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# National specifics of implementing international standards for the protection of women police officers' rights

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**Abstract**
Adherence to generally accepted international standards in the area of protecting the rights of women police officers is essential because it improves the country's reputation in the international arena and promotes effective coordination between states in the fight against crime. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to identify the key areas of ensuring equal rights of men and women in law enforcement in Ukraine in the context of the implementation of the European integration course. For this purpose, the study employed historical, comparative, and formal legal methods. The study analysed international legal acts and current national legislation of Ukraine in the field of ensuring and protecting the rights of women who carry out their professional activities in law enforcement agencies. It was found that as of 2024, all countries are characterised by the universalisation of the problem in this area. The study concluded that the issues of women's rights protection are being reactivated due to substantial changes in the social life of European countries. These processes are accompanied by the emergence of negative trends in the professional status of women, rising unemployment and poverty rates, and a decrease in the number of women in elected bodies and government agencies, including law enforcement. It was argued that the focus on international legal standards could become a prerequisite for improving the national regulatory framework for the protection of the rights of

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women who carry out professional activities in the police, and for transforming law enforcement practice towards accommodating the interests of this part of society. The practical significance of this study is that its results can be used to improve the work of law enforcement agencies of Ukraine by improving the provisions of domestic protection of the rights of women police officers

**Keywords:**
gender balance; law enforcement; civil service; European standards; European integration

## Introduction

The relevance of the subject under study is explained by the fact that the status of women in law enforcement agencies in individual countries may differ substantially from international standards set by supranational organisations. Some countries face challenges in adapting international standards to their cultural, legal, and social specificities. Considering the growing attention to gender equality and human rights in general, the implementation of international standards for the protection of the rights of women police officers is becoming a priority for many states. Thus, consideration of the national specifics of the implementation of these standards is important for the effective protection of the rights of women working in law enforcement agencies and for improving the overall quality of justice and law enforcement. Integrating a gender perspective into the work of law enforcement agencies is a prerequisite for more effective law enforcement, creating a safer society and strengthening the rule of law within the framework of international and national legal obligations.

Some researchers have investigated these issues in their studies. Thus, M. Kaliman (2021) concluded that it is necessary to adopt a special law on the special status of women police officers, their rights and obligations, and conditions of service following international standards for the protection of the rights of women police officers. Consolidation of these provisions at the legislative level, in the researcher's opinion, will help to reduce violations of the rights of women who carry out their professional activities in the police.

A. Stakhura (2023), comparing the current legislation of Ukraine and the European Union (EU), found that the main manifestations of gender inequality in the law enforcement system are violations of a career, personal, or official nature. According to N. Liakh (2021), the principal measure to ensure the implementation of gender equality in law enforcement agencies is to educate employees. However, the issue of gender policy and the mechanism of its implementation in various spheres of state and society was covered in a fragmented manner. The issues of legislative regulation of the status or organisation of women's service in law enforcement agencies, as well as the difficulties encountered in its implementation, are still unresolved.

The United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goal 5[1] calls for the elimination of violence, while Goal 16 calls for strong and stable judicial institutions, with the composition and culture of a country's police force playing a significant role in its ability to achieve these goals. As J. Sebire (2020) notes, in a democratic state, any form of discrimination is unacceptable for the social and political life of civil society. However, gender discrimination and sexual harassment of female police officers by their male colleagues are still problems in EU countries that police departments cannot effectively address.

W.M. Cabilan *et al*. (2023) point out that promoting gender equality in law enforcement is crucial for the well-being of female officers and the creation of a safer and more just community. This issue is relevant in terms of the fact that, according to A. Keddie (2022), in Australia during 2016-2022, the issue of gender equality in law enforcement after numerous reports of high levels of gender discrimination and sexual harassment became one of the most pressing issues in academia.

According to R.A. Aborisade & O.G. Ariyo (2023), who conducted a survey of women police officers in Nigeria, women police officers expressed concern about the existence of structural discriminatory provisions against them. These included the exclusion of married women from service, a ban on unmarried officers becoming pregnant, and a minimum three-year period of service before a female officer could marry. A study conducted by A. Rabrenovic *et al*. (2023) pointed to analogous problems faced by women in the Montenegrin police. The researchers showed that the country is dominated by the stereotypical notion that women should primarily perform formal bureaucratic work rather than managerial work. Therewith, the study highlights insufficient career opportunities for women, poor attitudes of managers, and cases of sexual harassment. D.C. Chu *et al*. (2019) note that these limitations can be partly explained by the fact that there are objectively some areas of law enforcement that are better performed by men than women. This refers to arrests, physical fitness, and stress resistance.

In these studies, the issue of the organisational basis of the mechanism of legal regulation of women's

[1] Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly of United Nations No. 70/1 "On Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". (2015, October). Retrieved from https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n15/291/89/pdf/n1529189.pdf?token=4U757gaxvqAYvSdvjJ&fe=true.

service in law enforcement agencies following international standards for the protection of their rights is covered only in passing. This determines the following purpose of the study: to identify the main obstacles to ensuring gender equality in law enforcement agencies of Ukraine. The objectives of the study were to analyse the legal regulation of the conditions of service of female police officers in EU countries; to identify factors influencing the process of recruiting female police personnel; the specifics of women's service in the police, as well as factors influencing their service in law enforcement agencies of Ukraine.

## Materials and Methods

To fulfil the purpose of this study, comparative legal and formal legal methods were employed. Using the comparative legal method, the study compared various forms and mechanisms of protection of the rights of women who carry out professional activities in law enforcement agencies. In addition, the comparative legal method helped to investigate the variability of types of legal mechanisms in the field of protection of women police officers' rights. The method was used to analyse and highlight the common and distinctive features of gender policy in the law enforcement system of the countries studied. The formal legal method was used to study the general trends in the development of the regulatory framework for the protection of the rights of women police officers in countries. The use of the formal legal method allowed for a comparison of national laws and regulations on the protection of women police officers' rights with international standards. The application of the method helped to identify the specifics of legal regulation of the protection of women police officers' rights in individual countries, analyse how certain international standards have been adapted or implemented into national legislation, and what changes have been made to consider specific national features and context. The historical method helped to investigate how national legislation on the protection of women police officers' rights has changed over time and to consider the chronology of the development of international legal acts in this area.

The choice of the geographical scope of the study – the European Union, the United States of America (USA), Israel, Turkey, and Ukraine – helped to consider the issue of protecting the rights of women police officers in different regions. Such research strategy was chosen to obtain a more comprehensive picture compared to analysing one of these regions. The European Union has a well-developed human rights protection system that includes a wide range of regulations and policies on gender equality and women's rights. The study of EU practices provided an opportunity to analyse the implementation of international standards in developed legal systems. The United States was chosen because of its long-standing experience in the field of human rights protection, which helped to provide valuable information on effective mechanisms for protecting the rights of women police officers. Israel, Turkey, and Ukraine are located on the periphery of Europe, which makes them an interesting case study to examine the impact of different cultural and legal traditions on the implementation of international standards.

To fulfil the purpose and complete the objectives, the study examined international regulations, acts adopted by EU countries to regulate the protection of women's rights and ensure gender equality of men and women in law enforcement. These sources included significant international documents adopted by supranational institutions, such as the UN, which has developed a series of key declarations[1,2,3] and conventions[4,5] of the Council of Europe[6], the Parliament and the Council of the EU[7].

## Results

**Combating gender imbalance in law enforcement agencies around the world.** Human rights are one of the key values of the modern world civilisation, legally consolidated at various levels – international and national. Consolidated in international treaties, they serve as a guide for the development of both individual countries and the international legal system as a whole. The majority of modern member states of the international community, despite their diversity, including political, economic, social, and civilisational characteristics, consider the rule of law and human and civil liberties to be the highest value. Because of this fact and due to the intensive development of positive international law at various levels – international (both universal and

[1] Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (1948, December). Retrieved from https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights.
[2] Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women. (1993, December). Retrieved from https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/declaration-elimination-violence-against-women.
[3] United Nations Millennium Declaration. (2000, September). Retrieved from https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/united-nations-millennium-declaration.
[4] Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. (1979, December). Retrieved from https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm.
[5] Conventions on the Rights of the Child. (1989, November). Retrieved from https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child.
[6] Declaration by the Committee of Ministers No. (17/03/2021)1 "On Equal Pay and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in Employment". (2021, March). Retrieved from https://search.coe.int/cm#{%22CoEObjectId%22:[%220900001680a1cb97%22],%22sort%22:[%22CoEValidationDate%20Descending%22]}.
[7] Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence. (2011, May). Retrieved from https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention.

regional) and national – a range of standards have been formed. This raised the issue of their correlation, coordination, prioritisation, and the need for effective implementation of universal standards in national practice.

From the standpoint of positivism, international human rights standards in modern international law are a specific category that reflects and develops one of the basic principles – the principle of respect and protection of human rights and freedoms. Furthermore, one cannot ignore their deeper meaning, as they are not just rules that develop the principle, and not just international legal obligations. Human rights can be interpreted as universal values, respect for which is a moral obligation of modern states and a guideline for the development of modern society. International human rights standards differ from other social standards: firstly, they are characterised by the fact that they define rights inherent in all people, they cannot be obtained by force or otherwise, they are acquired by a person only at birth. Secondly, the principal obligations arising from international human rights standards apply to states and their organs, not individuals.

The issue of gender equality as one of the necessary conditions for ensuring human rights was first highlighted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[1]. Subsequently, they were highlighted in another significant international regulation – the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights[2]. These international regulations contained provisions that guaranteed equal rights for men and women, proclaimed the equality of citizens in any sphere of life, regardless of age, gender, or skin colour. Despite the long history of international regulation of these problems, a series of issues are still controversial or understudied, including the issue of ensuring gender equality in areas where the role of one gender has conventionally prevailed, such as the police.

Different EU countries, the US, and others are addressing this challenge using different approaches. To improve the effectiveness of police work in the United States, programmes have been implemented to attract women to police work. These measures have resulted in an increase in the number of women in the police force in some states. Nevertheless, the overall picture in 2023 shows a considerable gender imbalance (Fig. 1). In France, which has a dualistic centralised system of two national police forces – the civilian national police and the military national gendarmerie – the number of female police officers is growing due to the introduction of various social projects by the government. While in 1980 only six out of 65 police commissioners were women, in 1990 women held 30% of these positions. Despite these results, however, there is still a systemic numerical advantage for men (de Maillard & Skogan, 2020).

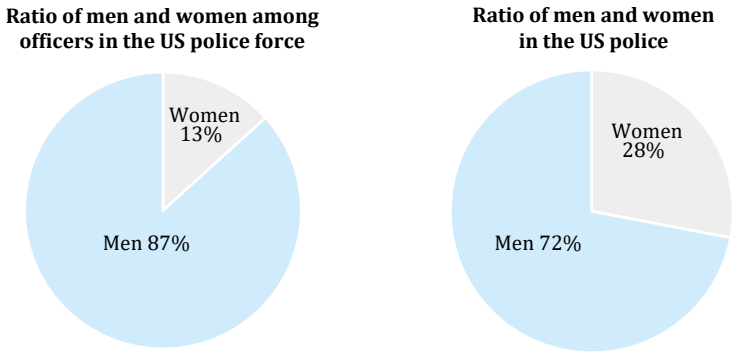



**Figure 1.** The ratio of men and women in US law enforcement as of 2023
**Source:** V. Korhonen (2023)

The situation is not too different in Israel and Turkey, countries where women's rights are also an issue that affects religious traditions. There are approximately 75 000 female police officers in the Israeli police force, which is 24% of the total number. The recruitment of minorities into the police force, including women from minority groups, is not only a sign of gender equality, but also reveals the multilayered complexity of the intersection of gender and ethnicity with diversity projects (Meler, 2023). In Turkey, in the Antalya police, the number of women police officers is 18-20% of the total number. Despite being comparable in number to female police officers in other countries, female police officers here have functional limitations. They mainly investigate crimes committed against children and women, but the prospect of their involvement in areas such as intelligence, counter-terrorism, homicide, pickpocketing, fraud, and smuggling is being considered for the future (Tepe, 2021).

Thus, despite the international standards for the protection of the rights of women police officers ratified by the above countries, the exercise of the right to

[1] Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (1948, December). Retrieved from https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights.
[2] International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. (1966, December). Retrieved from https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights.

this activity is a problem for women in many countries. This is due to a range of internal and external factors. The former includes all conditions of life in a particular country (economic development, historical, and cultural traditions), while the latter includes political, social, and economic factors of global scale that affect all countries of the world (globalisation, digitalisation). Therewith, the experience of these countries shows that the impact of these factors on the number of women in police forces is not decisive, as regardless of the region studied, their share in law enforcement agencies is within 20-30%. There are even more discrepancies in terms of career restrictions and functional equality. Thus, the number of women in senior positions is lower in the United States than in France, and in Turkey, women police officers face systemic restrictions on their activities within law enforcement agencies.

**Analysis of legal regulation of gender equality in law enforcement agencies of Ukraine.** Ukraine has become a member of several organisations, both European and international, since gaining independence. Ukraine's membership in the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe became momentous events for the country. As a result of its participation in these organisations, Ukraine has signed a considerable number of international legal instruments regulating gender equality. Following their provisions, Ukraine has assumed a series of international obligations to improve the national legal system in the area of legal regulation of gender equality. Despite this, Ukrainian legislation lacks a statutory definition of the term "gender equality", and there is no single formal and doctrinal approach to the concept of gender equality and equal rights in Ukraine.

Ensuring gender equality in society in terms of political, economic, and social life is reflected in the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women[1], which at the level of international norms focused on discrimination against women in the public and private spheres, as well as on the responsibility of governments in case of such violations based on gender. The Declaration by the Committee of Ministers No. (17/03/2021)1[2] contained analogous provisions, which proclaimed that discrimination based on gender, which can occur in the political, social, educational, cultural, and other spheres, is an obstacle to the recognition and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The provisions of the above-mentioned international regulations allow clarifying the term "discrimination". The newest of them deals with the position of women in society and in various spheres of its life. Thus, "discrimination against women" means any distinction, exclusion, or restriction made based on gender that impairs or nullifies the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with men in the political, economic, social, public, or any other field, irrespective of their marital status[3].

It is worth noting not only international but also European standards for ensuring gender equality in law enforcement. First of all, this refers to the Recommendation of the Committee (2001)10 of Ministers to the Member States of the Council of Europe dated 19 September 2001[4]. According to the rules of the European Code of Police Ethics, "police officers, regardless of the positions to which they are recruited, shall be recruited based on their competence and experience relevant to the tasks of police work" (Item 22). Furthermore, this legal act states that "recruitment procedures should be based on objective and non-discriminatory criteria (after the necessary vetting) and a policy of recruiting men and women from different social groups, including ethnic minorities, should be applied so that the police reflect the society it serves" (Item 25).

The significance of considering both international and European standards in the field of protection of women police officers in the development of national legislation is crucial from the perspective of Ukraine's political European integration course (Protosavitska, 2022). Ukraine's external course towards European integration requires harmonisation of the activities of state and public institutions and the system of national legislation with European standards and requirements, specifically in the area of gender equality. The gender policy of democratic countries prescribes the involvement of all genders in all areas of public administration.

The establishment of the Council of Europe, which has been engaged in the practical implementation of gender policy for a long time, was one of the main events for addressing gender equality issues for countries throughout the democratic world. The Council of Europe has provided invaluable experience for Eastern European countries, including Ukraine, in addressing the issue of protecting women's rights, including those of police officers. The organisation plays a significant role in the development of gender policy, primarily in European countries. The creation of the Council of Europe marked the beginning of the creation and implementation the first institutional mechanism for gender equality. This refers to the Committee on the Status of Women (1979-1981), which was later renamed

[1] Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. (1979, December). Retrieved from https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm.
[2] Declaration by the Committee of Ministers No. (17/03/2021)1 "On Equal Pay and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in Employment". (2021, March). Retrieved from https://search.coe.int/cm#{%22CoEObjectId%22:[%220900001680a1cb97%22],%22sort%22:[%22CoEValidationDate%20Descending%22]}.
[3] Ibidem, 2021.
[4] Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the European Code of Police Ethics. (2001, September). Retrieved from https://www.refworld.org/docid/43f5c7944.html.

the Committee on Equality between Women and Men (1981-1986), while its functions were preserved and expanded. Furthermore, the Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men has been operating since 1992 within the Council of Europe and simultaneously works within the Human Rights Directorate.

Various aspects of gender issues are covered at regular conferences organised by the Council of Europe at the ministerial level. These measures are of practical importance, as they play a significant role in shaping the gender policies of governments across Europe. Council of Europe member states have agreed to commit themselves to strengthening gender equality and protecting women's rights, and it must be in line with the principles of gender equality, which are directly linked to fundamental ideas about the quality of social justice, human rights, and the nature of democracy. Such obligations of the European member states are stipulated in a series of regulations (international, national, and sectoral agreements and treaties) (Table 1).

**Table 1.** The principal EU legislative framework on gender law to be harmonised with Ukrainian legislation in terms of protecting the rights of women police officers

| Date | Name | Content |
|---|---|---|
| 1957 | EU Treaty[1] | The right to equal pay for men and women; allows for the legal prevention of discrimination at work or in access to goods and services |
| 1975 | Directive 75/177[2] | On equal pay for men and women |
| 1976 | Directive 76/207[3] | On equal treatment in employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions |
| 1979 | Directive 79/7[4] | Equal treatment in matters of social security, as amended in 1996 |
| 1986 | Directive 86/378[5] | Equal treatment in occupational social security schemes, as amended in 1996 |
| 1986 | Directive 86/613[6] | On equal treatment in employment issues |
| 1992 | Directive 92/85[7] | On the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding |
| 1996 | Directive 96/34[8] | On the agreement on paternity allowance for childcare, the right of a man to receive maternity allowance for childcare |
| 1997 | Directive 97/80[9] | On the burden of proof in cases of discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity |
| 2000 | Directive 2000/43[10] | On the implementation of the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, religion and sexual orientation |
| 2000 | Directive 2000/78/EC[11] | Establishes a general framework for equality of treatment in employment and occupation |
| 2004 | Directive 2004/113[12] | On equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services |

[1] Treaty Establishing the European Economic Community. (1957, March). Retrieved from https://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/en/in-the-past/the-parliament-and-the-treaties/treaty-of-rome.
[2] Directive of the Council of European Union No. 75/117/EEC "On the Approximation of the Laws of the Member States Relating to the Application of the Principle of Equal Pay for Men and Women". (1975, February). Retrieved from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A31975L0117.
[3] Directive of the Council of European Union No. 76/207/EEC "On the Implementation of the Principle of Equal Treatment for Men and Women as Regards Access to Employment, Vocational Training and Promotion, and Working Conditions". (1976, February). Retrieved from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A31976L0207&qid=1718018723117.
[4] Directive of the Council of European Union No. 79/7/EEC "On the Progressive Implementation of the Principle of Equal Treatment for Men and Women in Matters of Social Security". (1978, December). Retrieved from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A31979L0007&qid=1718018748144.
[5] Directive of the Council of European Union No. 86/378/EEC "On the Implementation of the Principle of Equal Treatment for Men and Women in Occupational Social Security Schemes". (1986, July). Retrieved from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A31986L0378.
[6] Directive of the Council of European Union No. 86/613/EEC "On the Application of the Principle of Equal Treatment Between Men and Women Engaged in an Activity, Including Agriculture, in a Self-Employed Capacity, and on the Protection of Self-Employed Women During Pregnancy and Motherhood". (1986, December). Retrieved from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A31986L0613.
[7] Directive of the Council of European Union No. 92/85/EEC "On the Introduction of Measures to Encourage Improvements in the Safety and Health at Work of Pregnant Workers and Workers Who Have Recently Given Birth or are Breastfeeding (Tenth Individual Directive within the Meaning of Article 16 (1) of Directive 89/391/EEC)". (1992, October). Retrieved from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A31992L0085&qid=1718018864464.
[8] Directive of the Council of European Union No. 96/34/EC "On the Framework Agreement on Parental Leave Concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC". (1996, June). Retrieved from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A31996L0034&qid=1718018898847.
[9] Directive of the Council of European Union No. 97/80/EC "On the Burden of Proof in Cases of Discrimination Based on Sex". (1997, December). Retrieved from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A31997L0080.
[10] Directive of the Council of European Union No. 2000/43/EC "On Implementing the Principle of Equal Treatment Between Persons Irrespective of Racial or Ethnic Origin". (2000, June). Retrieved from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32000L0043&qid=1718018964641.
[11] European Commission Regulation (EEC) No. 2000/78 "On re-Establishing the Levying of Customs Duties on Woven Fabrics of Regenerated Textile Fibres, Falling within Subheading 56.07 B, Originating in South Korea to which the Preferential Tariff Arrangements set out in Council Regulation (EEC) No. 1197/78 Apply". (1978, August). Retrieved from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A31978R2000&qid=1718018986002.
[12] Directive of the Council of European Union No. 2004/113/EC "On Implementing the Principle of Equal Treatment Between Men and Women in the Access to and Supply of Goods and Services". (2004, August). Retrieved from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32004L0113&qid=1718019009796.

*Table 1, Continued*

| Date | Name | Content |
|---|---|---|
| 2006 | Directive 2006/54[1] | On the principles of equal opportunities and equal treatment in matters of employment and occupation (amended in 2014) |
| 2013 | Guidelines dated 24 June 2013[2] | Programme of Action and Plan of Directives for the Protection of Human Rights to Gender Identity (guidelines for the legalisation of LGBTI rights) |

**Source**: systematised by the authors

A.P. Stakhura (2023) notes that almost all articles of legal acts of Ukraine related to military affairs contain provisions on the status and activities of women in a separate part or paragraphs. This, according to the researcher, means that women are considered as a separate category of servicepersons, not equal to the status of men. On the other hand, within the framework of the analysis of the legislation of international legal acts on ensuring the rights of women police officers, which have already been ratified by Ukraine[3,4,5], it follows the standards of equality between men and women in society. The Ukrainian legislators try to maintain the non-discriminatory nature of legal relations, establishing responsibility for violations of legislation in the field of women's rights[6,7,8,9,10], and provide additional guarantees for the protection of motherhood and childhood[11], as this is an essential and priority vector in the development of the state, which is prescribed in the Constitution of Ukraine[12]. Nevertheless, a detailed analysis of EU legislation shows that despite these values and the desire to protect women's rights, the real situation of women police officers in Ukraine is affected by a considerable number of negative factors.

Notably, the provisions of the above-mentioned regulations contain general provisions on ensuring gender equality and protection of women's rights, grounds for civil, administrative, and criminal liability for their violation, but do not reflect the specifics of women's service in law enforcement agencies. Accordingly, in terms of the issues under study, these legal acts are not sufficient to regulate the rights of women police officers and protect them. This is reflected in the ineffective implementation of gender policy in law enforcement. According to this and considering the course of Ukraine towards European integration, it is considered appropriate to improve the current national legislation through its implementation of regulations that have not yet been ratified by Ukraine[13,14,15].

In modern Ukraine, it is difficult to imagine a field of activity in which women do not work. Women are actively mastering new professional skills, irrevocably changing stereotypes, and proving their ability to perform complex and responsible work on an equal footing with men. Feminisation is caused by the objective and subjective factors of contemporary social development, as discussed above. Gender stereotypes, by their very nature, support inequality in all its manifestations and are one of the most difficult problems to solve. Order of the Ministry of Health No. 256[16], which expired in 2017, contained a list of 450 professions prohibited for women. This legal act was contrary to national legislation, EU law, and Ukraine's international commitments on

[1] Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 2006/54/EC "On the Implementation of the Principle of Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Matters of Employment and Occupation (Recast)". (2006, July). Retrieved from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32006L0054&qid=1718019038623.
[2] Guidelines to Promote and Protect the Enjoyment of All Human Rights by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) Persons. (2013, June). Retrieved from https://tandis.odihr.pl/handle/20.500.12389/21604.
[3] Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (1948, December). Retrieved from https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2021/03/udhr.pdf.
[4] Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. (1979, December). Retrieved from https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm.
[5] International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. (1966, December). Retrieved from https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights.
[6] Civil Code of Ukraine, Code of Ukraine. (2003, January). Retrieved from https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/435-15#Text.
[7] Criminal Code of Ukraine. (2001, May). Retrieved from https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2341-14#Text.
[8] Code of Ukraine on Administrative Offences (Articles 1–212-24). (1984, December). Retrieved from https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/80731-10#Text.
[9] Law of Ukraine No. 2866-IV "On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men". (2005, September). Retrieved from https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2866-15#Text.
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gender policy. However, the problem of gender inequality is still relevant for Ukraine's security sector.

At the present stage, it is important to understand that achieving gender equality in law enforcement means not just increasing the number of women in law enforcement. This refers to changing the balance of power in modern society that maintains inequality and gender-based violence. First and foremost, this is about protecting the rights of all people, ensuring and defending their rights and freedoms, and enabling them to fully participate in public life regardless of gender. Apart from the adherence to the numerical target for recruitment to law enforcement agencies in Ukraine, it is also important to recruit representatives of ethnic minorities as one of the key manifestations of the policy of not only gender justice, but also balance. To ensure the listed requirements in the aspect of ensuring and protecting the rights of women police officers, it is considered appropriate to ratify the principal regulations of the EU on the regulation of gender equality issues[1,2]. It is also worth noting that Council Directive 2000/78/EC dated 27 November 2000[3] and Council Directive 2000/43/EC dated 29 June 2000[4] have already been implemented into Ukrainian legislation.

Analysing the provisions of the core law regulating law enforcement, the Law of Ukraine "On the National Police"[5], which defines the status of police officers, including the procedure for their service, one can find only a few provisions that stipulate a small number of rules on the specific legal status of women officers. This provision is considered as generally consistent with the principle of formal, i.e., legal, gender equality. The essence of it is that legally, men and women in law enforcement agencies as employees are equal in everything. This equality stems from the universal status of law enforcement officers as defined by law. This status is mainly administrative legal.

The problem of the effectiveness of the state apparatus in the current realities of public life is of particular significance in the context of armed aggression against Ukraine. The success of the state apparatus is directly related to the quality of the personnel that staffs state agencies, including law enforcement. Public service activities and legal relations arising in their implementation are the key sphere of life in any country, especially at a time when the state faces serious challenges and threats.

## Discussion

Police services reflect the society of which they are a part, and changes in the police are therefore partly dependent on those in the society. J. Brown & M. Silvestri (2019) support an analogous position, noting that as the gender ratio in the police is changing and reforms promote a style of policing with a greater emphasis on an ethic of care, it can be expected to reflect more female values (Brown & Silvestri, 2019). W.M. Cabilan *et al*. (2023) expressed a comparable sentiment, noting that in an era of transformation and change, women police officers need to be provided with opportunities for professional growth and development. Therewith, according to the findings of the study and the researcher's conclusions, it is necessary to ensure equal access of women police officers to leadership positions, training, and opportunities for promotion. This can be achieved by creating a support system, clubs, and programmes that empower and promote women in law enforcement. It is also necessary to strictly enforce laws and policies that protect the rights and promote the advancement of women in the field of law. Similarly to the results of this study, such position is supported by H. Reiter (2022), who notes that the comprehensive inclusion of all people in the police service should not be based solely on individual legal measures. It is worth agreeing with the researcher on the necessity of addressing the issue of police culture and the implementation of its ideas in a holistic manner, thus breaking old patterns, and rethinking them in a sustainable way.

The study findings suggest that the police can support or conduct public awareness campaigns that challenge gender biases and stereotypes; offer role models and encourage dialogue. A. Schuck & C. Rabe-Hemp (2024) confirm this opinion, emphasising that rethinking police responsibilities from a caring and gender equality perspective is a viable option to improve police relations with communities and to effectively secure legitimacy within them, especially in marginalised communities (Schuck & Rabe-Hemp, 2024). The results of the study suggest that a comprehensive approach is needed to ensure gender policy in law enforcement agencies in Ukraine. A. Stakhura (2023) adds that it is necessary to overcome manifestations of gender inequality primarily in the following aspects: career, those directly related to the service of women, recruitment, restrictions on women's service in certain areas;

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[5] Law of Ukraine No. 580-VIII "On the National Police". (2015, July). Retrieved from https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/580-19#Text.

personal, which relate to harassment in the service, sexism, combining family responsibilities and professional activities, service in terms of uniforms, involvement in duties, and other conditions of service. R.A. Aborisade & O.G. Ariyo (2023) support an analogous position, substantiated in their study, noting that female police officers experience a variety of sexual harassment, intimidation, and violence from their male colleagues, and they feel constrained to report their victimisation. That is why, as A. Keddie (2022) notes, gender inequality cannot be addressed without transforming the hierarchical and masculinised culture of police organisations.

While many of the benefits of women in the police have been recognised, sworn female officers are still largely underrepresented in the workforce (Davenport-Klunder & Hine, 2023). According to J. Sebire (2020), the use of a diverse workforce, especially in terms of female representation at all levels of the police command structure, is a vital factor in shaping police culture. However, many police forces are still traditional hierarchical institutions dominated by men. A. Rabrenovic *et al*. (2023) support a similar opinion, noting that gender inequality in the police is an attempt to shed light on the broader social context and status of women in this structure, demonstrating that women's inequality in it can be at least partially explained by deeply rooted perceptions of women's traditional patriarchal role in the family and society. According to V. Garcia & A. Shenx (2022), regardless of whether the "Western" definition of integration, gender-segregated units, or specialised police for women is used, research shows that in all countries women face barriers to service and are disadvantaged, discriminated against, or marginalised in male-dominated organisations. In this regard, according to N. Liakh (2021), it is necessary to consider the division of regulations governing gender equality in law enforcement into certain groups that have their specifics: international documents that define the fundamental legal framework for ensuring gender equality, regulations of Ukraine governing gender equality in law enforcement, court decisions of international and national courts interpreting these sources of law.

The opposite to the analysed studies and conclusions of the present study is expressed by N. Duclos & C. Jouhanneau (2019), who note that despite the high probability of women joining the police, as past research shows that men and women have analogous reasons for joining the police, women are more likely to discontinue. Accordingly, the issue of gender equality in law enforcement agencies according to international standards for the protection of women police officers is not relevant. The findings of the study suggest the presence of areas of law enforcement wherein women can perform more effectively than their male colleagues. D.C. Chu *et al*. (2019) does not support this position, noting that there are some job duties in law enforcement that are more effectively performed by men: they are significantly more self-efficacious than their female colleagues in the areas of arrests, reporting, and use of police equipment. Furthermore, the researcher notes, men are also much more confident that they are physically and mentally capable of doing police work.

## Conclusions

The subject of this study was the protection of the rights of women police officers following the provisions of existing international regulations. Based on the findings obtained, the study summarised theoretical provisions on the regulation of gender equality issues in law enforcement agencies of Ukraine and identified the main shortcomings of the current Ukrainian legislation according to international and European standards for the protection of the rights of women police officers. The conducted study suggests that legally, men and women are equal in law enforcement, which directly follows from the universal status of their work. However, at the same time, it is necessary to further improve both the legislative framework regulating the activities of law enforcement officers following European and international standards in terms of ensuring effective gender policy and other practical measures. Specifically, another aspect in this area should be educational work, which should be carried out primarily among law enforcement officers. The standards of gender equality and inadmissibility of discrimination based on sex, which were analysed in this study, underlie the UN Charter, are the principal standards in the field of women's rights protection and are prescribed in international human rights treaties. Furthermore, an analysis of the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international legal instruments to which Ukraine is a signatory leads to the conclusion that modern international law has developed a universal norm according to which states are obliged to respect and observe the rights of all women, regardless of their race, language, religion, or profession. Despite the detailed legal formulation of international women's rights standards, problems persist with their enforcement and protection at various levels, including in the area of law enforcement. Analysing the practice of international mechanisms for the protection of the rights of women police officers, the key problematic aspects are violence against women and discrimination in employment, which are among the most difficult to define the legal boundary between abuse of law and violation of law by both the prosecution and the defence. The findings of the conducted study confirm this conclusion and mainly correlate with the problematic aspects of international legal regulation.

Promising areas for further research in this area may be related to the subject under study: finding ways to improve the effectiveness of gender policy implementation in law enforcement agencies of Ukraine according to approved international standards.

## Acknowledgements

None.

## Conflict of Interest

None.

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# Національна специфіка впровадження міжнародних стандартів захисту прав жінок-поліцейських

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**Анотація**
Дотримання загальновизнаних міжнародних стандартів у сфері захисту прав жінок-поліцейських є актуальним у зв'язку з тим, що цей процес покращує імідж країни на міжнародній арені, водночас сприяє ефективній координації між державами в боротьбі зі злочинністю. Тому метою дослідження стало виявлення основних напрямів забезпечення рівних прав чоловіків і жінок у правоохоронній діяльності в Україні в контексті реалізації євроінтеграційного курсу. Для цього використано історичний, порівняльно-правовий та формально-правовий методи. Проаналізовано міжнародні правові акти та чинне національне законодавство України у сфері забезпечення та захисту прав жінок, які здійснюють свою професійну діяльність у правоохоронних органах. Встановлено, що станом на 2024 рік для всіх країн характерною є універсалізація проблеми в окресленій сфері. Сформульовано висновок, що питання захисту прав жінок реактуалізуються у зв'язку із суттєвими змінами в соціальному житті європейських держав. Ці процеси супроводжуються появою негативних тенденцій щодо професійного становища жінок, зростанням рівня безробіття та бідності, зменшенням кількості жінок у виборних органах, державних структурах, зокрема правоохоронних органах. Аргументовано, що орієнтованість на міжнародно-правові стандарти могла б стати передумовою для вдосконалення внутрішньодержавної нормативної бази в галузі захисту прав жінок, які здійснюють професійну діяльність у поліції, трансформації правозастосовної практики в напрямі врахування інтересів цієї частини соціуму. Практичне значення здійсненого дослідження полягає в тому, що його результати можуть бути використані для покращення роботи правоохоронних органів України шляхом удосконалення положень внутрішньодержавного захисту прав жінок-поліцейських

**Ключові слова:**
гендерний баланс; правоохоронна діяльність; державна служба; загальноєвропейські стандарти; євроінтеграція