

Invitation to the course

Women, Peace and Security (WPS): looking at the Western Balkans and the MENA region

Thessaloniki, 7 April 2025

The Department of International and European Studies at the University of Macedonia in Thessaloniki, under the auspices of the European Security and Defence College (ESDC), has the pleasure and honour of organising the course **‘Women, Peace and Security (WPS): looking at the Western Balkans and the MENA region’**. The course will be held in Thessaloniki, Greece, on **30 June to 4 July 2025**. It is being organised in cooperation with the UNESCO Chair on Women, Peace and Security of the University of Macedonia, and will be hosted by the same department.

The course aims to raise awareness and evaluate the implementation of the WPS policy agenda throughout its development over the last quarter of a century by the UN and other organisations, including the EU, through the EU Strategic Approach to WPS and the EU Action Plan on WPS 2019-2024. The course will focus on the Western Balkans and the MENA region as environments that have been affected by conflict and composite vulnerabilities, and in which the EU is currently making efforts to build peace resilience. Participants will have the opportunity to gain knowledge about the significance of WPS in building state resilience, to evaluate good practices in the regions, and to think constructively about ways of optimising the WPS agenda’s instruments within the EU policy framework, in order to bolster women’s resilience and agency in peacebuilding in the regions through CSDP missions and operations and other EU policy instruments.

We are pleased to invite all relevant stakeholders to nominate participants to attend this course. They should be mid- to senior-level officials or experts (civilian, diplomats, police and military) who are ready to create a network of personnel working in the field of promoting the WPS agenda within the EU and at regional and global levels.



Fergal O'Regan
Acting Head of the
European Security and
Defence College



Professor Dimitris V. Skiadas
Head of the
Department of International and
European Studies –
University of Macedonia (GR),
Jean Monnet Chair

Administrative remarks

- **Target group:** the course is open to civilian, diplomatic, police and military personnel from EU Member States and relevant EU bodies. Suitable participants will have expertise in gender equality, diplomacy and intelligence. The course is also open to participants from third countries, international organisations and NGOs.
- **Places and nominations:** around 35 places will be available for international participants. Typically, one or two places are allocated to each EU Member State, but depending on the total number of requests, one additional place may be offered. The course welcomes participants from third countries, international organisations, and NGOs, based on the availability of seats. Our objective is to put together a group that is balanced in terms of gender and professional background.
- **Applications from the EU Member States** are to be submitted via the ESDC secure internet system ENLIST, by designated nominators, at <https://esdc.europa.eu/enlist/login> **no later than 28 May 2025**. A list of ENLIST nominators can be found on the ESDC website at <https://esdc.europa.eu/nominators/>.
- **Applications from third countries and international organisations** should be sent to the ESDC training manager, Maria Grazia Romano, at **maria-grazia.romano@eeas.europa.eu** by the institution/organisation that is the recipient of this invitation. The application must include the following details: the candidate's full name, personal email address (functional mailboxes will not be accepted), sending institution, nationality, date of birth, and passport number and expiry date.
- **Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory on all days of the course. Participants will receive an ESDC certificate on the last day only if they have completed the entire course. This course will not be offered in hybrid format.
- **Inclusivity:** The ESDC strives to create a gender-sensitive and inclusive environment in all its courses, activities and day-to-day work. Only in an inclusive environment can all people, and therefore the ESDC and its partners, reach their true potential. We do not and will not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, religion, gender, gender expression, age, nationality, disability, marital status or sexual orientation in any of our activities or operations. The ESDC and the training institutions will not tolerate any conduct that violates these values.
- **Language:** The course will be conducted in English, with no interpreting.
- **E-learning:** The course is preceded by a mandatory e-learning module (set to start on **2 June 2025** on the ESDC e-learning platform ILIAS). The course participants must complete this module before the residential session starts (on 30 June 2025). Connection details will be provided in due course to all registered participants.

- **Residential part of the course:** This part of the course will take place on the premises of the University of Macedonia in Thessaloniki, Greece, on **30 June to 4 July 2025** (Monday 09:00 to Friday 14:00).
- **Costs:** Sending authorities must cover all travel, accommodation and catering costs (including breakfast) for all participants.
- **Dress code:** Formal dress or service uniform for the first and last days, smart casual clothing for the rest of the course.
- **Liabilities and insurance:** In the event of a medical emergency, participants' medical insurance, provided by the sending country/organisation, must cover all costs. The organiser does not provide health or accident insurance for participants in the event.
- **Additional info:** Course participants will receive further detailed information about the course (e.g. curriculum, schedule, driving directions) in good time.

More information regarding the University of Macedonia and its training activities is available at www.uom.gr and about the Department of International and European Studies at <https://www.uom.gr/en/ies>.

Points of contact:

ESDC – Maria Grazia Romano, Training Manager, ESDC/EEAS
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Pilot course 'WPS: looking at the Western Balkans and the MENA region'

30 June – 4 July 2025, Thessaloniki, Greece

Draft programme

Monday 30/06/2025	Tuesday 01/07/2025	Wednesday 02/07/2025	Thursday 03/07/2025	Friday 04/07/2025
09:30-09:45 Welcome, course introduction, ESDC presentation	09:30-10:15 The WPS agenda: a global perspective	09:00-10:15 Empowering women in building local resilience	09:30-10:15 Lessons learned from women's stories in the MENA region	09:30-10:15 The WPS agenda in the Western Balkans and the MENA region – Conclusions of working groups
09:45-10:45 Opening speech	10:15-10:30 Coffee break	10:15-10:30 Coffee break	10:15-10:30 Coffee break	10:15-10:30 Coffee break
10:45-11:00 Coffee break	10:30-11:45 The WPS agenda: the EU perspective	10:15-10:30 Coffee break	10:15-10:30 Coffee break	10:15-10:30 Coffee break
11:00-12:15 International security context and threats to human security	11:45-12:45 Coffee break	10:30-11:45 Good practices in women's mediation from the MENA region	10:30-11:45 Lessons learned from women's stories in the MENA region	10:30-11:30 Closing speech by UNESCO officer
12:15-13:15 Security challenges in the MENA region	11:45-12:45 Coffee break	11:45-12:45 Coffee break	11:45-12:45 Coffee break	11:30-12:45 Coffee break
13:15-14:15 Short break (snack)	12:45-13:15 EU military operations – the role of gender advisors	12:45-13:15 EU civilian missions and Civilian Compact: a WPS perspective/ Crisis response Centre	12:45-13:15 The role of the EULEX Gender Advisor – lessons learned	12.45-13:15 Course evaluation and
14:15-15:30 Security challenges in the Western Balkans	13:15-14:15 Short break (snack)	13:15-14:15 Short break (snack)	13:15-14:15 Short break (snack)	Certificates and closing ceremony
15:30-17:30 Ice breaker	14:15-15:00 EU Integrated Approach to Conflict and Crisis: a gender perspective	13:15-14:00 Capacity-building for women in post-conflict areas CPCC	14:15-15:00 Group activity	
		14:00-14:15 Short break	17:00-21:00 COURSE DINNER	
		14:15-15:00 European Civil Protection and its role in the Integrated Approach		

