

Security and Defence Policy

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Today's international security landscape looks uncertain and volatile. Military build-up and maneuvers, along with cyber-attacks, propaganda, information operations and other multidimensional and cross-sectoral security risks, like climate change and maritime safety are the new challenges to deal with. Similarly, the modern technologies create additional challenges and influence understanding of the threats. These threats are not limited by physical borders and thus cannot be addressed only by one state, organization or only by military means. The nature of the threat means that states need to work together with Allies and partners.

The change in the security environment has driven Latvia and its Allies to devote increased attention to security policy and the strengthening of defence capabilities on the national and international levels. Membership in NATO and the European Union play a decisive role in Latvia's security policy, and Latvia is actively engaged in these organisations and bilaterally with its Allies in order to bolster its own security and the security of the surrounding region.

From Latvia's perspective, an integral part of any successful policy of deterrence is the Allied military presence in Latvia. In this regard, the most important task in Latvia's foreign policy from the standpoint of external security is in making arrangements that result in an Allied military presence within Latvian territory that will be extended over the long-term, thereby also ensuring that the defence of every member state against any and all threats.

Not less important is the task of further increasing the capabilities of the NATO rapid reaction forces so that they are able to reinforce swiftly and assist any Ally in case of a crisis. In this regard, Latvia welcomes the progress towards implementing the NATO Readiness Initiative (NRI), agreed at the NATO Brussels Summit in 2018. The NRI envisages that Allies would provide 30 land battalions, 30 air squadrons, and 30 combat ships, available to use by NATO within 30 days. By 2020, all the necessary forces to implement NRI have been committed by Allies, including Latvia. Latvia is also one of six members of the Alliance in which NATO Force Integration Units (NFIUs) have been established, and these units, if the necessity were to arise, would be instrumental in facilitating the rapid deployment of military combat forces and ensure that such forces can operate effectively on Latvia's land and sea and in the air. At the same time, the NFIUs allow the entire region to implement a coordinated program for military exercises.

Latvia recognizes that first and foremost, each country is responsible for its own defence. In this light, Latvia fulfils the NATO collectively agreed commitment to invest 2 percent of its GDP in defence. This enables Latvia to provide adequate funding to strengthen national defence and contribute to Allied collective defence efforts. Latvia continues its efforts aimed at strengthening defence capabilities and improving cooperation among the relevant institutions on preventing and addressing wide range of threats and challenges.

The combination of military and non-military threats referred to as "hybrid threats" has a major impact on security environment. In this case, in order to destabilise a state and society, not only direct military means are employed but other elements as well. These may include cyber-attacks, disinformation and propaganda campaigns, intelligence operations, the application of coercion ranging from economic pressure to the leverage using energy supplies as an instrument, the use of disguised military personnel, and the use of terrorists and armed groups as proxies for various kinds of attacks, to mention a few.

The methods of hybrid warfare can be used independently or in combination with conventional military attacks. Although the primary responsibility for dealing with hybrid threats is at the national level, hybrid threats transcend national borders. Therefore, Latvia actively contributes to NATO and EU efforts to seek the most effective solutions to counter hybrid threats, including in the information space. State-sponsored cyber-attacks and influence operations cause serious concerns at the global level.

In 2018 the comprehensive defence approach has been developed in Latvia to strengthen the cooperation among state institutions, provide effective mechanisms for public - private partnership, increase the skills and capabilities of the society to protect themselves, their families and Latvia in case of crisis.

To contribute specifically to the development of NATO capabilities in the information space and its analysis, Latvia has established the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence.

Useful links:

[Security Policy](#)

[Website of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Latvia](#)

[The NATO website](#)

[NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence](#)

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