



PUBLIC OPINION AND NATIONAL DEFENCE

Estonian Ministry of Defence

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SUMMARY

1. As to institutions, the people trust the Border Guard and the Bank of Estonia the most, which are either completely or rather trusted by 85% of the population aged 15-74. Also, the people have deep trust in the Chancellor of Justice (79%), the Tax and Customs Board (79%) and the Defence Forces (78%).
2. Predominantly, the people's trust in political parties is the smallest, which are completely or rather trusted by a quarter of the population only. The percentage of not trusting people exceeds the percentage of trusting people by 43% in case of political parties. In comparison with the same period of the previous years, the trust in the President and the Riigikogu has decreased significantly as the result of the presidential elections. However, the number of people trusting the media, the police, the Bank of Estonia, the State Audit Office and the Defence Forces has increased.
3. 84% of the Estonians and 65% of the non-Estonians have trust in the Defence Forces. The trustworthiness of the National Defence League is weaker in comparison with the Defence Forces, being similar to the average trust percentage of institutions. 74% of the Estonians and 42% of the non-Estonians have confidence in the National Defence league.
4. The world security is seen in a negative light. 56% of the respondents believe that the danger of military conflicts will increase in the next ten years. In comparison with the spring survey, the percentage of inhabitants perceiving the increase of danger has enlarged by 6%. In recent years the percentage of people sensing the increase of danger has not been so large. From the past we find another percentage of the population perceiving such a high danger in the autumn survey of 2001 (53%), which emerged after the terrorist attacks in New York.
5. Like in spring, 17% of the respondents think it is probable that some foreign country could wage war on Estonia in the future. Among Estonians, the percentage of inhabitants who feel the probability of an attack is 13% higher than among non-Estonians.
6. The probability of international attacks in Estonia in the near future is seen as probable 29% of the people, incl. 3% who feel it is very likely.
7. As to the most significant factors ensuring security in Estonia, belonging to NATO is outlined most often. It is followed by co-operation and good-neighbourly relationship with Russia and belonging to the European Union. There is an explicit distinction between the Estonians and the non-Estonians. The Estonians have named belonging to NATO 41% more than the non-Estonians did. But the non-Estonians have mentioned the relationship with Russia 35% more often than the Estonians did.

8. The impact of joining NATO on Estonia is predominantly regarded as positive. Like in spring, 51% of the respondents think that the security of Estonia has increased after joining NATO.
9. Ca ¾ of the population support belonging to NATO. 30% are definite supporters of belonging to NATO and 45% rather support it. As compared to spring, the number of supporters has not changed significantly. Continuously among the Estonians the support is clearly higher (86%) than among the non-Estonians (51%).
10. Information on what it means for Estonia to be a member of NATO has not changed significantly in comparison with the spring. 40% of the respondents are either very well or rather informed about it. The level of the informed is lower than it used to be last year (45-49%).
11. Information on the Estonian national defence and NATO is prevailingly received through local media channels, both among the Estonians and the non-Estonians. In case of both groups, the most important media channels are the local mother-tongue print media, television and radio.
12. 69% of the respondents favour military resistance in case Estonia is to be attacked by some other country. About one quarter of the respondents is against resistance.
13. In case of an attack on Estonia, 64% of the inhabitants are willing to participate in the defence activity according to their abilities, incl. 67% of the Estonians and 57% of the non-Estonians.
14. In case of an attack, 16% of the people questioned would try to leave Estonia, 4% of them would definitely try to leave. 43% would surely not leave in case there is a danger of war, and 35% of the people would probably not leave. The number of people wishing to leave is greater among the non-Estonians.
15. Enlarging the expenses made on guaranteeing the defence ability is necessary in the opinion of 36% of the respondents. In comparison with the spring, the percentage of such inhabitants has lessened. The part of those people who would like to see the reductions of defence expenses has not changed significantly (10%).
16. 88% of the respondents regard undergoing military service as necessary; 56% of them think it is absolutely necessary. There are no significant changes in comparison with the spring. The implementation of compulsory military service for girls similarly to boys is only supported by 9% of the population.
17. Eluding compulsory military service is predominantly regarded as negative. 63% of the respondents condemn this behaviour or have a negative attitude towards it. 31% of the respondents have an understanding attitude towards eluding compulsory military service, and 2% approves it.
18. 68% of the respondents think it is definitely or rather necessary for the young men not fit for the army to participate in rescue works, environmental protection or somewhere else as a substitute service. 28% consider the implementation of substitute service unnecessary.
19. In the issue of switching over to vocational army, most of the people (77%) support the remaining of the current system, in which vocational army is combined with

compulsory military service. 19% of the respondents support giving up compulsory military service. 17% of the Estonians and 24% of the non-Estonians support giving up compulsory military service.

20. The continuation of Estonian military units as a part of international military forces in different crisis areas of the world is supported by 56% of the population, incl. 17% favouring it definitely and 39% probably. 62% of the Estonians support continuing operations in crisis areas, this percentage is 43 among the non-Estonians.
21. Approximately one quarter of the respondents, i.e. 7% of all the population would definitely or rather participate in some international mission. With a 95% likelihood, 17 395 – 38 382 people in total would be definitely or rather willing to take part in some mission
22. Operating as an organization guaranteeing internal security is most often considered to be the main role of the National Defence League in the future (49% of the respondents). 24% find that the National Defence Force should remain the way it is now. Other alternatives are supported by less than 10% of the people questioned.