

## Research Article

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# Comprehensive defence in Latvia – rebranding state defence and call for society’s involvement

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**Abstract:** This article explores how comprehensive defence has been introduced in Latvia, and focuses on society’s involvement and tasks in the state defence. This approach envisages a significant change in society’s relationship with the armed forces and state defence. Differently from many other countries, Latvia maintains its system without introducing conscription and instead puts efforts towards youth education in defence. Additionally, the Ministry of Defence involves different society groups and NGOs in defining their role in state defence. This article also discusses the concepts of resistance and non-collaboration as part of comprehensive defence.

**Keywords:** comprehensive defence; total defence; resistance.

## 1 Introduction

This article explores how comprehensive defence is conceptually understood and formulated in Latvia, and what are the new elements and policy changes envisaged by this approach. It also pays special attention to the role and tasks of society—civilian population and non-military organisations in the state defence because it is very much at the core of this approach and is emphasised throughout the new State Defence Concept (SDC)<sup>1</sup> and related discourse. Ultimately, this article attempts to identify unique elements of the comprehensive defence in Latvia—judging by formulated policy documents, its wider conceptual understanding by different actors and its implementation process. It does not attempt, however, to assess how well the chosen defence policy of comprehensive defence is addressing threats posed by Russia or other security challenges, nor does it try to identify the existing gaps in capabilities and means of mitigating them in Latvia<sup>2</sup>. Besides society’s involvement in defence, other domains of the comprehensive defence, such as the sustainable economy and functioning of the vital state services and the military readiness are briefly addressed.

According to the Resistance Operating Concept (ROC), total defence<sup>3</sup> ‘includes all activities necessary to prepare a nation for conflict in defence of its independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, and it consists of both civil and military defence’ (Swedish Defence University, 2019). Thus, total defence comprises civilian and military parts and the use of all state resources for ensuring defence of the country. According to the ROC, what differentiates the total

<sup>1</sup> According to the National Security Law (National Security Law, 2000), State Defence Concept (SDC) is reviewed every four years based on the military threat assessment. SDC is prepared by the Ministry of Defence and approved by the Parliament. The latest SDC was adopted by the Parliament on 24 September 2020. SDC is the key defence policy document that provides guidance for subsequent State Defence and National Armed Forces Development Plans.

<sup>2</sup> For more specific measures on improving total defence and unconventional warfare capabilities in the Baltic states, see Flanagan, Osburg, Binnendijk, Kepe, & Radin (2019).

<sup>3</sup> In this article, the terms total defence and comprehensive defence will be used in a close conjunction without any specific differentiation. It is done because similar principles and approaches adopted by several countries (e.g., Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden, and Norway) are presented under the frameworks of Total Defence or Comprehensive defence. Additionally, the terms used are ‘whole of society’ and ‘whole of government approach’.

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# The views presented in the article are those of the authors own and do not represent any official views of the affiliated institutions

defence from traditional defence is the increased role of the population and the required preparation to ensure that the population is ready to fulfil its tasks (*Ibid.*). Therefore, total defence is often referred to as a whole of society approach. Second, the ROC emphasises that enhanced institutionalised cooperation between all entities involved, including the ministries, public agencies, as well as civil organisations and the larger public (*Ibid.*). This is crucial for the success of the total defence.

This article argues that the conceptual understanding of the comprehensive defence in Latvia has been evolving gradually since 2017 and 2018 by introducing some of the elements, studying examples of other countries and carrying consultation with specific society groups in Latvia. As a result, it has strong features of the bottom-up approach, but is less rigorous in its doctrinal uniformity and clarity. The bottom-up approach is seen here in two ways. First, how society groups are involved in defining their role in state defence and second, how the implementation of comprehensive defence has gradually evolved from one specific project: state defence classes. Second, it will claim that this new concept or approach envisages a significant change in the society's relationship with the armed forces and state defence by tasking society (non-military personnel) to be directly and indirectly involved in state defence tasks. More specifically, support for the armed forces and participation in resistance, as well as non-collaboration with the aggressor are among the key concepts. Additional aspects of society's involvement are the delegation of state defence tasks to the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the further expansion of youth education and training on state defence-related subjects.

Although the policy formulation and discourse about the society's direct involvement in defence and the need to raise its readiness for potential crises or war situations may represent quite a significant shift, it is complementary to the previously existing policies in Latvia rather than a complete change in defence policy. Furthermore, as it will be seen later, some elements or building blocks of total defence were already in place in Latvia before being labelled as comprehensive defence, and thus comprehensive defence in its practical implementation is not entirely new in the Latvian case. Nevertheless, introducing the comprehensive defence has allowed bringing state defence to a much higher political and public agenda and has added a sense of urgency in terms of preparing the whole society for crises or war. One could argue that the communication about the concept preceded the concept itself. Therefore, the article closely follows the official policy formulation process and public discourse related to the comprehensive defence—how it has evolved and how its content and implementation examples have been explained.

This article is structured in the following way. It starts by providing a historical overview of the development of total defence and existing elements of the total defence system prior to the introduction of comprehensive defence as part of the defence policy. Second, it shows the reasoning and background for introducing a comprehensive defence in 2018–2020. Third, it provides a sequential overview of the decision-making and policy formulation process regarding the comprehensive defence in Latvia. Fourth, it attempts to highlight and analyse the key new concepts included in the state defence policy, paying special attention to resistance and non-collaboration, readiness culture and the focus on youth education on state defence subjects. Finally, the conclusion part provides an answer to the claims and suggests recommendations for policy formulation and potential research areas.

## 2 Development of total defence and its existing elements

Looking back, the first attempt to develop a total defence system as an overarching concept for defence was made in Latvia in the late 1990s and until 2004 until Latvia became a NATO member state, and it was inspired and guided by the Swedish model.<sup>4</sup> A special Swedish advisory team assisted the Latvian defence experts in the conceptual development of the total defence system.<sup>5</sup> Total defence was one of the main principles of the national defence system in Latvia, as defined in the SDC that was in force in 2001–2003, and was oriented towards the development of self-defence capabilities that included all state available resources, both military and civilian, material and personnel

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<sup>4</sup> 'The Swedish concept of "total defence" includes all activities needed to prepare Sweden for war. Total defence contains military activities (military defence) and civilian activities (civil defence). During a state of highest alert (e.g. a state of Sweden being at war or in danger of war) total defence consists of all societies activities.' (Lindgren & Odlund, 2017)

<sup>5</sup> The author of this article includes information based on personal professional experience from working as a junior civil servant at the MoD, and being directly involved in several projects together with the Swedish experts' team in years 1997-2000. The author was involved in two specific areas—drafting Mobilization law and conducting societal educational projects on total defence.

(State Defence Concept, 2001). The close cooperation between the military and civilian defence systems was one of the important principles (Ibid.). The keywords used in describing the total defence system were conscription, mobilisation and territorial defence, and, as described in the NATO’s publication issued in 1999, ‘In accordance with the concept of total defence, in case of imminent attack the whole Latvian Nation will be mobilized’ (Graube, 1999). At that time, Latvia had a conscription system (stipulated by the Obligatory Military Service Law (The Obligatory Military Service Law, 1997), amended in 2007). The development of mobilisation reserves was seen as an important cornerstone of the total defence system through the 12-month-long conscription service. It has to be noted that the conscription system was highly unpopular among the Latvian public, and young people in particular, and this factor was consequently used as one of the key arguments for abolishing it.

Additionally, planning, preparing and use of all state resources as part of the mobilisation was envisaged and laid out in the Mobilization Law (Mobilization Law, 2002), which was under development since 1997, and was eventually adopted by the Parliament in 2002 and entered into force in 2005. One of the underlying conceptual thoughts was that the new system should cover both the peacetime crises and wartime and that all preparation, planning and training that are conducted for peacetime emergencies would facilitate readiness in wartime. Readiness of municipalities and improved coordination between the different agencies, as well as the swift political decision-making process in case of the state of emergency, were also discussed.

Following the Swedish approach, the society’s education on total defence principles was seen as one of the important preconditions for the successful implementation of this system. Thus, experts from the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) assisted the Ministry of Defence of Latvia (MoD) with their advice and financial resources for organising projects for the youth groups and conducting seminars for municipalities on total defence in Latvia as well. Moreover, during 1998–2001, inspired by the focus on society’s psychological defence in Sweden, the MoD of Latvia started conducting regular public opinion surveys on defence issues as well as launched the series of brochures for schools and municipalities, including on total defence.<sup>6</sup>

However, in light of NATO membership and with abolishing conscription in Latvia in 2007, the total defence approach was dropped because it was seen as incompatible with the NATO collective defence principles<sup>7</sup>. According to retired Col Igors Rajevs, ‘the invitation to join NATO completely altered Latvia’s international situation and its approach to national defence. The principles of total defence and territorial defence have become obsolete, thus making the maintenance of large reserve units – which are poorly manned, trained and equipped – irrelevant’, quoted in (Paulauskas, 2013, p. 75).

Reliance on NATO’ collective defence and development of deployable capabilities for the NATO’s out of area operations was the focus of the national security and defence policy until 2014, while the self-defence capabilities were somewhat neglected. Overemphasis on participation in international operations has resulted in a disregard of territorial defence, as argued by the Latvian academics in their assessment of the changes in the Latvian security and defence policy post-2014 (Rostoks & Vanaga, 2016).

Coming back to the broad definition and main principles of the total defence framework, civilian and military dimension to prepare a country for crises and war, one can observe that many of its elements have existed in Latvia without direct references to comprehensive or total defence. For instance, the National Security Law (NSL) states that, ‘The National security system is based on the civil-military cooperation. The civil-military cooperation is planned and coordinated actions by the state institutions, population and the National Armed Forces to tackle the endangerment to the state’ (National Security Law, 2000). The previous SDC already emphasises the whole society’s involvement in defence by saying that ‘State independence and sovereignty is possible only with the whole society’s participation, government’s resilience and military capabilities’ (State Defence Concept, 2016). Specific legislation, plans and designated institutions address aspects of civilian defence (Civil Protection and Disaster Management Law (Civil Protection and Disaster Management Law, 2016). What is more, the Ministry of Interior with its subordinated State Search and Rescue Agency has been in lead to plan and manage civil emergency crises. The protection of critical

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<sup>6</sup> Confirmed by another former MoD employee who was employed in the Public Relations Section of the MoD and was part of the small team working with the Swedish counterparts. She organized several society education projects on defence questions (Interview with a former employee of the MoD, 2020).

<sup>7</sup> For instance, the State Defence Concept for the years 2003–2008, which was approved in the November of 2003, does not include a reference to the total defence anymore. Instead, collective defence is introduced as one of the main principles of the state defence system (State Defence Concept, 2003).

infrastructure is guided by the NSL (National Security Law, 2000) and its subordinated Government's regulations. Furthermore, the need to strengthen societal resilience, promote the unity of society and conduct effective strategic communications have been mentioned in already previously existing National Security (National Security Concept, 2019) and SDCs (State Defence Concept, 2016). Thus, when looking at the four main domains of the total defence and their elements, as suggested by Berzina (2018), one could identify that the key features of this system have existed in Latvia as part of the national security, defence and crisis management system even before the official introduction of the comprehensive approach in 2018–2020. According to Berzina (2018), the four main dimensions according to which to conceptualize the total defence are: (1) military, (2) civilian defence (including protection of infrastructure), (3) informational and (4) psychological (covering relationship between the state and society and social cohesion).

Nevertheless, there was a political choice by the experts and policymakers in Latvia to introduce the term comprehensive defence to bring state defence tasks to the society's attention. Furthermore, the new title—comprehensive defence versus total defence—was carefully considered, and the examples of other countries were analysed (Interview 2, 2020). Consequently, while many Scandinavian countries served as useful examples for the total defence principles, the reference to total defence was not suitable for Latvia (Ibid.). Thus, the following chapters cover how the new terminology was introduced in public discourse and official legislation and policy documents.

### 3 Comprehensive defence as a response to hybrid threats

It is not surprising that conception of the idea to organise the state defence based on the principles of a comprehensive defence/total defence was caused by Russia's war in Eastern Ukraine and annexation of Crimea in 2014. More specifically, the type of war Russia has been waging in Ukraine (for new generation Russia's war see (Berzins, 2014)) and its continued use of propaganda and information warfare in many countries, including Latvia, clearly demonstrated the need to strengthen the whole society approach, develop societal resilience<sup>8</sup> and improve an overall readiness to counter both military and non-military threats posed primarily by Russia. However, total defence or its modality under a different title is seen not only as the means to tackle a variety of hybrid or asymmetric threats, but is conceptualised as one of the building blocks of a deterrence strategy. In other words, deterrence is achieved by developing society's will and capabilities to resist any potential aggression that it defeats a potential enemy's will to attack, or if that fails—it denies the enemy an easy victory by raising the costs and changing the cost-benefit calculation. As such, the strengthening of the national total defence systems and society's resilience is found among the recommendations of experts in their assessment of the deterrence in the Baltic states (Klein, Lundqvist, Sumangil, & Pettersson, 2019; Jermalavicius, Societal Resilience as a Deterrent in 'Hybrid War', 2015; Flanagan, Osburg, Binnendijk, Kepe, & Radin, 2019). From this point of view, the society's involvement in the state defence, its will to support the country and its armed forces, as well as readiness to make a personal contribution is no less significant than the readiness of the Armed Forces—which until recently, was seen the main actor—together with the Allies, to ensure the defence of the country. This conceptual linkage of the comprehensive defence and deterrence is also present in the defence policy document of Latvia—SDC (State Defence Concept, 2020). Furthermore, the involvement of a wider society in defence and raising the society's responsibility represented a major shift in thinking in Latvia regarding how to organise state defence or respond to major crises.

Besides Russia's hybrid and subversive actions in Crimea and Ukraine and ongoing current challenges in the information domain in Latvia, historical lessons from Latvia's occupation by the Soviet Russia and incorporation in the USSR in 1940, was another important consideration. Fear of Russia's subversive operations and a *coup d'état* combining military operations with the staging of political regime change seems to be part of the background thinking in Latvia about how to avoid similar scenarios in the contemporary setting. Thus, several law amendments were adopted to avoid a repetition of the similar scenario in which a country surrenders without a fight or resistance, and to ensure continuity of command and decision-making in the event of war and military aggression<sup>9</sup>. As the former President of the Republic

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<sup>8</sup> Resistance Operating Concept broadly defines resilience as “The will and ability to withstand external pressure and influences and/or recover from the effects of those pressures or influences” (Swedish Defence University, 2019).

<sup>9</sup> The National Security Law (National Security Law, 2000) with its amendment from 2016 prescribed the duty to carry out the military resistance.

of Latvia said in his public speech during the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the National Guard (LSM, 2016), ‘Never again, it will be possible 1940, when Latvia surrender without a single shot’. Thus, a preparation for a potentially staged regime change and military attack or aggression has become part of the conceptual thinking of the Latvian elites and security experts since Ukraine, and it is clearly depicted in the current defence policy documents. Furthermore, historical examples of the resistance movements in the Baltic states and elsewhere during the Second World War and its aftermath, and current doctrinal development of organising resilience and resistance led by Special Operations Command in Europe, brought the concept of resistance to the attention (Swedish Defence University, 2019). Consequently, it is also depicted in the current policy and legal documents in Latvia—NSL, National Security Concept (NSC) and SDC. As such, it communicates to society several implied messages. First, war or military aggression cannot be excluded. Second, the occupation of the whole country or its parts is possible, and state and society need to prepare for that. Third, the participation in or support to the resistance is not only a history lesson but is something that needs to be planned and prepared for today as well. This may be difficult to realise in post-modern societies, especially for young generations who never experienced war directly or have not even heard about it from parents or grandparents.

Although overall conceptual thinking about defence has changed over the past six years and Ukraine brought defence back home (Jermalavicius, Atmante, & Kaljurand, *Strategic Cultures of the Baltic States: The Impact of Russia’s New Wars*, 2019), Latvia—unlike most of the countries in the region and in contrast with the countries that rely on the total defence concept or comprehensive defence has not reintroduced conscription. The National Armed Forces (NAF) in Latvia are manned by contracted volunteers (6000 personnel in total) and by part-time National Guard (NG) members (up to 8300 personnel in total), and trained reserves do not exceed 3000 in total (The Ministry of Defence, 2020). That means that a relatively small pool of people are involved in the state defence militarily. The SDC (State Defence Concept, 2020), however, prescribed the increase in the total number of professional soldiers up to 8000 within 4 years and NG members until 10,000 within 4 years and by 2027 reaching 12,000 of NG volunteers.

Thus, some aspects of the comprehensive also attempt to solve manpower issue and, more specifically, to expand the number of reserves and create a potential recruitment pool for the NAF through state defence classes (Interview 1, 2020). Whether this is a viable option and whether state defence classes and youth education on defence could be a substitute to the system where reserves are prepared through a conscription system (or its contemporary versions as they are known in other countries in the region) will remain outside the scope of this article.

Another important aspect that since abolishing of the conscription in 2007, the public support for the military has grown and the NAF are among the most trusted public institutions. Regularly conducted public opinion surveys show that over 60% of the population trust the NAF<sup>10</sup>. One could argue that this positive development took place along with society’s disengagement from the defence issues—defence was left in the hands of professionals. Besides the NG and Youth guard organisation, there is no other NGO focusing on state defence tasks.

## 4 Introducing the ‘comprehensive defence’ to Latvia

This chapter covers the main milestones in introducing the comprehensive defence to Latvian legislation and national security and defence policy, as well in the public discourse. It also looks into some conceptual issues with the terminology, stated goals and implementation challenges.

In reintroducing the total defence or comprehensive defence, Latvian experts and policymakers were influenced by the defence policy choices and development or revitalisation of total defence systems in several countries across the Baltic region and Nordic countries<sup>11</sup>. During the policy formulation process on comprehensive defence in Latvia, there was an extensive analysis done by Latvian academics, defence practitioners and politicians to learn from the examples of other countries with total defence. For instance, the group of the Latvian parliamentarians visited several Scandinavian countries to learn from their examples and experiences. Particularly, Finland and Sweden, due to their

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<sup>10</sup> An overall trend that the NAF are among the most trusted institutions is regularly communicated by the MoD representatives, and displayed in the media. However, since data from the surveys are publically unavailable, included reference is one from the many secondary sources (Pētījums: arī 2018.gadā ievērojami augusi sabiedrības uzticība bruņotajiem spēkiem, 2019).

<sup>11</sup> See for an overview of total defence concepts in the Nordic countries (Wither, 2020) and (Veebel & Ploom, 2018) for Estonia’s comprehensive approach to defence.

long-standing tradition in the total defence, were very useful for defining the Latvian framework. From the NATO nations, examples of Norway and Estonia were also examined (Interview 1, 2020). However, some limitations of the existing total defence systems have also been noted by experts and researchers. It was observed that the total defence concept does not represent a blueprint for the most effective organisation of state defence because this concept has not been tested in these countries or elsewhere, as pointed out by Berzina (Berzina, 2018). The question has also been raised whether these total defence concepts, which were established in the Cold War, can address effectively political and military threats from Russia (Wither, 2020). Thus, interestingly, in the Swedish case, the experts used the term ‘modern total defence’ in describing the new total defence system that would ‘bring maximum defence impact’ but also would be designed based on the contemporary societal conditions (Lindgren & Odlund, 2017).

In Latvia, the term ‘comprehensive defence’ started appearing in the public discourse and in professional settings (discussions, lectures) during 2017–2018 before any official policy was formulated by the MoD or the Cabinet of Ministers. As expressed by the Parliamentary Secretary of the MoD at that time, comprehensive defence presented a shift in thinking, comprehension about the security and organisation of defence. In other words, it is not only about NATO membership and collective defence but also about involving Latvia’s people in defence (Atzīst kļūdu līdzšinējā aizsardzības koncepcijā - lai to labotu, būs jāmaina domāšana, 2017). Since this type of approach to defence involves other sectors of economy and wider scope of institutions, this new thinking had to gain, first of all, political support in Latvia.

Meanwhile, in the early public discourse about the comprehensive defence and its practical implementation, youth education in defence through volunteer state defence classes was one of the vivid examples of this new approach. The step-by-step approach was emphasised, and as stated in one of the interviews by the former Minister of Defence Bergmanis, the state defence classes were small steps towards comprehensive defence and to prepare youth for the X hour (Brikmane, 2018). The state defence classes were initially conducted on voluntary bases in 14 Latvian schools for the students of the last two grades of high school<sup>12</sup>. Additionally, these lessons are supplemented by the voluntary boot camps in the summer. At the same time, the state defence classes, in their discourse, were strongly linked with the question of patriotism. ‘The aim of the state defence classes is to develop loyal and active Latvian citizen who has basic military skills to be able to act in the crisis situation’, explained the director of the Youth Guard and Information Centre (Valsts aizsardzības mācība skolās iecerēta divus gadus -10. un 11.klasē, 2018). Thus, from the inception of the state defence classes and comprehensive defence as such, its discourse was linked to the questions of patriotism and development of civic duties (Berzina, *Pilsoniskais patriotisms Latvijas attīstībai un drošībai*, 2018; Berzina, *Patriotisms Latvijas jauniešu vidū un sabiedrībā*, 2018).

One of the first times when the term ‘comprehensive state’ defence was included in the official policy formulation process and went through the legislative process were amendments in the of NSL, which were discussed at the Government’s meeting in May 2018 (Likumprojekts ‘Grozījumi Nacionālās drošības likumā’, 2018) and was approved by the Saeima, Latvian Parliament in October the same year. The amendments in the legislation contained the new chapter titled Comprehensive state defence (chapter 23) and new chapter 25 regarding the duties and rights of the inhabitants in case of war or military attack (National Security Law, 2000). Without defining the comprehensive defence, the new chapters clearly refer to implementing this concept in case of war, military attack or occupation until the functioning of lawful public institutions is restored (Ibid.). Secondly, the same chapter states that, in addition to the armed forces, also ‘physical and legal entities carry out actions of the state military and civilian defence and carry out military resistance, civilian disobedience/ resistance and non-collaboration with illegal governance institutions’<sup>13</sup> (Ibid.).

The new Chapter 25 is even more specific in stipulating duties and rights of the citizens/inhabitants in implementing comprehensive state defence. As a first duty, it stipulates fulfilment of tasks given by the NAF, Allied Forces or public institutions. As a second duty, it prescribes the non-cooperation or non-collaboration with unlawful public institutions and the armed forces of an aggressor unless rejection to cooperate jeopardises the life and freedom of a given person or their family members (Ibid.). As the rights of the inhabitants are listed following: (1) non-collaboration and resistance; (2) armed resistance; (3) providing support to the members of the civilian or armed resistance, to the NAF (Ibid.). Thus,

<sup>12</sup> The classes cover following teaching blocks and subjects: (1) statehood classes (including history and patriotism); (2) survival and leadership; (3) physical training and fitness and (4) military basic theory and training, including first aid and handling of weapons (Valsts aizsardzības mācība, 2020).

<sup>13</sup> Here and in other places translation from Latvian into English by the author of this article.

these amendments in the NSL include several concepts and specific tasks on the part of society that were not included in defence policies earlier.

One can see these actions in a spectrum from less dangerous to more dangerous linked with the military tasks and resistance. As noted by RAND report (Flanagan, Osburg, Binnendijk, Kepe, & Radin, 2019), the implementation of total defence, resistance and unconventional warfare can present several risks: “Russian countermeasures could be overwhelming, and might result in many civilian casualties and extensive damage to infrastructure”. While the security risks for civilians were considered and discussed during the consultation process of these law amendments, one of the main aims was the legalisation of the resistance - according to the Director of the Crisis Management Department of the MoD interviewed for this article (Interview 1, 2020). This is in line with one of the key recommendations of the resistance doctrine on the importance of legal frameworks (Swedish Defence University, 2019): “A legal framework offers internal legitimacy to the actions of the threatened nation and facilitates allied and partners support by communicating legitimacy on the international stage to secure to restore sovereignty”.

In the summer of 2018, the MoD presented to the Government and a wider public *Report on implementation of the comprehensive state defence system in Latvia* (Ministry of Defence, 2018) which constitutes the first conceptual attempt of formulating a holistic view on the comprehensive defence. This report, first, includes the reasoning for choosing this concept as a response to the hybrid of threats, and the need to address them by a much broader spectrum of tools and by involving the whole society. It also stipulates the need of demonstrating resistance, but also the development of the ability to recover after a crisis. Furthermore, this report, already in the definition of the comprehensive defence, points towards a broader understanding than just military defence and talks about the involvement of society in state security: “Comprehensive state defence system – in Latvia - means responsible attitude of the Latvian population towards the state and its security” (Ibid.) This idea is repeated in the stated goal of comprehensive state defence – which is to promote the readiness of the Latvian population to defend the country and create conditions for crisis management and functioning of vital state services and functions (Ibid.). It also highlighted the need to identify and involve NGOs in the state defence tasks and promotion of self-organisation of the society groups; involvement of the private sector and promotion of the cooperation between the industry and the state; state defence classes and other educational programmes; ability of the population to assume responsibility for their own being during the crises or war (Ibid.).

A reference to the comprehensive state defence system and its short explanation was also for the first time included in the National Security Concept (NSC) which was adopted by the Parliament in 2019<sup>14</sup> (National Security Concept, 2019). The main focus of the comprehensive state defence system is similar to the described previously: promote the readiness of the population to defend country, to ensure the functioning of the state vital services during crises and other emergencies and create overarching conditions for overcoming threats. However, here the comprehensive defence is put at the core of a wider concept - national security and national security policy.

Finally, the most detailed explanation of comprehensive state defence is found in the SDC (State Defence Concept, 2020). The comprehensive defence is one of the four main domains or pillars of the state defence- along with the NAF, NATO collective defence and international cooperation. The Comprehensive defence chapter in this document represents a compilation of desirable end-state, ways how to implement comprehensive defence, description of some responsibilities or processes, and singling out some specific organisations, for example, non-governmental institutions and church<sup>15</sup>. According to SDC Ch. 2.2, comprehensive defence “is the best instrument to develop resilient society. The comprehensive defence not only increases readiness for the overcoming peace and wartime disturbances, but also reduces the gap between the population and public institutions, and will unite the society” (State Defence Concept, 2020). An overall aim of the comprehensive defence, according to SDC, is that state institutions, non-governmental organisations and population have the will to defend the country and are ready to provide support to the NAF, and able to provide vital functions for the functioning of the economy and society, as well as provide civilian defence in wartime (Ibid.).

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<sup>14</sup> According to the National Security Law, National Security Concept is national security policy-level document that is prepared every four years based on the overall threat assessment. The Cabinet of Ministers is responsible for its preparation and Parliament approves it.

<sup>15</sup> The main sub-chapters of Chapter 3.2 on Comprehensive state defence are continuity of the government, societal resilience, protection of the information space, sustainability of the economy, Non-governmental organizations, church, civil resistance, cybersecurity and youth education (State Defence Concept, 2020).

## 5 Conceptual issues with ends, ways and implementation

After having reviewed how the comprehensive defence has been introduced into the Latvian legislation and security and defence policies, it is worth looking into a couple of the conceptual issues with the formulated policy and its implementation. Firstly, looking at the state defence goals as defined in the SDC, it includes 'facilitation of the responsible attitude from the whole Latvian population towards the state and its security' (State Defence Concept, 2020, Ch.2.1). This overarching defence goal and the description of the comprehensive defence that were mentioned earlier refer to the unity of society; both contain very broad goals and cover complex issues of the Latvian society. For instance, the low trust in politicians and the growing gap between the society and the state institutions that politicians represent is a known contemporary phenomenon in Latvia<sup>16</sup>. It is acknowledged by different experts, society groups and even by the institutions and politicians themselves. For instance, the NSC—which is approved by the Government and the Parliament—states that the low trust in the public institutions and political parties represent the threats to internal security (National Security Concept, 2019).

Recently, the mistrust of politicians, alienation from the capital and different threat perception and their potential risks for the implementation of the comprehensive defence were also found by the researchers' group studying the subjective threat perception of Latvia's population. While research is still ongoing, the leader of the researchers' group, professor Ozolina stated, 'The lack of trust towards politicians is a very important factor in implementing comprehensive state defence system' (Pētījums atklāj klupšanas akmeņus visaptverošas valsts aizsardzības ieviešanā, 2020). However, one can observe the paradox of 'chicken egg' dilemma that a societal cohesion (in terms of unity, trust to the government and will to contribute to wider society), is both—the precondition for the successful implementation of the comprehensive defence, and at the same time - an overarching aim of the comprehensive defence—as it is formulated in several documents, including SDC.

Secondly, considering that the comprehensive defence builds upon many existing processes, institutions and capabilities of the national security and defence system, it is difficult to assess holistically what are the new approaches and elements envisaged under the concept of the comprehensive defence. During the interview (Interview 1, 2020), the main focus and some new elements in the comprehensive defence were highlighted following: to increase society's resilience and psychological readiness; to ensure the functioning of the vital services and sectors of economy; and more direct involvement of society in the state defence, including NGOs. Additionally, one very crucial aspect was mentioned by the Director of the Crises Management Department in one of his presentations on the implementation of the comprehensive defence that regardless of what crises may come (terrorism, health, or military attack): 'We are building one system' (Lecture, 2020). This is linked to the planning and use of available state resources and improved cross-institutional coordination as part of the overall crises management system. Thus, one can observe that two main aspects of the total defence that were mentioned in the beginning of the article seem to be addressed under the new framework of comprehensive defence in Latvia, in particular, increased society's involvement and its preparation for defence and enhanced institutionalised cooperation between different state and non-state actors.

Thirdly, the comprehensive defence—as it is presented in the newly adopted SDC—constitutes only one part of the defence policy in Latvia, and, as such, is not an overarching concept. Furthermore, the comprehensive defence in the SDC is formulated in a form of descriptive narrative rather than clear guidance or strategy formulation in terms of the ends, ways and means. This observation is in line with the Director of the Crises Management Department saying that the MoD is not providing solutions, but is trying to identify the roles and tasks of other organisations, and to help them to make necessary plans for the civilian emergencies and war situation (Lecture, 2020). Thus, although the current comprehensive defence approach may seem somewhat incoherent as an overarching policy or strategy, it does include many key concepts and new terminology to communicate it to the public and mobilise the society's attention towards defence. Some of these new concepts and initiatives are discussed in the next chapters.

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<sup>16</sup> See, for example, research on 'vertical' and 'horizontal' gap in Latvia's society (Berzina, Berzins, Hirss, Rostoks, & Vanaga, 2016). See Berzina, *Pilsoniskais patriotisms Latvijas attīstībai un drošībai* (2018) for the development of civic patriotism as the means of increasing the societal cohesion and reducing the gap between the state and society.



## 6 Resistance and non-collaboration

This and the next two chapters will address a couple of key concepts and initiatives that are either newly introduced as part of the comprehensive defence (resistance, non-collaboration, readiness culture) or significantly expanded as part of Latvia’s unique approach (youth education and training on defence).

Referring to the society’s involvement in defence and its support to the NAF, resistance is one of the key concepts of total defence, and it constitutes an important aspect of deterrence, as stated in the RAND report (Flanagan, Osburg, Binnendijk, Kepe, & Radin, 2019): “The concepts broadly defined as Total Defence (TD), a whole-of-society approach to national defence and resilience, and aspects of Unconventional Warfare (UW), which can include broad-based, state-supported resistance against invaders – are designed to enhance deterrence by denial and by increasing the costs of aggression, while also supporting conventional efforts to counter and repel military attacks”.

The concepts of resistance and non-collaboration have gained attention largely due to intellectual work and doctrinal development done by the Special Operations Command Europe, which has resulted in the Resistance Operating Concept (Swedish Defence University, 2019). It defines resistance as “A nation’s organized, whole-of-society effort, encompassing the full range of activities from nonviolent to violent, led by a legally established government (potentially exiled/displaced or shadow) to re-establish independence and autonomy within its sovereign territory that has been wholly or partially occupied by a foreign power” (Ibid.).

Since it is beyond the scope of this article to cover any practical aspects of resistance planning, this article covers only policy areas relying on official documents and discourse. Overall, with introducing a comprehensive defence, the notion of involvement of the society in resistance has been integrated into the Latvian legislation and policy documents. First, as it was elaborated earlier, taking part in and support to resistance was legalised with the amendments in the NSL (National Security Law, 2000). Additionally, in the newly adopted SDC, several terms or concepts are linked to military resistance, civilian resistance (passive resistance, civic disobedience), and non-collaboration (State Defence Concept, 2020). It is stipulated that NAF must plan and prepare for the resistance (Ibid.). Thus, it is clear from the SDC, and it was confirmed during the interview with the Director of the Crisis Management Department that the main focus is on organised resistance, for which the NAF is responsible for to make necessary preparations in the peacetime (organised centralised and executed decentralised way) (Interview 1, 2020). Furthermore, an important aspect is that the civilian population is involved in the preparation of the resistance voluntarily and based on mutual trust (State Defence Concept, 2020).

SDC (State Defence Concept, 2020) contains also a subchapter titled *Civilian resistance* which stipulates the duty of non-collaboration with the illegal public institutions and its military units, and which includes non-participation in the illegal elections or referendums. Furthermore, it describes the population’s support for the resistance movement (ranging from logistical, medical support, including the supply of information, finances, communication, and training, recruitment and intelligence gathering) (Ibid). The text in the SDC makes a general reference that everyone who participates in supporting the resistance should consider security risks, while leaving the awareness and assessment of these risks either up to the population or to be addressed somewhere specifically later. However, one cannot exclude the situation and risks to human lives while implementing total defence and carrying out resistance, as argued by Wither (2020) ‘...it is possible that populations resisting Russian occupation would be faced with brutal repression by state military and paramilitary forces. Civilians are invariably the main victims in irregular warfare and experience suggests that Russian forces may act without the constraints that nominally characterise Western military operations’. This is something that is not so easy to communicate to the public and selected groups of people when asking them to get involved in the state defence tasks, however, it cannot be avoided completely. So far, this has been discussed only among the experts, and the question of protection of the civilian population in case of war or military aggression has been somewhat overlooked. Moreover, preservation of the population was not included in the initial draft of the SDC describing overarching goals of the state defence—it was limited to defending the state, its statehood and its continuity. After the revisions and discussions by the parliamentary committees, and preservation of population is one of the goals of state defence (State Defence Concept, 2020).

More direct involvement of the society in the state defence and resistance, particularly, has triggered interest from the academics to analyse the society’s motivation and will to fight. Based on the research ‘The will of the Latvian population to defence the country: possibilities and limitations’ (Berzina & Zupa, Latvijas sabiedrības griba aizstāvēt valsti: veicinošie un kavējošie faktori, 2020), 31% of respondents were ready to defend the country with the military means

while much higher percentage—55% of respondents ready to support the armed forces in the non-military ways. One of the recommendations of this research for facilitating society's involvement in defence was to clarify how individuals can contribute to the state defence based on their skills and interests, and what is their role in the state defence (Ibid.). The need for more clarity about the defence tasks was also mentioned in the conversation with the interviewed NGO representative (Interview with NGO, 2020). Another study that addressed the will of inhabitants to defend the country also looked at the question of resistance more specifically and found out that only 19,8 % of the respondents in Latvia were willing to resist in contrast to 36,9% in Lithuania and 33,8% in Estonia (Andzans & Spruds, 2020). In Latvia was also the highest percentage of those who were ready 'to live as usual' in case of Latvia was attacked. Andzans & Spruds recommended that societal attitudes and trends should be regularly measured and taking into consideration when designing national security and defence policies (Ibid.). This is an important recommendation, especially in the case of counting on the population's active participation in the form of resistance and support to resistance.

## 7 Building a culture of readiness: the role of NGOs, church and individuals

As was mentioned earlier, the importance to involve NGOs in the state defence tasks is explicitly mentioned in the documents prescribing new policy elements on the comprehensive defence in Latvia. It must be acknowledged that besides the NG and adjacent Youth Guard organisation, society's involvement and self-organisation in defence, security or crisis management tasks is quite a new phenomenon in Latvia. Most of the experts agree that it is linked with an overall low civic engagement and the lack of interest in the social-political processes of the state.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, luckily for the population, the country has not experienced such magnitude or frequencies of civilian emergencies or crises that would call for auxiliary resources in addition to the crisis management system provided by the state and municipalities based on the Civil Protection and Disaster Management Law and its procedures.

However, one must notice that despite the lack of permanent civic engagement or limited participation in the NGOs, there is evidence from the recent historical events that show the spontaneous will and ability of members of the society in Latvia to engage in the situation that has high importance for the society or in crisis. The biggest example is the national awakening movement in the 90s, but also in some instances of other peacetime crises that Latvia has experienced, such as large forest fires and the collapse of the supermarket 'Maxima'. The people's willingness to engage was mentioned by the interviewed NGO representative referring to the ongoing COVID pandemics with numerous calls from individuals expressing their willingness to help (Interview with NGO, 2020). On one hand, this is not what can be counted on in the preparation and planning for the state defence tasks. However, these behaviour patterns could be considered and built upon in making some of the auxiliary initiatives more permanent.

Although NGOs and civic participation in the security and defence domain may be a new phenomenon for Latvia, it is very much in line with an overall notion of involving citizens in the state defence tasks in the Baltic states (Kepe & Osburg, 2017). It is supported by the research on the need to empower communities, including NGOs to develop their resilience and improve human security (A Practical Guide to Improving Human Security at the Community Level (including NGOs), 2014; Volunteers in Estonia's Security Sector, 2020). The NGOs are seen as important intermediaries between the state and individuals, as well as the source of expertise and auxiliary resources (A Practical Guide to Improving Human Security at the Community Level (including NGOs), 2014). Considering the relatively low trust in the Government and politicians in general and due to fragmented information space, the NGOs can function as a vital source and provider of trustworthy information. This role of the NGOs was acknowledged in the interviews by both sides: the MoD and the NGO representatives (Interview 1, 2020; Interview with NGO, 2020). As stated in the Estonian analysis of the involvement of volunteers in the security sector, well-prepared volunteers can contribute to CIMIC functions and societal resilience-building tasks such as supporting police with crowd management and mass evacuation, crisis communication and delivering emergency supplies (Volunteers in Estonia's Security Sector, 2020). This report also stated that the mass disorders in 2007 and the Covid-19 crises increased the need for additional resources to support policing and other public safety tasks (Ibid.).

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<sup>17</sup> See Berzina (2018) for analysis on patriotisms and lack of political engagement among the youth in Latvia.

In Latvia's case, the representatives from the MoD have engaged numerous NGOs and other organisations in the consultation process to identify their tasks in the comprehensive defence. According to the interview, their potential roles could be summarised as follows: (1) specialised NGO corresponding to their core non-military functions in providing services and assistance to the population (e.g., the Red Cross, 'Samariesi'); (2) specialised organisations with relevance for the military or public safety tasks (Hunters organisation); (3) Umbrella type of NGOs as trustworthy information disseminators (Civic Alliance (Pilsoniska Alianse)) (Interview 1, 2020). Additionally, there have already been some very practical examples of involving the NGOs in some defense-related tasks in the communication and information domain. For example, several NGOs provided their inputs and shared their expertise in the preparation process of the brochure that was produced and sent to all Latvian households. Another form of engagement was testing the dissemination of information through the umbrella type of NGO (Civic Alliance) to assess whether this type of NGO could function effectively as an alternative source of trustworthy information. From the interview with one NGO representative, these were seen as the first positive steps for launching long-lasting cooperation and partnership with the MoD, and important ways how to raise awareness of the society, including NGOs, about the challenges and responsibilities in the crisis (Interview with NGO, 2020). However, from the NGO's perspective, the next important step would be the identification of the specific tasks and requirements for the NGOs and conducting advance planning, including some logistics coordination with the NAF or NG to better prepare these NGOs for the times of crises or war (Ibid.).

The involvement of NGOs is closely linked with the concept of building communities and how to increase the readiness of the individuals to take care of their own and neighbours security (A Practical Guide to Improving Human Security at the Community Level (including NGOs), 2014). The focus on individual responsibilities and abilities to withstand crises is communicated as part of the new culture of readiness that is seen as one of the crucial elements in a comprehensive defence in Latvia, and it is emphasised in the public discourse. Readiness culture, as described in the SDC, is aimed at preparing the population for the worst-case scenarios, where people are ready to support each other and wider society, thus achieving psychological resilience (State Defence Concept, 2020). The strengthening of the NG and Youth Guard movement still provides the main structure to facilitate populations' preparedness for potential endangerment. More broadly, readiness culture is linked with the overall preparedness of the NGOs, private enterprises' readiness for the potential crises, but more specifically to the ability of the population to survive without external assistance for at least 72 h.

Raising awareness of the population and its readiness to withstand the shock and take care of their own safety and provisions has been the next practical step in the implementation of a comprehensive defence. In the summer of 2020, all households in Latvia received a digital brochure on how to prepare to survive 72 h during a crisis or war (Booklet "What to do in the case of crisis", 2020). Additional activities that facilitate the understanding of own responsibility and promote the readiness for an emergency are through the exercises and seminars conducted by the MoD. The scenarios and cases that are played out during these events are quite eye-opening, and as stated by the interviewed NGO representative it is 'shocking to realize that you have to save yourself' in the crisis (Interview with NGO, 2020). According to the interviewed NGO representative, this kind of exercise is an excellent tool on how to make one realise that in the time of crises, especially war-like situations, all state services will be preoccupied and thus, will not be able to provide support.

In addition to the NGOs, the church is singled out as an institution that may have a distinct role in the comprehensive defence in the domain of psychological defence and is mentioned explicitly in the official defence policy document (State Defence Concept, 2020). This is remarkable considering that Latvia's society is not regarded as very religious. Furthermore, according to the constitution - Satversme, there is a clear separation between the state and church in Latvia (Latvijas Republikas Satversme, 1922). Nevertheless, in addition to the meetings with industry representatives and NGOs, the MoD has also organised the consultation meeting with representatives of the main religious confessions in Latvia to identify the role of church and priests in the comprehensive defence. According to the interviewed MoD official (Interview 1, 2020), especially the Catholic church, was very responsive and interested in follow-up meetings. As stated by the church representatives 'The role of church and priests in the comprehensive state defence system is to, foremost, strengthen the foundation of values - the sense of responsibility and love' (Garīdznieki: lielākais drauds krīzes situācijā būtu sabiedrības sašķeltība, 2020). They also pointed out some of the biggest risks that lay within the lack of unity within society and the gap between the state and population.

## 8 From state defence classes to youth education and training

Since the pilot project in 2018 with state defence classes conducted in 14 schools, this initiative has expanded, and it is planned that by 2024/2025 these classes will be part of the mandatory education in all schools in Latvia. For instance, in 2019, already 53 schools had included state defence classes in their curricula with a total of 1018 high school students attending this programme, and 67 signing up for the practical military training in the summer camp (Valsts aizsardzības mācību pilotprojekts skolās - veiksmīgs, 2019). Thus, according to the MoD's estimate approximately 30 000 pupils (15 to 17 years old) will complete these classes yearly (State Defence Concept, 2020). Besides the state defence classes, the plan is to strengthen also the Youth Guard movement, which has a wider reach in terms of age, but in total numbers up to 8000 (Ibid.). Furthermore, in the SDC in the dedicated chapter, the role of education and state defence classes and Youth Guard in particular, were highlighted for implementation of comprehensive defence and for building societal resilience against external influences (Ibid.).

Interestingly, that the state defence classes are presented as an alternative to a mandatory service or conscription or even as a better solution for preparing the population for the crisis, claiming that Latvia's system reaches a much wider range of people and without gender limitations. Furthermore, according to the SDC, the students who have completed training in the voluntary military camps will form the pool of reservists and will represent the most active and prepared part of the society in case of crisis. It has to be noted that state defence classes were also one of the main examples of the comprehensive defence during the parliamentary debates in the deliberations on the SDC in 2020 (Saeima, 2020). Furthermore, in his speech at the Parliament, the Minister of Defence stressed the advantage of Latvia's approach over the other countries with a contemporary conscription system, illustrating it with an argument that as a result of the defence programme conducted at the schools in Latvia most of the youth will be prepared for a potential crisis, comparing to just 5–10% of the population in other countries with conscription (Saeima, 2020).

However, in addition to these already existing initiatives that will be expanded in the coming years, the MoD is planning to establish one specialised high school (sometimes referred to as 'cadets school') to 'prepare the future commanders and strengthening the leadership of Latvia's officership' (State Defence Concept, 2020). This specialised school would focus even more on military training along with the development of leadership and critical thinking skills and other subjects. It is envisaged that graduates from this school would have a possibility to continue studies at the National Defence Academy or join NG, but furthermore, they would form a pool of reservists for the NAF (Topošās Rudbāržu militārās vidusskolas absolventi iegūs jaunākā līmeņa militārā vadītāja profesiju, 2020). This is in line with Latvia's unique approach to keep strengthening defence programmes for the high school students instead of developing reservists' pool through the conscription as it is known in the other countries. More in-depth reasoning and comparison of these different approaches remain outside the scope of this article, and will not be elaborated any further. The argument here was to illustrate the importance attached to youth education in the comprehensive state defence approach in Latvia, and that state defence classes are still articulated as one of the main examples of the comprehensive defence in the political and public discourse. While it is perhaps too early to assess the effectiveness of these youth programmes, some research has already indicated that the participation in the Youth Guard has shown a positive correlation with the development of the sense of patriotism (Berzina, Pilsoniskais patriotisms Latvijas attīstībai un drošībai, 2018). Thus, Youth Guard and other youth programmes may be already contributing to the stated overarching goals of the state defence, and comprehensive defence, in particular.

## 9 Conclusions

This article tried to demonstrate that the conceptual understanding of comprehensive defence in Latvia's case started with a rather narrow focus on state defence education in the schools and emphasis on patriotism. It then proceeded with the legalisation of the society's participation in the military or civilian resistance in case of war or military attack. Comprehensive defence—as part of the newly approved SDC—covers society's resilience in peacetime and state defence in wartime, including resistance. As such, it is in line with the overarching framework prescribed by the Resistance Operating Concept, but it would depend, of course, on the practical implementation and detailed plans. Namely, the developing society's resilience and preparing and planning for the resistance in peacetime to be ready to implement it in wartime. Furthermore, the concept of comprehensive defence includes the development of a new culture of readiness,

which emphasises the responsibility of individuals, NGOs, and communities for their own safety and survivability in case of crises or war. The first step in the development of this culture and increased awareness of the population has been implemented with the distribution and promotion of the digital brochure and a series of seminars for targeted groups.

Within the comprehensive defence approach, there is a significant shift towards society’s role and tasks in the state defences and it includes a wide scope of tasks and elements—starting from society’s education in defence matters, civilian defence, non-violent resistance, and ending up with direct assistance to the NAF and participation in the resistance, as well as non-collaboration. Consequently, the SDC and its supporting legislation prescribe much more direct and challenging duties for civilians in case of war or military attack. However, involving the civilian population in the state defence tasks—directly or indirectly, by military or non-military means, will potentially expose the civilians to certain personal security risks. While this was considered during the legislative drafting process among the experts, it has not gained any wider concern and has not triggered public debate.

A closer examination of the formulation of the comprehensive defence in the two main policy documents—NSC and SDC raise the question as to whether the comprehensive defence is regarded as an overarching concept and a coherent policy on how to tackle national security threats and to organise state defence. Its main effort seems to be on increased societal resilience and psychological readiness of society as part of the strengthening deterrence. As such, it does not constitute any change in the defence policy or defence strategy. Furthermore, the structure and overall framework of the newly adopted SDC indicate that the comprehensive defence is one of the foundation blocks or pillars on how to achieve the state defence goals.

Latvia’s approach to the comprehensive defence could be summarised as the emphasis on the gradual involvement of the state institutions, NGOs and society groups into the state defence tasks. Furthermore, building readiness culture is seen as the concept of how to increase readiness for peacetime crises and wartime situations, especially among the NGOs and population. The coordination of the implementation of the comprehensive defence is currently carried out under the leadership of the Minister of Defence, thus the MoD is in the lead of this process. Considering this factor and the fact that institutional coordination was not analysed in detail in this article, it leaves open the question of whether Latvia’s comprehensive defence approach could be characterised as the whole government approach, and whether cross-institutional cooperation is getting sufficient attention from the decision-makers and experts. Ultimately, the comprehensive defence is used as a vehicle for making state defence everybody’s business and duty. It covers all areas of functioning of the state and economy and includes strengthening societal resilience and cohesion of society, which goes far beyond the defence policy boundaries. The focus on youth education on defence and a broad range of subjects that facilitate preparation for a potential crisis is an important backbone of the Latvian system, whereby the MoD aims not only to prepare the young leaders who would possess a critical and patriotic mindset and readiness to act in the type of crises but also envisages that these graduates can form the pool of reserves and potential recruits for the NAF in the long-run.

Even though this has not been the focus of this paper, a couple of points with regard to potential implementation challenges will be mentioned. First of all, new conceptual thinking about defence does not deliver capabilities per se. The will to defend the country—which is at the core of the stated comprehensive defence—without specific capabilities will not suffice. Thus, the shift in thinking about organising defence needs to be followed up by detailed plans and preparation. It will take perhaps several years to develop the plans and even longer time - to deliver some measurable capabilities in the domains of societal resilience and society’s overall readiness for crisis and war. Second, it may be especially challenging in the areas that fall outside the responsibility of the MoD and the NAF. If the focus of the comprehensive defence is extensively on the psychological preparation, critical thinking and education of society, then perhaps it could be worthwhile to establish a designated agency or organisation for these tasks. Furthermore, there should be regular training and exercise conducted for civilian institutions, including NGOs.

Secondly, on a more conceptual level—if comprehensive defence includes all sectors of society and the threats may come in any domain of society, perhaps the boundaries of defence and responsibility of the MoD could be considered more critically. Resilience building comprises a wide spectrum of the state and society’s life (education, development of critical thinking, education, political activism and political engagement), and as such, it may contribute to the overarching state security and defence goals. However, they most likely should not be tackled as part of the defence policy and defence plans. In doing so, the MoD may lose its focus on the core task—development of the defence capabilities. Expanding the understanding what is defence and including many societal aspects, it may present risks

when the MoD is getting too preoccupied with the non-military dimension of the defence. On other hand, it presents additional problems regarding financial resources. If the other sectors of society and economy are put under the umbrella of defence, it may lead to including many non-military functions as part of the defence budget, which in the end may end up with a reduced budget allocation for the military defence capabilities. Latvia has already experienced it once prior to the financial crisis of 2008.

However, the defence sector has expanded towards other than military threats and domains, which currently are also included in the national security framework (cyber defence, societal cohesion and resilience, infrastructure). Perhaps, it is time to consider creating a truly comprehensive framework based on one integrated approach on how to use all state resources, existing mechanisms and institutions for addressing different types of threats, and which would coordinate and planned under the centralised leadership at the Governmental level.

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