

**National Action Plan on the Implementation of the UN Security Council  
Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in Latvia for the period of  
2020-2025**

Riga, 2020

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## **Abbreviations used:**

<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNSC</b>	United Nations Security Council
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>OSCE</b>	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>EEAS</b>	European External Action Service
<b>MFA</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<b>MoD</b>	Ministry of Defence
<b>MoI</b>	Ministry of the Interior
<b>MoES</b>	Ministry of Education and Science
<b>MoW</b>	Ministry of Welfare
<b>MoH</b>	Ministry of Health
<b>NAF</b>	National Armed Forces

## I. Summary of the plan

The National Action Plan for the Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (hereinafter – the UNSC Resolution) in Latvia for the period of 2020-2025 has been designed for the sake of implementing the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia No. 210 of 7 May 2019 (hereinafter – the Order) “On the Government Action Plan for the Implementation of the Declaration on the Intended Activities of the Cabinet of Ministers Led by Arturs Krišjānis Kariņš” (hereinafter – the Government Action Plan). The Order endorsed Task 3 set out in Paragraph 218.1 of the Government Action Plan – Promotion of gender equality at the national and international level, paying special attention to the promotion of women’s participation in leading positions (decision-making) in the Armed Forces, public institutions, politics, as well as the elimination of all forms of gender-based violence by preparing a National Action Plan.

The origin of the theme of Women, Peace and Security dates back to the unanimously adopted Resolution 1325 by the United Nations Security Council (hereinafter – UNSC) in 2000. The aim of the UNSC Resolution was to integrate a gender perspective into conflict resolution, given that gender inequalities increase during conflicts, women’s access to health care and education is restricted, and women’s opportunities for economic and political participation are reduced. The UNSC set the task of changing the existing situation throughout the UN system, setting out four main objectives for the UNSC resolution:

1. Prevention – prevention of gender-based violence and awareness raising in conflict prevention;
2. Protection – protection of women and girls, including health and well-being;
3. Participation – women’s participation in peace processes and decision-making, both within the UN system and at the local level;
4. Gender mainstreaming in conflict stabilization efforts, increasing the role of women in conflict resolution and post-conflict stabilization, and protecting women from gender-based violence, including sexual abuse.

Therefore, this UNSC Resolution marked the beginning of a new process in which a gender perspective became an integral part of international politics. At a later stage, the UNSC adopted nine more resolutions on Women, Peace and Security, which reinforce the role of various non-military instruments, increasingly including development cooperation, humanitarian aid, education and many other elements, which also increase women's participation.

UNSC Resolution 1325 is binding for all UN member states. Elements of this resolution are integrated into the policies and activities of the EU, NATO and other international organizations. Latvia is bound by decisions and policies that are agreed upon within international organizations as a member of international organizations, including the integration of the objectives of UNSC Resolution 1325 into national policy. To date, 83 countries have developed their national coordination systems of implementation for the UNSC Resolution.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereinafter – MFA) established a working group for the drafting of the National Action Plan, which included representatives from the MFA, Ministry of Defence (hereinafter – MoD), Ministry of the Interior (hereinafter – MoI), Ministry of Education and Science (hereinafter – MoES), Ministry of Welfare (hereinafter – MoW), Ministry of Health (hereinafter – MoH). In the drafting process, the working group consulted with non-governmental organizations, civil society and academia. The National Action Plan will be used to coordinate the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 instead of gender

equality issues, and therefore the MFA will coordinate the implementation of the goals included in it, as is the case in other EU countries. Latvia's National Action Plan covers the period from 2020 to 2025.

The aim of the National Action Plan is to develop and improve coordinated actions for the maintenance of peace and security at the international and national levels taking into account the principles of gender equality.

The National Action Plan envisages the implementation of the following sub-objectives:

1. Purposeful and coordinated activities in the implementation of the *Women, Peace and Security* agenda in international organizations and formats.
2. Raising public awareness of *Women, Peace and Security* and reduce gender-based violence.
3. Educating the new generation and raising awareness of gender equality and the prevention of gender-based violence.
4. Capacity building of the Defence and Internal Affairs sector on gender issues.
5. Promoting the exchange of knowledge and experience on the UNSC Resolution in the framework of bilateral and multilateral development cooperation.

The tasks and activities envisaged in the National Action Plan are implemented in co-operation with other line ministries like MoD, MoES, MoI, MoW and non-governmental organizations within the budget resources allocated to the responsible institutions.

Canada will be an important co-operation partner in the implementation of the National Action Plan, as the Canadian Embassy in Latvia has offered its support and expertise on *Women, Peace and Security* issues. During the implementation period of the National Action Plan, Latvia intends to intensify co-operation with other countries, especially the Nordic countries, which have accumulated many years of experience and knowledge on gender equality issues.

The lines of action of the National Action Plan are consistent with Latvia's current policy and activities in the field of gender equality, and the plan is meant to serve as an important tool for better exchange of information and coordination in implementing the UNSC resolution at a national level.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has developed a communication plan taking into account national and international developments on *Women, Peace and Security*. Latvia's National Action Plan has its Ambassadors – well-known people from different backgrounds, who raise awareness on *Women, Peace, Security* and gender equality topics, presenting it to the public via their social networks, thus contributing to one of the tasks of the National Action Plan – raising public awareness.

Latvian civil society has also shown interest in participating in communication related to the National Action Plan, for example the "Sparkle Heart" association has launched a new initiative. This NGO has created a social media platform of 99 short films about 99 inspiring Latvian women.

The National Action Plan will be available on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and via other digital media. The Latvian embassies and missions to international organizations will also be involved in the communication on the National Action Plan.

## **II. Description of the current situation**

### **II. 1. International activities**

#### **II.1.1. UNSC Resolution and its international role**

Gender equality and the *Women, Peace and Security* theme plays an increasing role at the global level.

Gender equality is one of the preconditions for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals<sup>1</sup> of eradicating poverty, combating inequality and tackling climate change enshrined in the 2030 Agenda. The goal of the National Action Plan is in line with the 2030 Agenda and the 5<sup>th</sup> Sustainable Development Goal “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”.

Gender equality is at the heart of the EU’s defined values and an enduring priority in all EU policies and efforts to support sustainable peace, security, human rights, justice and development. The EU and its Member States are committed to the full implementation of the *Women, Peace and Security* agenda in cooperation with other regional and international organizations.

The gender perspective is also integrated into NATO policy, including in the planning, implementation and evaluation of NATO’s operations and mission policy. NATO is aware that the Alliance must set an example in respecting women’s rights in the areas of peace and security in its core tasks of collective defence, security and crisis management.

2020 will mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UNSC Resolution and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Programme of Action<sup>2</sup>; therefore, gender equality has a special role this year and will be widely addressed in various international formats.

#### **II.1.2. Latvia's foreign policy in the context of UNSC Resolution 1325**

Latvia is active in promoting gender equality and the *Women, Peace and Security* agenda in all major international formats – the UN, the EU, NATO, the OSCE, the OECD, as well as in Nordic-Baltic working groups. Latvia regularly makes voluntary contributions to the budget for UN Women<sup>3</sup>.

Gender equality was one of the thematic priorities of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2015 and also during Latvia’s activities in the UN Human Rights Council from 2015-2017.

Gender equality and the reduction of the impact of the illicit trade in conventional weapons on gender-based violence were the thematic priorities of the Latvian Presidency of the Arms Trade Treaty. The Action Plan for the Elimination of Gender-Based Violence adopted during the Latvian Presidency from August 2018 to August 2019 was the first intergovernmental

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/declar.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Latvia contributed USD 10,000 in 2013, USD 10,000 in 2014, USD 10,000 in 2015, USD 10,000 in 2016, EUR 20,000 in 2018, and EUR 10,000 in 2019.

document of its kind. One hundred six countries joined the Action Plan, recognizing the impact of gender on armed violence and conflict, and agreed to share information on how they apply the criteria for assessing the risk of gender-based violence.

Latvia actively advocated that gender equality be a separate goal in the Sustainable Development 2030 goals.

Latvia has put itself forward as a candidate for the 2020 elections to the UN Commission on the Status of Women for the period 2021-2025, the main institution for promoting gender equality policy and women's rights at a global level.

The implementation of the goals of UNSC Resolution 1325 and the implementation of the National Action Plan is an essential precondition for Latvia's candidacy in the UNSC elections in 2025 (for the period of 2026-2027).

## **II. 2. Gender equality in Latvia and raising awareness of gender-based violence**

At present, with 59.7 points, Latvia ranks 18<sup>th</sup> in the European Gender Equality Index, which is a lower score compared to the EU average of 67.4 points<sup>4</sup>. Nevertheless, gender equality in Latvia is gradually improving. There are changes in public attitudes and perceptions about the need to ensure equal opportunities for women and men and how these principles are followed in practice. In a 2019 research titled "Women, Business and Law"<sup>5</sup>, the World Bank found that Latvia is one of the six countries in the world to ensure full gender equality in regulatory enactments.

Latvia has chosen an integrated approach to ensure gender equality. In both their design and implementation phases, and when involving stakeholders and partners, gender equality is viewed as a horizontal principle that is to be included in the national policies and regulations related to defence, foreign affairs, the economy, finance, internal affairs, education, youth, science, culture, welfare, transport, justice, health, environment, regional development and agriculture. Policy priorities and measures in the medium term are based on an integrated approach and spelled out in the Plan for the Promotion of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men for 2018-2020. The plan aims to promote the implementation of integrated, targeted and effective sector-specific policies, thus promoting the implementation of equal rights and opportunities for women and men in life. The plan pays particular attention to ensuring equality between women and men in the labour market and in lifelong education, as well as to reduce gender-based violence and raise awareness of gender equality among professionals and the public.

Latvia has also developed a "Concept for the Implementation of Gender Equality"<sup>6</sup> to promote an effective, integrated and coordinated resolution of gender equality issues by identifying priority issues (problems and possible consequences) in the field of gender equality in Latvia. The National Action Plan is complementary to this document and does not duplicate the policy goals, lines of action and tasks.

The Latvian National Armed Forces (NAF) is one of those leading the way amongst NATO armed forces in terms of women's representation. 15.3% of the personnel in Latvia's armed forces are women, and 17% of those serving in the National Guard are women, which is above the NATO average of 10%. The share of Latvian women in international operations is 6%. In

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<sup>4</sup> <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2019/LV>

<sup>5</sup> <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/702301554216687135/WBL-DECADE-OF-REFORM-2019-WEB-04-01.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.lm.gov.lv/upload/petijumi/dzimumu\\_lidztiesiba.doc](http://www.lm.gov.lv/upload/petijumi/dzimumu_lidztiesiba.doc)

the Latvian Army, women have never been restricted in the positions they can take. Ten women hold the rank of lieutenant colonel in the NAF (in total 128 persons, of which 118 are men and 10 are women). Latvia has included the principles of UNSC Resolution 1325 in the NAF-related legal norms and regulations, as well as in the training programmes before the deployment of a contingent. In 2020, for the first time, a woman was posted as Latvia's resident military attaché abroad, in the United States. In 2019, the number of Latvian civilian experts in international missions was 25, of which five were women (20%).

Promoting gender equality is also one of the basic principles of Latvia's development cooperation policy. Latvia's development co-operation framework from 2016 to 2020 envisages channelling 8% of bilateral development assistance into support for the strengthening of gender equality in development partner countries. During development cooperation grant project competitions, an assessment is made on how the project will be respecting and taking into account the principles of gender equality. Development cooperation projects with the direct aim of promoting gender equality are also supported.

In recent years, Latvia has made significant changes to its laws and regulations to reduce domestic violence and violence against women, as well as educational work to promote the understanding of the specialists concerned with domestic violence issues and to strengthen inter-institutional cooperation for effective resolution of cases of violence. In the face of gender-based violence, it is important to talk about referring the victim for help, where inter-institutional cooperation and action is crucial.

Several Latvian non-governmental organizations are also actively involved in reducing gender-based violence. Although the implemented measures have reduced public tolerance for violence, it is important to further improve the knowledge and skills of the specialists involved, to strengthen inter-institutional cooperation, as well as implementing measures to address the causes of violence. For example, in the Latvian defence sector, there is a need for training which is purposefully planned and aimed at promoting awareness of gender equality and reducing gender-based violence. In February 2020, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women evaluated Latvia's report on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in Latvia from 2005 to 2017. The Committee noted Latvia's achievements in promoting gender equality, while recommending the government's priority to focus on prevention, identification of the causes of violence and support measures.

## **II. 3. Objectives, lines of action and evaluation of the National Action Plan**

The aim of the National Action Plan is to promote a general understanding of the principles of UNSC Resolution 1325 in public administration and Latvian society. An important target group of the National Action Plan is the younger generation – it is important to promote early understanding of issues related to gender equality and the prevention of gender-based violence.

The National Action Plan envisages three main tasks: (1) raising public awareness of gender equality issues and the elimination of gender-based violence, especially in the younger generation; (2) training for the Defence and Internal Affairs sector, including the establishment of a gender adviser's position; and (3) transfer of Latvia's experience and knowledge.

Although in many areas Latvia's gender equality indicators are better than in other EU and NATO member states, it is necessary to promote public awareness of the importance of the *Women, Peace and Security* agenda, gender equality and the elimination of gender-based violence. According to the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, gender discrimination still affects

many young people, especially young women, and raising young people's awareness of gender equality, gender-based violence and the objectives of the UNSC Resolution is particularly important.

Latvia's latest educational standards stipulate that the topic of gender equality be reflected in the teaching process of schools providing a general education. In order to promote understanding and knowledge among the members of Latvian society and the new generation about the goals of the UNSC Resolution, the National Action Plan envisages organizing three international conferences. The first conference is geared to attract Canadian experts with long-term experience on *Women, Peace and Security* issues. An active partner in reaching out to the new generation will be a youth organization (*Klubs Maja*) – Youth for a United Europe, which will organize discussions on gender equality and the National Action Plan with youth within the framework of the UN Youth Delegates Program.

The second important line of action of the National Action Plan is training for the Defence and Internal Affairs sector. The plan envisages creating the currently lacking position of a gender adviser in the Latvian Defence and Internal Affairs sector. The gender adviser will develop guidelines and proposals for the management of the defence agencies and institutions in regard to gender mainstreaming in military operations and missions, crisis and conflict situations, and educate on gender equality and gender-based violence in the Internal Affairs and Defence structures. Latvia will develop a training programme for gender advisers in collaboration with Canada.

It is important to not only promote the awareness of the Latvian society, but also transfer the acquired knowledge and accumulated experience to third countries, thus offering education on gender equality and gender-related violence to the widest possible international community. Therefore, the third task of the National Action Plan is the transfer of Latvia's knowledge and experience to the Eastern Partnership and Central Asian countries in order to promote UNSC Resolution 1325, gender equality and elimination of gender-based violence. In order to implement this task, in addition to state institutions, the role of Latvian non-governmental organizations is especially emphasized. Latvian non-governmental organizations make a significant contribution to the field of gender equality and reduction of gender-based violence not only in Latvia but abroad.

One of the best-known Latvian non-governmental organizations, which is active in the Central Asian region on gender equality issues, as well as expanding economic opportunities for women and girls, providing access to education and trying to prevent early marriages, is the Resource Centre for Women MARTA. Successfully operates the Latvian Women's Non-Governmental Organizations Cooperation Network, which performs the functions of national coordination and delegating representatives to the European Observatory on the Prevention of Violence against Women. They also cooperates with public administration institutions and local governments, and participates in promoting women's participation in political decision-making.

The following table shows the lines of action, responsible institutions and the period envisaged in the National Action Plan:

The aim of the plan is to promote a general understanding of the principles of the UNSC Resolution in public administration and Latvian society				Lines of action of the National Action Plan		
Policy results and performance indicators in December 2025				<p>1. The awareness and knowledge about UNSC Resolution 1325 in the Latvian society, especially the younger generation, will increase.</p> <p>2. The Latvian Defence and Internal Affairs sector will be trained and educated on gender equality and elimination of gender-based violence. 3 positions of a gender adviser to be created in the Latvian Defence sector, and one position of a gender adviser in the Internal Affairs sector in the period of implementation of the National Action Plan from 2020 to 2025.</p> <p>3. Latvia's knowledge and experience to be transferred to the Eastern Partnership and Central Asian countries in order to promote the UNSC Resolution, gender equality and elimination of gender-based violence.</p>		
1. Line of action				Raising public awareness		
No.	Event	Result of action	Performance indicator	Responsible institution	Co-responsible institutions	Deadline (to the nearest six months)
<b>Raising public awareness of the importance of the UNSCR resolution, gender equality and the elimination of gender-based violence</b>						
1.	<b>International conference on Women, Peace and Security and the prevention of gender-based violence</b>	Raising public awareness of the importance of the <i>Women, Peace and Security</i> topic, gender equality and the elimination of gender-based violence	3 international conferences	MFA	MoD, MoW, MoES, MoI, MoH	Three conferences are planned:  until 1 December 2020; until 1 December 2022; until 1 December, 2024.
2.	<b>Reflection of gender issues and the elimination of gender-based violence in the teaching process of schools offering a general education</b>	Raising public awareness of the importance of the <i>Women, Peace and Security</i> topic, gender equality and the elimination of gender-based violence	Gender equality and the reduction of gender-based violence are regularly covered in the teaching process of general education schools	MoES (National Centre for Education)		2nd half of 2025
3.	<b>Gender mainstreaming and human rights in youth work and non-formal education</b>	Raising public awareness of the importance of the <i>Women, Peace and Security</i> topic, gender equality and the elimination of gender-based violence	Regularly updated gender and human rights issues in youth work and informal education	MoES (Agency for International Programs for Youth )		2nd half of 2025
4.	<b>Exhibition about women / girls in the NAF and the National Guard and other thematic exhibitions</b>	Raising public awareness of the importance of the topic of <i>Women, Peace and Security</i> , gender	2 exhibitions	MFA	MoD	Every 2 years

		equality and the elimination of gender-based violence				
5.	<b>Engaging Latvian Embassies and Missions on the topic of <i>Women, Peace and Security</i> and in promoting the National Action Plan</b>	Raising public awareness of the importance of the <i>Women, Peace and Security</i> topic, gender equality and the elimination of gender-based violence	Latvian embassies and missions provide information on social media platforms and in the mass media concerning <i>Women, Peace and Security</i> and the National Action Plan	MFA		2nd half of 2025
6.	<b>Implementation of the Communication Plan on <i>Women, Peace and Security</i>, promotion of the topic and the National Action Plan both on social media and media, as well as at national-level events and in international organizations</b>	Raising public awareness of the importance of the <i>Women, Peace and Security</i> topic, gender equality and the elimination of gender-based violence	To regularly integrate the <i>Women, Peace and Security</i> agenda at a national level; regularly cover the topic of <i>Women, Peace and Security</i> on both social platforms and in the media	MFA		2nd half of 2025
7.	<b>Establishment of a contact point network of persons / institutions involved in the implementation of the <i>Women, Peace and Security</i> agenda</b>	Raising public awareness of the importance of the <i>Women, Peace and Security</i> topic, gender equality and the elimination of gender-based violence	A contact point network has been set up	MFA		2nd half of 2025
<b>2. Line of action</b>				<b>Training / education on gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence, and the establishment of the position of gender advisers in the Latvian defence and internal affairs sector</b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Result of action</b>	<b>Performance indicator</b>	<b>Responsible institution</b>	<b>Co - responsible institutions</b>	<b>Deadline (to the nearest six months)</b>
<b>Training on gender equality and the prevention of gender-based violence; creation of a gender adviser position in the Latvian defence and internal affairs sector</b>						
1.	<b>Training on gender equality and reduction of gender-based violence in the Latvian Defence and Internal Affairs sector</b>	Training on gender equality and the prevention of gender-based violence	5 training cycles in the Latvian Defence and Internal Affairs sector in the period from 2020 to 2025	MFA, MoD	MoI	2nd half of 2025
2.	<b>Training for a selected group of people in the Latvian Defence</b>	Establishment of a position of a gender adviser in the Latvian	3 gender adviser positions in the Latvian Defence sector and 1 gender	MoD, MoI		2nd half of 2025

	<b>and Internal Affairs sector to create a gender adviser position</b>	Defence and Internal Affairs sector	adviser position in the Latvian Internal Affairs sector in the period from 2020 to 2025			
<b>3. Line of action</b>				<b>Transfer of Latvian knowledge and experience</b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Result of action</b>	<b>Performance indicator</b>	<b>Responsible institution</b>	<b>Co-responsible institutions</b>	<b>Deadline (to the nearest six months)</b>
<b>Transfer of knowledge and experience gained, promotion of the international implementation of the "Women, Peace and Security" objectives</b>						
1.	<b>Support the Women, Peace and Security initiative in international organizations and formats</b>	Transfer of knowledge and experience gained, promotion of the international implementation of the <i>Women, Peace and Security</i> objectives	Support 10 to 20 <i>Women, Peace and Security</i> initiatives per year in international organizations and formats	MFA, Latvian diplomatic missions abroad	MoD, MoW	2nd half of 2025
2.	<b>Participation of Latvian women in the team of civilian experts in EU and OSCE missions in Ukraine</b>	Transfer of knowledge and experience gained, promotion of the international implementation of the <i>Women, Peace and Security</i> objectives	Participation of Latvian women as civilian experts in international missions – share of women at least 20%	MFA	MoD	2nd half of 2025
3.	<b>Transfer of practical working methods and experience to promote gender equality and the reduction of gender-based violence in Central Asia and the Eastern Partnership countries</b>	Transfer of knowledge and experience gained, promotion of the international implementation of the <i>Women, Peace and Security</i> objectives	One study programme implemented within the framework of the development cooperation grant project competition	MFA		2nd half of 2025
4.	<b>Further integrate the gender perspective in the targeting of development cooperation funding</b>	Transfer of knowledge and experience gained, promotion of the international implementation of the <i>Women, Peace and Security</i> objectives	Gender mainstreaming in development cooperation funding	MFA		2nd half of 2025

A new inter-ministerial working group headed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs shall be established to evaluate the National Action Plan. Working group meetings will be convened when necessary.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will prepare and submit a mid-term evaluation of the National Action Plan to the Cabinet of Ministers by 1 December 2024, and information on the implementation of the National Action Plan by 1 March 2026, ensuring the possibility of seamless transition from one period of the plan to the next.

The contact point of UNSC Resolution 1325 in Latvia is the Department of International Organizations and Human Rights of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and it will also maintain contact and communicate with the contact points of the international network.

### **III. Territorial perspective**

Not applicable.

### **IV. Impact assessment on the state and local government budget**

The plan is implemented within the budget of the institutions.