

The Role of Women in the Armed Forces – EPP Hearing

MEP General Christophe Gomart and MEP Željana Zovko

Wednesday 30 September, 13.30 –17.30 followed by a reception

SPAAK 3C050

13.30 - Introduction

President Roberta Metsola

MEP Željana Zovko

MEP General Christophe Gomart

14.20-16.00 - Panel 1 (Where do we stand and Why does it matter?)

Moderated by MEP **Eleonora Meleti** (EPP coordinator of the FEMM Committee)

Panel 1 will assess the presence, roles and leadership of women in European armed forces, highlighting differences between countries and recent trends. It will examine the main barriers to recruitment, retention and access to senior positions. Personal testimonies will provide concrete examples of progress, remaining challenges and lessons learned from military experience.

- **Amy Hill** (UK) - Researcher – New Castle University
- **COL Gwenola Colleter** (FR) - Colonel - Special Forces
- **LCDR Agnieszka Hydzik** (POL) - Lieutenant Commander
- **LCL Annika Heusinger** (ALL) – Lieutenant Colonel

16.15-16.45 - Keynote : Commissioner Henna Virkkunen

16.50 - Panel 2 (What works and What must change?)

Moderated by MEP **Hélder Sousa Silva** (EPP)

Panel 2 will focus on strategic perspectives and concrete solutions to increase the participation of women in the armed forces. Military leaders will identify best practices in recruitment, retention, career development and access to senior leadership, while maintaining operational standards. The discussion will aim to define practical measures and measurable objectives that armed forces can implement and assess.

- Major General Gordana Garasic** (HR), Deputy Director of the Institute for Security and Defense Studies
- Lieutenant General Iavor Mateev** (BU), Chief of Bulgarian MilRep OTAN EU
- Brigadier General Timothy O'Brien** (IRL), European Union Military Committee (EUMC), Director of Cabinet of General Sean Clancy
- Admiral Pierre Vandier** (FR), NATO, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT)

17.25 – Conclusion

MEP Željana Zovko and General Christophe Gomart

18.00-19.00 - Cocktail Reception – Room JAN 2Q