Principal Commissioners. From her point of view, there is neither a lack of capacity nor of professional qualification among female members of the National Police Force. In fact, leadership positions are seconded by a system of free appointment and what women are missing is the lack of access to communication channels.

Finally, it is worth noting that the moderator, **Dr. Elena Peribañez**, expressed her disappointment with the lack of accountability on part of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation referring to the Second Spanish National Action Plan for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 for Women, Peace and Security (adopted in September 2017).





CLOSURE



The closure was carried out by **Ms. Pilar Allué Blasco**, Principal Commissioner of the National Police and Deputy Director of Training and Human Resources and by Colonel Auditor of the Military Legal Corps, **Begoña Aramendía Rodríguez de Austria**, Technical Deputy Secretary General of Ministry of Defence. They are the two senior ranked females in National Security Forces and Armed Forces that have respectively achieved the highest positions in the Ministries of the Interior and Defence.

Commissioner Pilar Allué began her speech highlighting how female participation has been increasing in a bicentennial institution as the National Police, since the approval of their incorporation in 1979. As a military institute of civil nature reporting to the Ministry of the Interior, she evoked the mission of the National Security Forces based on the Spanish Constitution Article 104: *“to protect the free exercise of rights and freedoms and guarantee public safety”*.

Spotlighted by her speech, the audience could appreciate how National Police has been adapting to become a modern security structure where women are represented at all levels, although unequally and somehow unevenly; women represent 50% of the population but are just 15% of the National Police members, a situation still nowadays far away from equity.

The evolution of their participation has been gradual but still kept within quite acceptable figures in comparison with those from Guardia Civil and Armed Forces,



although there are several reasons explaining these differences. Women today are represented in all police units and collaborate in the international arena to turn the world into a safer place, exercising their functions at INTERPOL, EUROPOL, OSCE, FRONTEX, in international missions, and as Ministry of the Interior, counsellors in diplomatic delegations overseas.

From an institutional point of view, the Commissioner stressed the role of the National Office for Gender Equality, created in 2018, and the international seminar conducted last November in Toledo commemorating the 40th anniversary of women's incorporation to National Police. In her own opinion, the future of women in police forces implies promoting measures to close the gender gap and encouraging equality policies, overcoming some glass ceilings still pending.

As Deputy Director, she stated that, her objectives include stimulating a work environment in conditions of equality; preventing gender disparities, promoting respect to diversity and ensuring that the incorporation of women becomes a fact, making this career more appealing for women, as it is characterized by its public service vocation. In this regard, she encouraged women in this arena to take a step forward in their professional careers. *"We have come here to stay and we are an important asset in this institution"* she expressed.

Colonel Aramendía focused her speech in the important evolution women have experienced in the Armed Forces from the approval of Royal Decree-Law 1/1198, on 22 February, which allowed access for women to 24 different bodies and ranks, up until Law 17/1989, regulating the Status of Military Personnel, which extended the access of women to bodies and ranks for the Army, Navy and Air Force. However, it was not until the enactment of Law 17/1999, 18 May, regarding military personnel, when the effective parity among men and women inside this institution was achieved; an issue not yet solved in all Western armies. Consequently, gender equality was configured as a focal point and transversal axis of the Military Career Law, adopted in 2007, and also of the 2009 Royal Ordinances and 2011 Law on the Rights and Duties of the Armed Forces members.

After analysing this regulatory evolution, Colonel Aramendía referred to the institutional development, within the Under Secretariat of the Ministry of Defence, of several organs until the current configuration of the Military Observatory for Equality, as collegiate body involving representatives of men and women from the Army, Navy and Air Force, Common Bodies and from all military categories. She let the audience know that the current percentage of women in the Armed Forces reaches 12.8% of the total troops. This percentage is one of the highest in comparison to NATO countries, an organization that also has the *NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives* to address these matters inside the Alliance.



Precisely, Colonel Aramendía's experience in international missions in Kosovo, Afghanistan, Bosnia and Lebanon allowed her to verify that there is full equality between men and women in the military field as there are no limitations when applying for assignments and occupying tactical or operational positions.

Likewise, she assesses that different political measures undertaken in recent years have been able to contribute to training on gender in operations, both at national and international level, as well as spurred the participation of women in the armed forces in different scenarios. Also, work continues to be under way to make the military profession more appealing to women, promoting the achievements of true military referents in our society.

After these interventions, **Dr. Marian Caracuel** thanked their interesting speeches, as well as the audience for their presence and active participation throughout the whole event, which encourages the Association to keep working along this line to bring issues related to gender equality in security and defence closer to the society. She also thanked the Congress and protocol staff for their excellent contribution to the success of the event, taking into account the quality of the briefings and the depth and scope of the issues raised in the debates.

CONCLUSIONS

The event was an excellent opportunity for debating with top political representatives and from different professional backgrounds the importance of raising awareness and promoting gender perspective in international issues related to peace, security and defence. In this context, all briefings complemented each other and were very enriching, as they shared visions and lessons learned in this field of expertise, both from individuals or institutions.

Also, the event highlighted the necessity of promoting female leadership in these areas, giving visibility to top female referents and talent in different disciplines, as well as promoting better understanding of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (MPS) and Agenda 2030 of Sustainable Development Objectives, especially those related to gender equality and women participation in conflict resolution.

ADESyD will remain committed to these tasks in the short, medium and long terms!



EVENT

Hashtags:

#MujeresEnSeguridadyDefensa

#Women in SecurityAndDefence

#DóndeEstánEllas

#WomenInSTEMSD

For more information and documentation please visit

<http://www.adesyd.es/swiis/index.php>





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