



UNSC Resolution 1325 fifteen years on

by Marta Martinelli

October 2015 will mark the 15th anniversary of the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women and conflicts. While recognising the disproportionate impact of conflict on women and girls, UNSCR 1325 and its corollary resolutions also acknowledge that women have vital perspectives to offer in both analysing the drivers of conflicts and identifying solutions to them. UNSCR 1325 established a demand for women's increased leadership and participation in all efforts to establish peace and security.

This is seen as essential for effective peacebuilding, because it brings to bear women's specific experiences of war and peace and their unique insights on locally-owned definitions of security, state-citizens relations and development.

Much has been achieved over the past 15 years. Europe is the region with the highest number of countries (23) to have adopted a National Action Plan to implement the Resolution (although only 17 out of 28 EU member states have done so), but the operationalisation of UNSCR 1325 is still confronted with key challenges. In particular, women's leadership in EU foreign policy, accountability mechanisms, capacity building and financing are all critical areas of work that can help the EU ensure a meaningful implementation of the Resolution.

From 1325 to the Comprehensive Approach

UNSCR 1325 was adopted in late 2000, at the end of a decade of horrific conflicts (former Yugoslavia, Somalia, Rwanda and the repeated bouts of violence in the Congo, to name but a few). The Security Council acknowledged the changing nature of warfare and the fact that civilians 'and women and children in particular' represent a disproportionate number of victims of armed conflict. The international debate was thus focused on how to ensure better protection of civilians and, for the first time, sexual violence in conflict was recognised as a matter of international security. The two key components of the Resolution are (a) addressing sexual violence in times of armed conflict and (b) increasing women's participation in peace processes and political institutions.

Resolution 1325 has clearly contributed to an increased recognition of the importance of gender issues and of women's role in the Union's external policies, particularly when managing crises. In 2006 the European Council adopted *Conclusions on Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming in Crisis Management* (doc. 14884/1/06). Subsequently, the 2008 *EU Guidelines on violence against women and girls and combating all forms of discrimination against them* enhanced the EU's work on combating gender



discrimination abroad. The same year the EU adopted a *'Comprehensive approach to the EU implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security'* (CA). The CA instructs the EU to refer to UNSCR 1325 in its political dialogues with third countries and regional organisations; in its policies and programmes; and in its strategic use of funds such as the European Development Instrument, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, and the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP). In 2010, the Council also adopted the *Revised Guidelines on the Protection of Civilians in CSDP Missions and Operations*.

In addition to these broad policy frameworks, the EU has proceeded to develop work-level policy tools. For instance, in 2013 the European Commission adopted a Staff Working Document on Gender and Humanitarian Assistance, which aims at producing more effective and tailor-made responses to how crises affect women, girls, men and boys in different ways. The same year new Crisis Management Procedures (CMPs) for CSDP missions were developed with the requirement to include specific analysis of human rights and gender issues in the mission's planning documents.

The EU missions' Concept of Operations and Operation Plans now also include annexes on human rights and gender. Human Rights Strategies have been adopted for the countries which host a CSDP mission, and each strategy includes an assessment of the women's rights situation in the country concerned.

Heads of Delegations are meant to include gender issues in their diplomatic exchanges with host country authorities, inform Brussels of significant developments in relation to women's rights, and ensure that all EU delegations' initiatives are consistent with the EU commitments to gender equality and women's protection and participation in peace processes. Some EU Special Representatives' mandates also include wording about women's rights protection.

In terms of staffing, the EU strives to achieve gender balance in all relevant bodies involved in CSDP missions and encourages member states and the EEAS to consider gender balance when nominating personnel for positions at all levels. Several CSDP missions are staffed with a gender adviser tasked

with providing the missions with gender analysis, implementing agreed gender programmes in the country of deployment and engaging with the EU delegations and other international agencies to exchange best practices and share information.

Training plays a key role in building awareness of the values embodied by UNSCR 1325. The European Security and Defence College – which offers courses on EU crisis management – now includes training modules on gender. Staff of EU delegations also undergo regular training on gender issues in the countries in which they operate. A 'Women Peace and Security Task Force', comprising of personnel working on gender equality and security issues in the EEAS and in the Commission, has been set up at HQ level to increase inter-institutional coordination and promote coherence as well as consult regularly with civil society representatives. Finally, a community of practice has been established with gender advisors assigned to CSDP missions, which meets once a year in Brussels.

These initiatives at the level of policy, work practices and training all indicate an effort to incorporate the values of the Resolution into the EU's foreign policy toolkit. For instance, an external evaluation of the IcSP has shown increased gender concerns being addressed in several actions (in the Solomon Islands, Peru, Nepal, and El Salvador). Around

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70% of all CSDP missions now have a gender adviser and some EU Delegations (Peru and Tajikistan) have launched calls for proposals aimed at empowering women to participate in local conflict resolution or have created advisory groups of key stakeholders to

inform their political dialogue on violence against women (Bolivia).

EU member states also hold annual meetings on UNSCR 1325. Based on their outcomes, national embassies and EU delegations cooperate locally in financing relevant projects. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, following the annual member state meeting, the EU Delegation decided to fund projects aimed at building trust in victims of war and potential victims participating in transitional justice initiatives. This would probably not have happened had it not been for UNSCR 1325 and its value as an international policy and advocacy tool.



Much as all these EU initiatives are encouraging, progress on the ground is slow and much remains to be done to ensure that the two main objectives of 1325 are met.

Changing women's lives: an elusive goal?

While the adoption of UNSCR 1325 has sparked an unprecedented number of policy initiatives in the EU and has impacted on EU structures and practices, it remains unclear to what extent it has had a transformational effect on the lives of women who are victims of armed violence or strive to make their voices heard.

Meaningful female representation in peace and security initiatives at all levels is still far from being a common reality and, in spite of the annual celebrations of UNSCR 1325, the international community (and with it, the EU) is struggling to make a significant difference. Worldwide only 4 percent of peace negotiators are women, and less than 10 percent of troops contributing to UN peacekeeping missions are female personnel. In the EU, of the current nine Special Representatives, none is a woman. Out of a total of 41 former EUSRs, only two were women. Data contributed by the EU for the UN Secretary-General report on women, peace and security (2014) indicates that, in 2013, out of 30 senior managers in the EEAS only 4 were women; 1 out of 10 Special Representatives was a woman and 24 of 133 heads of EU Delegations or missions outside of EU headquarters were women.

One of the most important obstacles to effective action is the lack of reliable data on all forms of gender-based violence, compounded by disaggregated quantitative and qualitative comparable data. This is true also in regard to violence against women in times of conflict. Following the adoption of the Comprehensive Approach to the EU implementation of UNSCR 1325, the EU has established indicators to monitor progress on a yearly basis. A questionnaire is distributed to Delegations, CSDP missions, EUSRs and member states to document experiences from staff on the ground and complement official statistics. In addition, the EU organises an expert level workshop to discuss the results from the annual consultations with civil society and compare data.

While such efforts to promote the accountability of its actions with regard to women, peace and security are commendable, the actual methodological approach to data collection remains weak and does not provide a full understanding of the changes that the EU can help bring about through its initiatives.

The normative framework of the Women, Peace and Security agenda

The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security on 31 October 2000. The resolution reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peace-keeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction and stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

Four follow-up resolutions provide support for Resolution 1325.

Resolution 1820 (2008) recognises that conflict-related sexual violence is a tactic of warfare, and calls for the training of troops on preventing and responding to sexual violence, deployment of more women to peace operations, and enforcement of zero-tolerance policies for peacekeepers with regard to acts of sexual exploitation or abuse.

Resolution 1888 (2009) strengthens the implementation of Resolution 1820 by calling for leadership to address conflict-related sexual violence, deployment of teams (military and gender experts) to critical conflict areas, and improved monitoring and reporting on conflict trends and perpetrators.

Resolution 1889 (2009) addresses obstacles to women's participation in peace processes and calls for the development of global indicators to track the implementation of UNSCR 1325, and the improvement of international and national responses to the needs of women in conflict and post-conflict settings.

Resolution 1960 (2010) calls for an end to sexual violence in armed conflict, particularly against women and girls, and provides measures aimed at ending impunity for perpetrators of sexual violence, including through sanctions and reporting measures.

Much attention is currently devoted to developing indicators that would help the EU establish what concrete effects its actions are producing on dynamics of sexual violence in times of conflict and on women's participation in peace processes. However, the risk is that while attention focuses on developing quantitative tools of analysis,

accountability for qualitative improvements may not materialise. This is not to say that such approaches do not produce effects – only that, if they are not matched by adequate political backing and financial resources, their effects will remain limited.

Mainstreaming gender

One of the drivers that undermine EU actions on the ground is the general tendency to associate gender issues with women's 'problems'. There is a general assumption that women are mostly the victims of violence in wartime, and activities undertaken under UNSCR 1325 may wrongly perpetuate that perception by not emphasising women's own agency.

Often, women's rights or gender programmes target only women, overlooking the fact that the lived reality of women and girls is the result of how relations between men and women are negotiated in a society. Gender relations in all societies are underpinned by power considerations and the rules which regulate them.

Giving women a more prominent space in the peace and security arena is not a 'neutral' action as it fundamentally seeks to alter the relations between men and women and how their presence in the private and public space is regulated by bringing to the fore traditionally marginalised and victimised groups. Thus it is essential that policies and programmes with a gender focus involve both women and men in the redefinition of such power relations.

Men, however, are rarely included as stakeholders in programmes targeting women's reproductive health issues; male politicians are often absent from debates on the empowerment of female political candidates; and there usually are few men in meetings that address gender issues. On the other hand, the lack of women in peacebuilding and conflict prevention initiatives at high decision-making levels is not always the result of bad programming but also of entrenched cultural norms and political interests.

The EU's own track record in appointing female candidates to high-level positions (with the notable exception of the EU High Representative) or not including gender requirements in the mandates of EUSRs in a consistent manner affects its credibility when promoting the Women, Peace and Security agenda, while the tendency to rely on international institutions as partners

means that the EU may be missing out on partnering with local women's organisations and their wealth of knowledge, coping mechanisms and untapped potential.

Women's participation in peace initiatives should not be seen as a favour granted to them but as an essential component contributing to the quality and sustainability of peace and security. The EU could signal that women's plight in times of war and the key role they play in peacebuilding is at the heart of its external policies by undertaking several steps.

First, ways to hold EU high-ranking officials accountable on when, how and with whom they raise gender issues in diplomatic dialogues could be established. Second, mechanisms could be established that reward good performance in furthering the objectives of UNSCR 1325 (for instance through promotion). Third, national parliaments could be helped to scrutinise governments over the implementation of national action plans in pursuit of Resolution 1325. And finally, dedicated resources could be earmarked to support women candidates in all the elections the Union observes internationally.

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