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MSc Course

**The EU as a Global Actor: Peace,
Security and Conflict**

The role of gender in European Foreign Policy – a feminist institutionalist analysis of the European Union Advisory Mission in support of Security Sector Reform in Iraq

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Introduction

Ever since the start of the civil war in Iraq in 2013 after the rise of the Islamic State (IS), the country has witnessed social unrest, religious conflict, and ethnic cleavages (Van Veen et al. 2021). Following a request by the Iraqi authorities, in October of 2017 Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/1869 established the European Union Advisory Mission in support of Security Sector Reform in Iraq (hereafter: EUAM Iraq). This CSDP civilian mission was set out to focus on the “civilian related aspects of the Iraqi National Security Strategy and the security sector reform”, predominantly comprising institutional reform and the fight against terrorism and organized crime (European Union Advisory Mission in Iraq n.d.-a). CSDP missions like EUAM Iraq intend, through stabilizing the situations in the relevant countries or augmenting those countries’ capabilities, eventually to safeguard the wellbeing of the EU and its natives (European External Action Service 2022). It is not difficult to think of reasons why Iraq might be a country of interest to the EU. To name a few, it is a top 3 country-of-origin for migrants coming into the EU, it is home to IS, and it is the fourth oil-richest OPEC member as of 2021 (Eurostat & European Migration Network 2022; Ezzeddine & Colombo 2022; Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries 2022). Like all EU foreign policy endeavors, EUAM Iraq is supposed to implement the EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III, which aims to advance gender equality throughout the EU’s external actions (European Union & European Commission 2020). Considerable literature has been dedicated to notions of liberal peace in foreign intervention, such as the works by Paris (2010) or Mac Ginty (2010). Much less attention has been devoted to the role of gender and the specificities of Security Sector Reform (SSR) operations, especially those performed by the EU – of which Ansorg & Haastrup’s (2018) article constitutes an exception. The present paper seeks to complement the literature available on the role of gender in EU foreign policy by focusing on this nexus between gender and EU foreign SSR-endeavors specifically (Chappell & Guerrina 2020). It does so through a case study of EUAM Iraq, applying a feminist institutionalist lens to the mission. We seek to examine its implementation of GAP III, with the objective of answering the following research question: “How can a feminist institutionalist framework help understand the interrelationship between gender and EUAM Iraq?”. The paper will start with a theoretical framework, followed by a methodological section. Thereafter, an analytical section containing a case study of EUAM Iraq and its adherence to GAP III ensues. Finally, a conclusion sums up the paper’s central findings and identifies possible pathways for future research.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 The security sector, SSR, and GAP III

Any meaningful analysis of EUAM Iraq must start with a clear picture of what the security sector is. According to the OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform, a country’s security sector is constituted of

- 1. Core security agents (e.g., the police)
- 2. Management and oversight institutions (e.g., the ministry of defense)
- 3. Justice and rule-of-law actors (e.g., the judiciary)
- 4. Non-state security forces (e.g., private security companies) (OECD 2007).

Hence, these actors and agencies combined are what this paper refers to as the security sector. The European Union defines the main objective of its reform (SSR) as “to ensure the security of individuals, as perceived and experienced by them” (n.d.: §3). Further, it lists various more specific subobjectives in a Results Chain - a much more simplified version of which would look like:

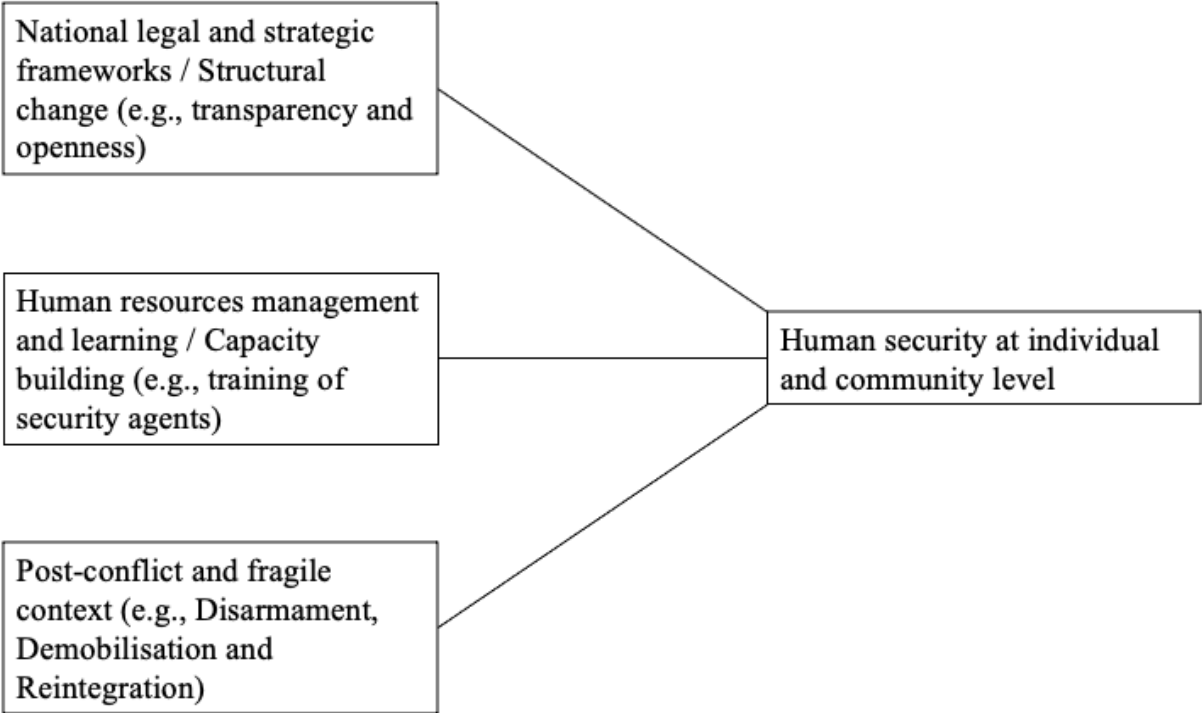


Figure 1: the objectives of SSR, derived from the European Union's Results Chain (European Union 2021)

In GAP III, the EU outlines five pillars of action through which it seeks to achieve gender mainstreaming¹ in all its foreign policy – i.e., including in its CSDP civilian missions (European Union & European Commission 2020). Within the fourth pillar of GAP III (the EU will lead by example), the European Union and the European Commission (ibid: 20) emphasize the EU’s commitment to advance the “institutional cultural shift” set in motion by GAP II. This means that the EU must mainstream gender equality and the empowerment of women to strengthen an institutional culture of gender parity, and that the institutional capacity of all external action agencies and missions must be enhanced to incorporate a deeper knowledge on gender and the importance of gender equality (idem). Hence, like all other CSDP civilian missions, EUAM Iraq is expected to adhere to this pillar.

2.2 Feminist Institutionalism (FI)

As Minto and Mergaert (2018) observe, the notion that institutions carry weight (be they formal, informal, public, or private) is widely accepted. Outlining the development of the new institutionalist paradigm, Mackay et al. (2010) sketch New Institutionalism (NI) as an approach that considers political, economic, and social factors that affect and are affected by institutions. For a long time, gender was missing from these factors in the NI literature (Mackay et al. 2010; Minto & Mergaert 2018). The feminist institutionalist framework fills this gap, by questioning “how the gendered organization of political life makes a difference” (Lowndes 2014: 685). According to Feminist Institutionalism (FI), the gendered structures that characterize formal and informal institutions are crucial to understanding these institutions, their outcomes, and their effects on the people that function within them (Mackay et al. 2010). Further, as Chappell (2006) elaborates, institutions may also affect the way gender operates within them (e.g., through the reproduction of certain gender norms). Within institutions, as Lovenduski (1998) explains, gender inequalities may be reflected in the number of women and men respectively in the organization, in the positions they occupy, and in the way femininities and masculinities are perceived hierarchically. Accordingly, Haastrup et al. (2019) approach the incorporation of gender perspectives in EU foreign policy through a critical analysis of its integration of gender equality in the context of Brexit. Here, the authors scrutinize the way the EU understands and reproduces notions of gender, masculinity, and femininity in its foreign policy (idem). Guerrina et al. (2018) likewise investigate this interconnection between gender and institutions within

¹ Gender mainstreaming: ensuring “gender representation and gender responsive content” in all stages of the decision-making process (European Institute for Gender Equality n.d.: § 3)

EU foreign policy. They highlight the suitability of the feminist institutionalist framework for analyzing the way its institutions incorporate and neglect gender, and thus contribute to the perpetuation of gender norms (idem).

From these observations on the relationship between gender and institutions, one can derive the following mechanism:

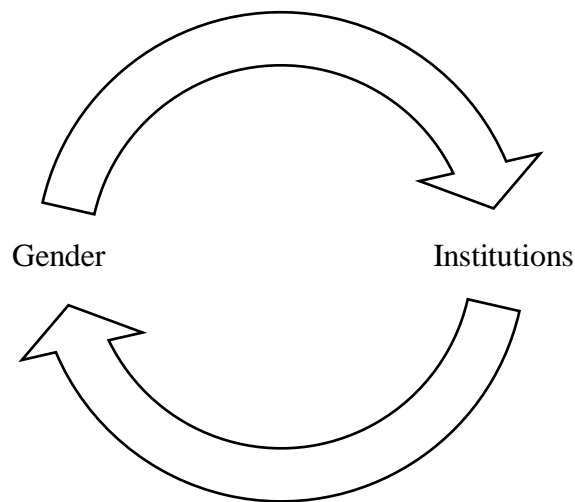


Figure 2: the interplay between gender and institutions, based on Mackay et al. (2010) and Chappell (2006)

GAP III's fourth pillar is focused on the move towards an institution-wide culture of gender equality and balance (European Union & European Commission 2020). We would expect this pillar to affect both the way the manifestations of gender shape EU missions (e.g., through an even balance between men and women), and how institutions shape the way gender operates within them (e.g., through an increased knowledge on the importance of gender equality). This supposition produces the following conceptual framework:

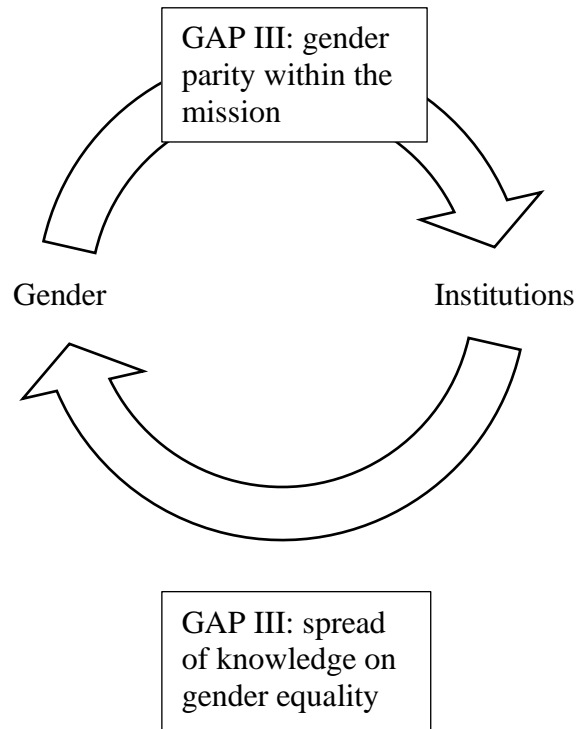


Figure 3: conceptual framework: action points of the fourth pillar of GAP III within FI. Based on European Union and the European Commission (2020)

3. Research design

This research has aimed to shed a light on how GAP III intervenes in the way gender shapes institutions and vice versa within EUAM Iraq, by adopting a feminist institutionalist lens. As visualized in the conceptual framework in Figure 3, one would expect the fourth pillar of GAP III to interfere in both directions of the relationship between gender and institutions. Here, the top half of the framework represents the effect gender exerts on institutions, whereas the bottom half portrays the impact these institutions have on the way gender works. Through an analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, I have investigated the extent to which EUAM Iraq has incorporated the fourth pillar of GAP III. For the purposes of this research, I have operationalized the pillar's main areas of intervention (as identified in Figure 3) as follows:

1. Gender parity within the mission: the representation of women within operational and managerial staff within EUAM Iraq. The European External Action Service, Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability has compiled this numerical data (2021a; 2021b). I have complemented this information with an analysis of the employees listed on the EUAM Iraq

website (European Union Advisory Mission in Iraq n.d.c). One must be aware that the information on EUAM Iraq's personnel on its website might not be completely up to date.

2. Spread of knowledge on gender equality: the extent to which EUAM Iraq devotes attention to the dissemination of expertise and awareness of gender equality. I have gathered this information through an examination of its mandate as well as its activities on the ground by means of a textual analysis of the mission's press releases and Twitter posts. Specifically, I have identified the instances where the words "gender", "women", or "female" were used (including in acronyms and pictures). I have chosen to scrutinize EUAM Iraq's tweets, because Twitter is commonly used among politicians and journalists (Cillizza 2022; Jurkowitz & Gottfried 2022). EUAM Iraq's press releases can be found on its website (European Union Advisory Mission in Iraq n.d.b).

It was beyond the scope of this paper to conduct a more extensive investigation of gender within other EUAM Iraq institutions like established rules of behavior (Lowndes 2014). Nevertheless, the operational definitions of the fourth pillar's points of action have served as proxies for the interconnections between gender and institutions.

4. Analysis

4.1 Gender parity in EUAM Iraq

Gender equality in terms of representation is crucial for the efficiency of CSDP missions as well as for the EU's reputation as a gender parity advocate (European External Action Service, Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability 2021b). Moreover, as identified in the conceptual framework in Figure 3, the manifestations of gender (in)equality (i.e., the representation of women) may determine the character and functioning of CSDP missions (as institutions).

4.1.1 Overall women personnel

In general, the proportion of women personnel in civilian CSDP missions amounted to nearly 30% in the period 2017-2020 (European External Action Service, Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability 2021a):

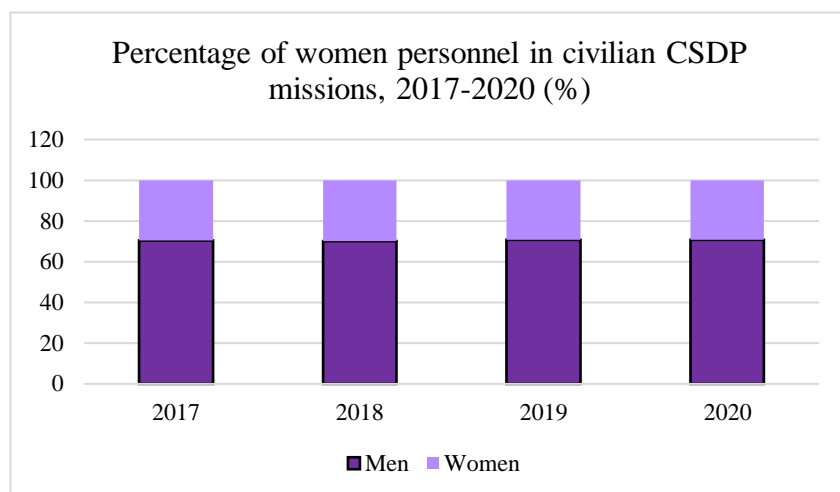


Figure 4: women personnel (%) in civilian CSDP missions, 2017-2020 (European External Action Service, Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability 2021a)

However, the percentage of women personnel differs greatly for every mission: women accounted for only 23.5% of all EUAM Iraq personnel in 2020 (idem). When looking solely at international personnel, EUAM Iraq has the third lowest percentage of women with only 19% female international staff (European External Action Service, Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability 2021-b).

4.1.2 Women in operational staff

Gender diversity within operations contributes to the EU's credibility, the situational awareness of missions and an enhanced relationship with the local population (Collective work of WIIS 2017). Further, women can serve as challengers of gender biases in other cultures or as role models in the security sector for the local population (idem). Regardless of the EU's aspiration to expand the number of women involved directly with the local people of the mission area, women represent only 20% of the total operational staff (European External Action Service, Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability 2021b). For EUAM Iraq, the percentage of women in operational positions was even lower, reaching only about 15% (idem).

4.1.3 Women in managerial positions

As in operations staff, the EU is committed to increasing the proportion of women in managerial positions (idem). Interviews with mission members highlight the importance of women in management: according to the interviewees, female managers can serve as role models, call more attention to activities surrounding gender, enhance the decision-making process and

ameliorate the working environment (Collective work of WIIS 2017). Despite this, women held only 28% of the top-3 management positions in civilian missions (i.e., Head of Mission, Deputy Head of Mission, or Chief of Staff) at the end of 2020 - the principal office of Head of Mission was only filled by a woman in one of the eleven occasions (European External Action Service, Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability 2021-b). This imbalance has been corrected slightly in the meantime, with currently three women among the 11 Heads of Mission (for a list of current Heads of Missions, see Appendix A). However, the distribution of the highest managerial positions in CSDP civilian missions is still obviously disproportionate.

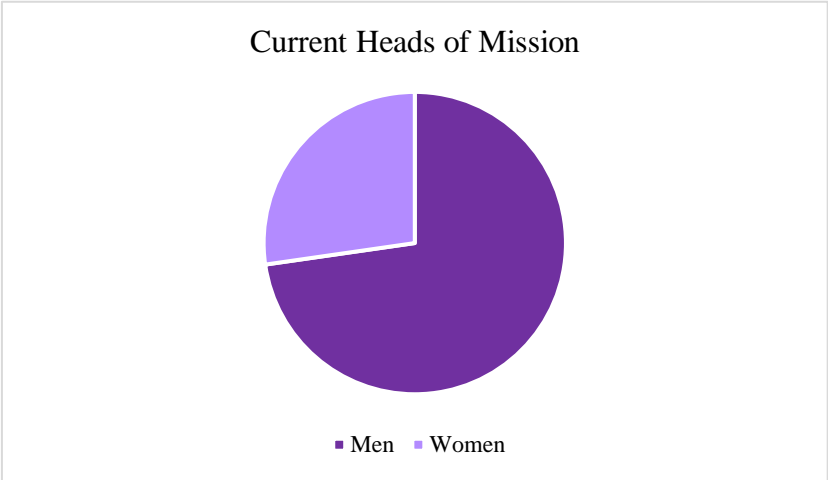


Figure 5: gender ratio of current Heads of Mission in civilian CSDP missions

Further, within EUAM Iraq, the highest-ranking officials (the Head of Mission and the Deputy Head of Mission) are both men (European Union Advisory Mission In Iraq n.d.c). Additionally, a glance over EUAM Iraq’s website corroborates this relative absence of women in this mission: of the 13 persons featured on the ‘Team’-page of the mission, only four are women (idem). For a detailed list of presented staff, see Appendix B.

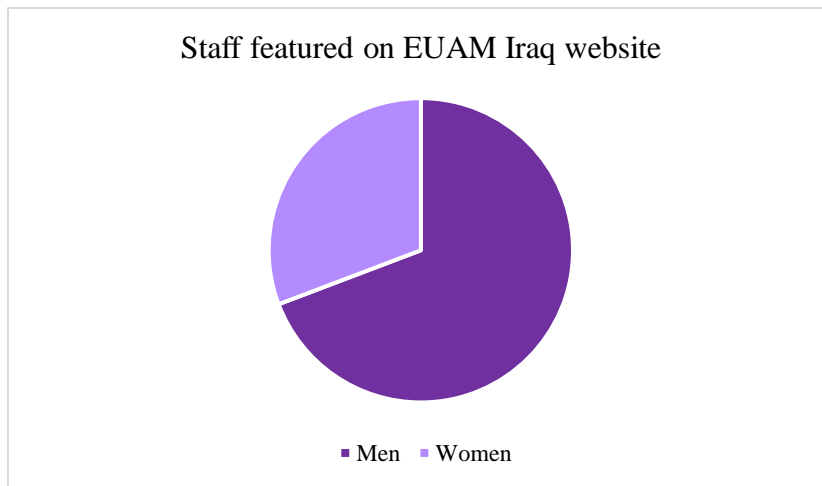


Figure 6: gender ratio of staff featured on EUAM Iraq website

Hence, there is no equal representation of men and women within the staff of CSDP civilian missions. EUAM Iraq is no exception to this reality: women constituted only around 15% of the mission’s operational staff; neither the Head of Mission nor the Deputy Head of Mission is a woman; and only four out of 13 members of personnel listed on the mission’s website were women.

4.2 *Spread of knowledge on gender and gender equality in EUAM Iraq*

Just as a feminist institutionalist perspective commands us to examine the ways gender manifests itself within institutions, it equally directs us to consider the ways institutions can affect the way gender works within them. A closer inspection of EUAM Iraq’s mandate, press releases, and Tweets provides insights into the manners by which the mission engages with gender, and thereby shapes the way gender operates within the mission.

4.2.1 *Mandate*

The 2017 mandate, which forms the foundation of EUAM Iraq, stipulates that “EUAM Iraq shall ensure that human rights and gender perspectives are incorporated into its tasks, and that policies and plans developed with its support comply with international standards and obligations on human rights and on gender” (“Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/1869 of 16 October 2017 on the European Union Advisory Mission in support of Security Sector Reform in Iraq (EUAM Iraq)”, 2017, Article 3(4)). This is in line with the fourth pillar of GAP III, which prescribes that the EU ought to lead by example (European Union & European Commission 2020). EUAM Iraq’s activities are thus required to include (knowledge on) gender.

4.2.2 Press releases

Of the three press releases available on the EUAM Iraq website, two pertain to actual activities the mission has undertaken whilst the other is a statement on the instalment of the current Head of Mission. The mission's attentiveness to gender is visible in its press release on the meetings held between EU and Iraqi government officials (European Union Advisory Mission in Iraq 2022). Here, it is mentioned that gender and human rights is one of the crucial areas of SSR that the mission is involved in (European Union Advisory Mission in Iraq 2022). Likewise, gender is a key theme of EUAM Iraq and the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior (MoI)'s social media campaign calling attention to domestic violence, which points out that men and women alike can become victims of domestic abuse (European Union Advisory Mission in Iraq & Iraqi Ministry of Interior 2022).

4.2.3 Twitter

The number of EUAM Iraq's social media posts greatly exceeds the amount of press releases. Hence, they provide more information about the activities the mission is actually involved in on the ground and as a result, an analysis of them generates an insight into the level of attention the mission devotes to gender. Out of the 535 tweets EUAM Iraq ([@EuamIraq], n.d.) has posted up until the moment of writing, 66 (or 12.3%) had something to do with gender (equality). For an extensive list of the relevant tweets, see Appendix C.

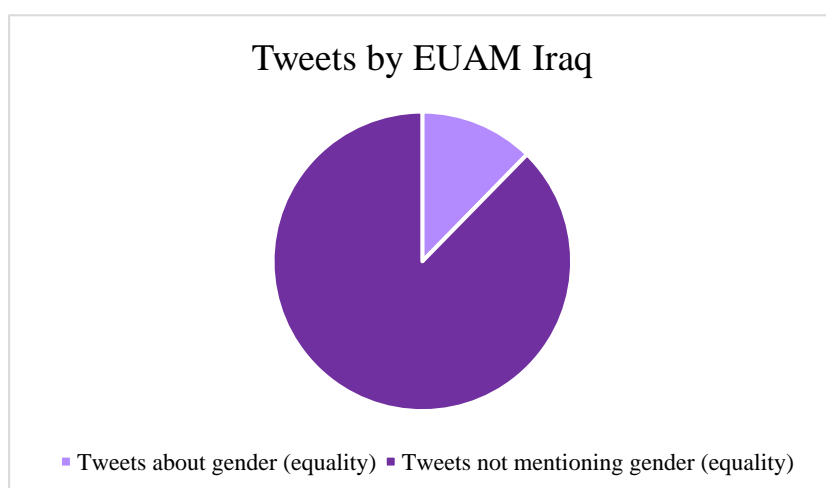


Figure 7: EUAM Iraq (@EuamIraq) tweets about gender (equality).
Source: EUAM Iraq [@EuamIraq], n.d.

It is important to mention, though, that a lot of these tweets do not actually have to do with activities the mission has undertaken in spreading gender (equality) knowledge. A great deal of them are tweets pertaining to specific occasions or anniversaries where gender is a key theme, such as in the 16 Days of Activism against GBV against Women and Girls Campaign (EUAM Iraq 2021b). Nevertheless, a look at EUAM Iraq's tweets still reveals actual cases where the mission has actively worked on mainstreaming gender in different policy domains. Its workshop on integrating women into intelligence operations on 27 and 28 June, and its meeting on gender parity in law enforcement provide examples of such cases (EUAM Iraq 2022b; EUAM Iraq 2022a). The creation of a Mixed Gender Intelligence Analysis Unit in cooperation with the Federal Intelligence and Investigations Agency (FIIA) likewise exemplifies EUAM Iraq's commitment to gender mainstreaming (EUAM Iraq 2021a; European External Action Service 2021).

Conclusion

With the adoption of GAP III, the EU has committed itself to achieving ambitious objectives in the field of gender equality. Notably, with the fourth pillar of GAP III it has vowed to lead by example in this regard, furthering the cultural shift in its institutions towards a culture of gender equality (European Union & European Commission 2020). The feminist institutionalist framework likewise acknowledges the importance of understanding the relationship between gender and institutions. This paper has investigated this interconnection within the context of EUAM Iraq, through an assessment of how gender shapes it and of how it shapes gender. Women are still quite underrepresented in CSDP civilian missions, as is the case in EUAM Iraq. This holds true for the mission's operational staff as well as its managerial staff, indicating a female minority throughout different levels of the operation. With respect to the mission's role in shaping gender, its activities mostly consist of workshops, meetings, and trainings. It has occupied itself with mainstreaming gender equality into different areas like intelligence operations and law enforcement. Achievements like the establishment of a Mixed Gender Analysis Unit within the FIIA are promising and may inspire other ways of integrating gender equality into Iraq's SSR strategy. Yet, the underrepresentation of women within EUAM Iraq might plausibly undermine its ability to effectuate such gender mainstreaming, since the gender balance within the staff affects the decision-making process and the workplace environment. This is in line with a feminist institutionalist approach, which appreciates the interdependence of gender manifestations and the characteristics of institutions. The findings of this research therefore have important implications for CSDP civilian missions, seeing that such missions

ought to implement GAP III and thus must lead by example. Given that this analysis has focused solely on EUAM Iraq, future research should scrutinize other CSDP civilian missions. Further, although this paper refers to gender equality as the equality between men and women, it is essential that future studies consider other gender and LGBTQIA+ identities on the spectrum for more comprehensive assessments of the interactions between gender and institutions.

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Appendix 1 Heads of Mission of CSDP civilian missions

Mission	Head of Mission: person (gender)
EUAM Iraq	Anders Wiberg (M)
EUAM RCA	José Marques Dias (M)
EUAM Ukraine	Antti Juhani Hartikainen (M)
EUBAM Libya	Natalina Cea (F)
EUBAM Rafah	Florin Bulgariu (M)
EUCAP Sahel Mali	Hervé Flahaut (M)
EUCAP Sahel Niger	Antje Pittelkau (F)
EUCAP Somalia	Kauko Aaltomaa (M)
EULEX Kosovo	Lars-Gunnar Wigemark (M)
EUMM Georgia	Tibor Kozma (M)*
EUPOL COPPS	Nataliya Apostolova (F)

*Acting Head of Mission until a new HoM will be deployed

Sources: European Union Advisory Mission in Iraq (n.d.-c), Eurogendfor (n.d.), EUAM Ukraine (n.d.), European External Action Service, Strategic Communications (2021b), EUBAM Rafah (n.d.), European External Action Service, Strategic Communications (2021a), EUCAP Sahel Niger (n.d.), EUCAP Somalia - Press and information team (2022), EULEX Kosovo (n.d.), EUMM Georgia (n.d.), and EUPOL COPPS (n.d.)

Appendix 2 Staff listed on EUAM Iraq website

Position	Person (gender)
Head of Mission	Anders Wiberg (M)
Deputy Head of Mission	Robert Boer (M)
Executive Officer	Amir Jaouadi (M)
Senior Strategic Adviser on Command and Control	Juha Piippo (M)
Gender and Human Rights Adviser	Anette Schwitzke (F)
Senior Strategic Adviser on Human Resources Management	Robert Knight (M)
Senior Strategic Adviser on Command and Control and Crisis Management	Hans Moors (M)
Head of Project Cell	Raila Puurunen (F)
Logistics Officer	Tadej Knuplez (M)
Medical Adviser	Miguel Valente (M)
National Executive Officer to Head of Mission	Usama Tawfik (M)
Verification Officer	Anca Dobre (F)
Project Management Officer	Jovita Uzdavinyte (F)

Source: European Union Advisory Mission In Iraq (n.d.-c)

Appendix 3 Gender-related tweets of @EuamIraq

#	Date	Retweet or original tweet	Key words
1.	22-08-2019	Retweet	#WomenPeaceSecurity #genderandhumanrights
2.	23-08-2019	Original tweet	#WomenPeaceSecurity #genderandhumanrightsv
3.	17-04-2020	Retweet	Protection of [woman emoji]
4.	11-07-2020	Retweet	Women, gender-based violence
5.	30-10-2020	Retweet	#WPS2020 #Women4Security
6.	31-10-2020	Original tweet	#Women4Security
7.	31-10-2020	Original tweet	#Women4Security
8.	31-10-2020	Original tweet	#Women4Security
9.	27-12-2020	Original tweet	#Unwomen
10.	15-01-2021	Retweet	#WomeninCSDP
11.	16-02-2021	Original tweet	#Womenpeacesecurity
12.	06-03-2021	Retweet	#EEASWomen #InternationalWomensDay
13.	07-03-2021	Retweet	#EEASWomen #InternationalWomensDay
14.	08-03-2021	Retweet	#InternationalWomensDay
15.	08-03-2021	Original tweet	#InternationalWomensDay
16.	09-03-2021	Original tweet	#WomenPeaceSecurity
17.	20-03-2021	Retweet	Women
18.	29-04-2021	Retweet	Gender
19.	30-04-2021	Retweet	Gender
20.	05-05-2021	Original tweet	Women
21.	06-05-2021	Retweet	Gender mainstreaming
22.	06-07-2021	Original tweet	Women's Affairs
23.	13-07-2021	Original tweet	Gender, #WomenPeaceAndSecurity

24.	29-07-2021	Original tweet	Gender, #WomenPeaceAndSecurity
25.	11-08-2021	Original tweet	#GenderMainstreaming
26.	12-08-2021	Original tweet	Women's Affairs, #ViolenceAgainstWomen, #GenderEquality, women's empowerment
27.	03-11-2021	Original tweet	Female, #women
28.	05-11-2021	Original tweet	Gender-based violence, Women, Peace, and Security
29.	18-11-2021	Original tweet	#Gender
30.	23-11-2021	Original tweet	Women, peace and security
31.	25-11-2021	Original tweet	Gender-Based Violence
32.	27-11-2021	Original tweet	Gender-Based Violence
33.	29-11-2021	Original tweet	Gender-Based Violence
34.	01-12-2021	Original tweet	Gender-Based Violence
35.	03-12-2021	Original tweet	Gender-Based Violence
36.	05-12-2021	Original tweet	Gender-Based Violence
37.	07-12-2021	Original tweet	Gender-Based Violence
38.	09-12-2021	Original tweet	Gender-Based Violence
39.	10-04-2022	Original tweet	Women
40.	30-05-2022	Original tweet	Women Affairs
41.	19-06-2022	Original tweet	#GBV
42.	21-06-2022	Original tweet	Women, Peace, and Security
43.	21-06-2022	Original tweet	#Genderequality, women
44.	26-06-2022	Original tweet	Female, #GBV, gender, #women
45.	30-06-2022	Original tweet	Women, female
46.	08-09-2022	Retweet	Female, Women
47.	08-09-2022	Retweet (original tweet in Kurdish)	Women
48.	14-09-2022	Retweet	Gender, women's issues
49.	07-10-2022	Retweet	Gender
50.	19-10-2022	Retweet	Female, #WomenPeaceSecurity

51.	20-10-2022	Original tweet	Female, #WomenPeaceSecurity
52.	23-10-2022	Original tweet	#Gender
53.	25-10-2022	Retweet	#EPGenderEqualityWeek, women
54.	27-10-2022	Original tweet	#Gender, #WomenPeaceSecurity, #EPGenderEqualityWeek
55.	28-10-2022	Original tweet	#Gender
56.	28-10-2022	Original tweet (in Kurdish)	#Gender
57.	01-11-2022	Original tweet	Gender, women's role
58.	25-11-2022	Original tweet	Gender-Based Violence, #GBV, women, #SayNoStopVAW
59.	26-11-2022	Original tweet	Gender-Based Violence, women, #SayNoStopVAW
60.	27-11-2022	Original tweet	Gender-Based Violence, #ViolenceAgainstWomen, #StopVAW #EndGBV
61.	29-11-2022	Original tweet	Women
62.	01-12-2022	Original tweet	Women
63.	10-12-2022	Original tweet	Women
64.	14-12-2022	Original tweet	Gender, women, female
65.	23-12-2022	Original tweet	#Gender
66.	12-01-2023	Original tweet	#Gender, female

All tweets available at: <https://twitter.com/euamiraq> (EUAM Iraq [@EuamIraq], n.d.)