

Albania



National Action Plan 1325: Most countries have already adopted their second generation of action plans, except for Albania, which was the last in the region to adopt the first action plan in 2018. The Albanian action plan expired in 2020 and there seems to be no political will to draft a new one. The Ministry of Defence however states that it complies with other gender-related documents, such as the newly adopted National Strategy on Gender Equality 2021-2030. The Ministry is focused on fulfilling three strategic goals: promoting and enhancing women's leadership in the military, increasing women's participation in missions and operations, and increasing the number of women in the Albanian military representations in NATO command structures and the number of women in diplomatic missions.



Participation of women in the MoDs and the Armed Forces: There was a 14.01% representation of female military personnel in the Armed Forces in 2020, which was an increase of 0.27% compared to December 2019. The total number of employees in the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces is 7,413, of which 18.6% are women. Albania will therefore soon meet the NATO standard of 15% of female uniformed personnel in the armed forces. However, Albania is the only country in the region with the quota for women in the army (15%) that can affect their further admission. The increase of representation of women in the armed forces is slow, given that the percentage of women military personnel in the armed forces in 2011 was 12.3%, in 2012 - 13.42%, while in 2013 it decreased to 11.2%. Still, Albania had the highest percentage of women officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) in 2020 - 19.51% of officers (341 out of the total of 1,747) and 14.89% of non-commissioned officers (348 out of the total of 2,337). The percentage of women among the civil employees in the MoD is 35.55%. In other words, out of 1,578 civil servants, 561 are women.



Representation of women in command and leadership positions: There are no precise data on the representation of women in command and leadership positions. The highest rank held by women in the Albanian Armed Forces is that of Major General. This rank is held by Manushaqe Shehu, who became the first female Deputy Chief of General Staff of the Albanian Armed Forces in 2018. Until recently, Albania had two women defence ministers, who headed the Ministry from 2013 to 2020. Mrs. Olta Xhaçka was the second woman to be appointed Minister of Defence (2017-2020) after Mrs. Mimi Kodheli, who led the defence sector for four consecutive years. There are also other decision-making positions held by women, such as that of Deputy Defence Minister.



Participation of women in peacekeeping operations: Albania has been a member of NATO for almost 15 years. However, it is only in the last three that the percentage of women in NATO operations has increased. Albania has increased the representation of women in NATO operations by 75%, from 4% in 2018 to 7% in 2019. Lieutenant Aurela Bala and Sergeant Esmeralda Murati were the first two women from the Albanian Armed Forces to take part in an international naval operation in 2017, i.e. the NATO operation "Sea Guardian" in the Aegean Sea to monitor and prevent illegal immigration into the EU. Apart from NATO operations, two women peacekeepers from Albania were also engaged in UN operations in 2020.