



Dear Madam, Sir,

Facing the return of the worldwide realpolitik behaviour and the rivalries between powers, the European Union must assert itself as a true geopolitical player and emerge as a relevant security and defence actor capable of protecting its citizens. Aligning itself with established EU policies, the Belgian presidency of the Council of the European Union (BE EU Presidency) intends to pursue initiatives that will strengthen the EU's ability to take up its role as a global security actor within the framework of the Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

To further promote the inclusion of women in peace processes, the BE EU Presidency organises a seminar on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). The seminar will recall why the WPS Agenda matters now more than ever, 24 years after its creation. It will take stock of its most salient achievements – and worst failures – through case studies from Afghanistan, Ukraine, Mali and elsewhere. Finally, it will focus on the pragmatic implementation of the agenda in the framework of future EU CSDP missions and operations.

On behalf of the BE EU Presidency, I am pleased to invite you to this **full-day seminar** jointly organised by the **Royal Higher Institute for Defence (RHID)** and the **Centre for Security and Defence Studies (CSDS)**. The seminar will take place in English and French (with simultaneous interpretation to English, Dutch and French) on **Thursday 21 March 2024** from 10:00 to 20:00 at the **Town Hall of Tournai** (address: **Rue Saint-Martin 52, B-7500 Tournai**). You are also kindly invited to a social cultural event and a networking/walking dinner offered to all participants.

Registration by Thursday 7 March 2024 is compulsory. Please register as early as possible, since the **number of seats will be limited** and availability thus not guaranteed. **Collective transportation** between Brussels and the venue will be available to registered participants. Please find the practical information note [here](#).

(Signed)

Filip BORREMANS, MSc Eng
Air Force Major General
Director-General
Royal Higher Institute for Defence

Programme Thursday 21 March

09:00 – **09:45** **Arrival and registration**

10:00 – 10:30 **Welcome addresses**

Maj Gen Filip BORREMANS (DG RHID)
Her Majesty Queen Mathilde of Belgium
Mrs Ludivine DEDONDER (Minister of Defence)

10:30 – 12:15 **Panel 1: Why the WPS Agenda still matters**

Introduction of speakers by Dr Didier LEROY (Researcher, CSDS)

Prof. Dr Megan MACKENZIE (Simon Fraser University, Canada)

The transversal myths and realities of women in combat

Dr Denis MUKWEGE (Panzi Foundation, DRC)

Rape as a weapon of war in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Dr Lotte VERMEIJ (NORCAP Refugee Council, Norway)

The taboos and stigmas facing deployed military women

Mrs Fatima MAIGA (ESEN Executive Director, Mali)

Takeaways from the Malian experience

Discussion moderated by Prof. Dr María MARTÍN DE ALMAGRO INIESTA (Ghent University)

12:15 – 12:30 **Intermediate addresses**

Mrs Hadja LAHBIB (Minister of Foreign Affairs) – **TBC**

Mrs Caroline GENNEZ (Minister of Development Cooperation) – **TBC**

12:30 – 13:30 **Lunch offered by the BE EU Presidency**

13:30 – 15:15 **Panel 2: A state of play through case studies**

Introduction of speakers by Senior Captain Estelle HOORICKX, PhD (Researcher, CSDS)

Prof. Dr Jennifer GREENBURG (University of Sheffield, United Kingdom)

Reflecting on US Female Engagement Teams (FETs) in Afghanistan

Anonymous Speaker (Special Forces Group, Belgium)

The deep development capability of the Belgian Special Forces Group: the case of Niger

Dr Myriam BACQUELAINE (Honorary Ambassador, Belgium)

Gender-based lessons learned from peace accords negotiations

Gen Maj Justine SHESHI (GENAD – Focal Point Congolese Armed Forces, DRC)

Achievements and challenges: the view from Kinshasa

Discussion moderated by Prof. Dr Nina WILÉN (Africa Program Director, Egmont Institute)



15:15 – 15:45 **Coffee break**

15:45 – 17:15 **Panel 3: Implementing UNSCR 1325: Best practices and lessons learned**

Introduction of speakers by Mr Maarten DANCKAERT (Deputy Director, CSDS)

Mrs Gisela DUETTING (GENAD – EUAM Ukraine)

Sexual violence in conflicts: the situation in Ukraine

Lt Col Katherine PRUDHOE (GENAD – NATO HQ IMS)

What is the way ahead according to NATO?

Mrs Terhi LEHTINEN (European External Action Service)

What is the way ahead according to the EU?

Discussion moderated by BDG Katrien D’HERT (EUMS)

17:15 – 17:30 **Closing remarks**

Closure address by Col Eric KALAJZIC (Director, CSDS)

17:30 – 18:30 **Social cultural event in Tournai**

18:30 – 20:00 **Walking dinner offered by the BE EU Presidency**

20:15 **Departure for Brussels**