

Latvia's contribution to international security

On the doorstep to NATO Latvia has transformed itself from a security consumer to a security donor. Participation in international missions and initiatives demonstrates Latvia's commitment to international peace, security and the common values of the Euro-Atlantic family. Latvia is focusing on the areas where its contribution to the Alliance's operations would produce an added value to NATO's overall capabilities.

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Latvia has provided a notable contribution to stabilisation efforts in the Balkans and has participated in all NATO-led peace operations in the region, starting from the IFOR in 1996. These missions include the subsequent SFOR mission in Bosnia, AFOR mission in Albania during the Kosovo crisis and KFOR mission in Kosovo.

Initially, Latvia contributed an infantry platoon as part of the Swedish and Danish battalions. From 1997 to 1998 five Latvian platoons, consisting of 40 soldiers each have participated in the Multinational Stabilisation Forces (SFOR) mission as part of the Danish Battalion. Since 1998, the Baltic Battalion (BALTBAT) has been operating in Bosnia and Herzegovina with its own contingent. A Latvian company (BALTSQN-6) has been deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina in August 2002 and in January 2003 moved to Kosovo. In February 2003 the Latvian peacekeepers were replaced by an Estonian company.

In 1999 (April - July) 8 members of the Latvian National Armed Forces Medical Liaison Team took part in operations in Albania as part of the Belgian contingent.

An explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) team and military police and military medics within Norwegian and British contingents had been deployed in Kosovo on several posts. On February 8, 2003, a new rotation of military medics took place. The Latvian EOD team has received the highest appraisal from the commanders.

In January 1999, Latvia sent six observers to Kosovo as part of the Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM). Due to the commencement of NATO air strikes, the mission had to conclude its work in Kosovo in the spring of 1999. Until May 2002, a Latvian representative was involved in border observation in FYROM.



BALTSQN-6 on patrol in the mountains, February 2003" / Photo: BCCS
REPRO Māris Zemgalietis/