National Security Concept of Estonia

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1. Introduction

Freedom is invaluable.

Estonia's security policy aims to ensure that we and our children are free and have our own state, nation and language, and the right to decide independently on the organisation of our lives and society.

Our security is built on democracy, the rule of law, whole-of-society preparedness and strong allied relationships.

We will defend Estonia in any circumstances against all threats and against any adversary, however powerful.
We have the will to defend and to achieve victory.
We will never surrender.

This foundational security policy document describes the security environment as of spring 2026, explains Estonia's objectives in the deteriorating security environment and sets out the activities required to achieve them. Within the framework of national strategic planning, this document sets out the fundamental principles of policy and serves as the basis for the preparation of sectoral development plans and action plans.

The 2026 National Security Concept is the sixth of its kind and builds on the 2023 National Security Concept.

The National Security Concept is drafted by the Government and approved by the Riigikogu (Estonian parliament). The document is updated at least every four years, in line with changes in the security environment or in Estonia's capacity to ensure its security. The Prime Minister regularly presents the Riigikogu with an overview of the implementation of the National Security Concept.

2. Principles of Estonia's security policy

We defend the Estonian state, society, the preservation of the Estonian people and culture, and freedom. Our security rests on democracy, the rule of law, strong allied relationships and whole-of-society preparedness. Estonia defends itself against all threats.

The aim of Estonia's security policy is to secure the independence and sovereignty of the Republic of Estonia, its territorial integrity, constitutional order, the security of its population, the functioning of society, and the continuity of the Estonian nation, language and culture.

The foundation of Estonia's security lies in the preservation of a social order that respects human dignity, fundamental rights and freedoms, democratic governance and the rule of law. Estonia is part of the community of democratic states and supports its unity and continuity. Estonia's security is supported by a system of international relations based on respect for the international law.

National security is founded on the protection of people and the living environment, strong national defence and a successful economy

Estonia values a society in which all people have equal opportunities, are supported and able to live long, healthy and fulfilling lives, where inequality and poverty are reduced and where long and high-quality personal and working lives, social participation and self-realisation are supported for all.

The economy and security are mutually reinforcing – a successful economy makes it possible to strengthen security, and a secure investment environment is a precondition for economic growth. Estonia seeks to maintain an attractive economic environment that supports balanced and competitive development in all regions. Comprehensive education and research and development form the basis of a successful and future-oriented Estonia.

Estonia's security is built on international law, allied relationships, independent defence capability and indivisible security

Estonia's security policy is based on the principles of international law and those enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations (UN), in particular the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states and the right and freedom of every state to choose its own security arrangements. Ensuring Estonia's security is not directed against any other state.

We are an integral part of European security. Estonia's security is supported by membership of the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), as well as on close cooperation with allies and other international partners. Estonia regards its own security and that of its allies and partners as indivisible.

The whole of society contributes to Estonia's security

Estonia's security policy is based on a broad concept of security, taking into account all trends and factors that affect the security of the state. The implementation of security policy is based on the principles of a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach.

Security considerations are integrated into the development of policy, sectoral development plans and legislation, as well as into the design and development of work processes, supply chains, infrastructure and international cooperation. To strengthen security, Estonia is accelerating efforts to enhance its independent defence capability, allocating from 2026 at least 5% of gross domestic product to national defence, in addition to investments in comprehensive national defence. Ensuring security in the state and society is a cross-cutting, continuous and goal-oriented endeavour.

Estonia prevents war through deterrence and will defend itself in all circumstances

Our objective is to prevent war against Estonia by deterring the adversary and rendering aggression unfeasible. Should deterrence fail, Estonia will defend itself in all circumstances and against all threats, regardless of their origin or the time and place of their manifestation, and against any adversary, however powerful. Estonia will never surrender.

By preparing to prevail in the event of war and to respond to the most serious crises, Estonia is also prepared to address lower-impact crises, in which the Defence Forces and the Estonian

Defence League support civilian authorities in preparedness and response where necessary. In the event of war, military defence is the state's primary effort, with civilian structures providing maximum support to the Defence Forces in ensuring Estonia's military defence.

We defend Estonia against threats on land, at sea, in the air, in space and in cyberspace, and against foreign information manipulation. In strengthening preparedness, Estonia's national defence is based on a broad concept aimed at protecting the state and the nation and preparing for that purpose, using all military and non-military capabilities and means at the state's disposal and involving actors across society.

Estonia's security requires whole-of-society preparedness, responsibility and cooperation

Estonia's security depends on the preparedness and the will to defend and fight of every individual and of society as a whole. In preparing for crises and war, Estonia follows the principle of continuity of functions: all constitutional institutions, public sector bodies, local authorities and providers of vital services perform their roles in crisis and wartime, as well as in normal circumstances, although the scope of tasks may change.

Preparing for crises and war and, where necessary, responding to them is the responsibility of every constitutional institution, authority and individual, within their respective competences and in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, acting at the lowest competent level. In doing so, cooperation is undertaken and mutual assistance is provided. The state encourages and supports voluntary activities related to this.

3. Security environment

The international security environment has become more unpredictable, and the rules-based international order is under pressure. European security is affected above all by Russia as an existential threat.

The international security environment and global balance of power have changed and confrontation between states has intensified. The community of values based on democracy, the rule of law, human rights and free trade is under pressure. The world order founded on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, multilateral cooperation, state sovereignty, territorial integrity and the peaceful settlement of disputes has been called into question. Deepening global instability and confrontation increase the risk of tensions and conflicts. States are increasingly pursuing spheres-of-influence policies and, in seeking to achieve their objectives, at times act in violation of international law, including through the use of military force.

Transatlantic unity and European unity are important to Estonia

Our allied relationships are a defining factor of Estonia's security environment. Deterrence and the capacity for collective self-defence depend on NATO unity and transatlantic relations. Long-term trends in the European security order and changes in the strategic interests and positions of the United States have led to a situation that requires European countries to assume greater responsibility and take action to ensure common security, including the accelerated increase of military defence expenditure, the achievement of NATO capability targets, and the development of European defence technology and industry. The activities of the European Union and NATO are complemented by the readiness of states to act in *ad hoc* coalitions and in regional or other defence cooperation formats.

Russia as an existential threat

Russia constitutes the greatest security threat to Estonia and to the entire Euro-Atlantic area. Its imperialist policy of aggression seeks to undermine and reshape the European security architecture and the rules-based international order and to restore its sphere of influence. Russia's hostile objectives remain unchanged and constitute an existential threat to Estonia and to Europe as a whole. The continued actions of allies and partners to counter Russia's aggression and establish a just and lasting peace in Ukraine will shape the security environment of Europe and Estonia for decades to come.

Russia is preparing for a long-term confrontation

Russia's resources are subordinated to the needs of warfare and preparations continue for a possible armed conflict with NATO. Russia's aggression against Ukraine is supported by the People's Republic of China, North Korea, Belarus and Iran. An end to the war in Ukraine on terms favourable to Russia, combined with a weakening of the sanctions regime, would accelerate the reconstitution of Russia's armed forces and enable it to achieve the objectives of its military reform, significantly increasing its military capability in the vicinity of Estonia's borders. Russia is increasingly willing to take risks and miscalculations cannot be ruled out. Individuals who have participated in the war of aggression on Russia's side constitute a distinct security threat.

Hybrid operations are a persistent and systematic instrument

Russia systematically conducts hybrid operations against European states to advance its political objectives, combining various instruments of pressure and influence, such as hostile influence activities, intimidation, nuclear threats, sabotage, cyberattacks and artificially induced migration pressure. The aim is to weaken the cohesion of European societies and mutual trust, shape political and social choices and prepare the ground for possible military action.

Global trends also affect Europe

China's growing global influence, exercised through its economic and technological power, has resulted in a more assertive posture on the international stage. China's economic support reduces the impact of Western sanctions and enables the strengthening of Russia's armed forces. A potential crisis in the Indo-Pacific region would affect the security of Europe, including Estonia.

Estonia's and international security are also affected by climate change, migration pressure, terrorism, extremism, pandemics and risks to the global economy. Estonia's demographic situation may develop into a security risk, as the population is declining and ageing. If uncontrolled migration in Europe were to increase, the risk of radicalisation and terrorism could also rise in Estonia. Although the number of supporters of extremist ideologies in Estonia is small, the growth of communities and their external contacts, combined with integration challenges, may lead to a broader spread of extremist ideologies. As a member of the European Union and NATO, Estonia may be a target for terrorist organisations and supporters of their ideology.

Dependence on external connections and on states that pose a threat

Estonia's security of supply depends to a significant extent on external connections, including sea lines of communication in the Baltic Sea, communications links and energy infrastructure. Estonia's economic security is threatened by insecure supply chains and dependence on unreliable technologies, products and resources controlled by states that pose a threat to us.

Technology and interdependence increase vulnerability

The international security environment has become significantly more complex as a result of increasing interdependence and the development and deployment of new technologies. The advancement of artificial intelligence, quantum technology and unmanned systems creates new opportunities as well as risks that require mitigation. Businesses, institutions and states are increasingly dependent on each other's services, technology and products, which means that an organisation may be vulnerable even if its own protective mechanisms are effective. Therefore, enhanced cooperation between the public and private sectors is a prerequisite for identifying and addressing threats. Growing dependence on global service providers also poses a significant challenge for Estonia, as data are subject to the jurisdiction of the state in which they are physically stored or legally domiciled. The extensive use of cloud services also increases the risk associated with cyberattacks against central service providers and their partners.

4. Areas of activity in Estonia's security policy

Constitutional institutions, state authorities, local authorities, providers of critical services, enterprises with national defence tasks and other actors are responsible for implementing the National Security Concept approved by the Riigikogu – each in accordance with their competences and assigned responsibilities. In ensuring national security and implementing comprehensive national defence, the Government, led by the Prime Minister, plays the leading role. Parliamentary oversight supports transparency, accountability and strategic continuity in national security decision-making.

National security is ensured through the implementation of security policy. Estonia focuses on five closely interconnected and mutually reinforcing areas of activity that form a coherent whole, each of equal importance: (1) social cohesion and civil protection, (2) economic security and vital services, (3) internal security, (4) military defence, and (5) international security.

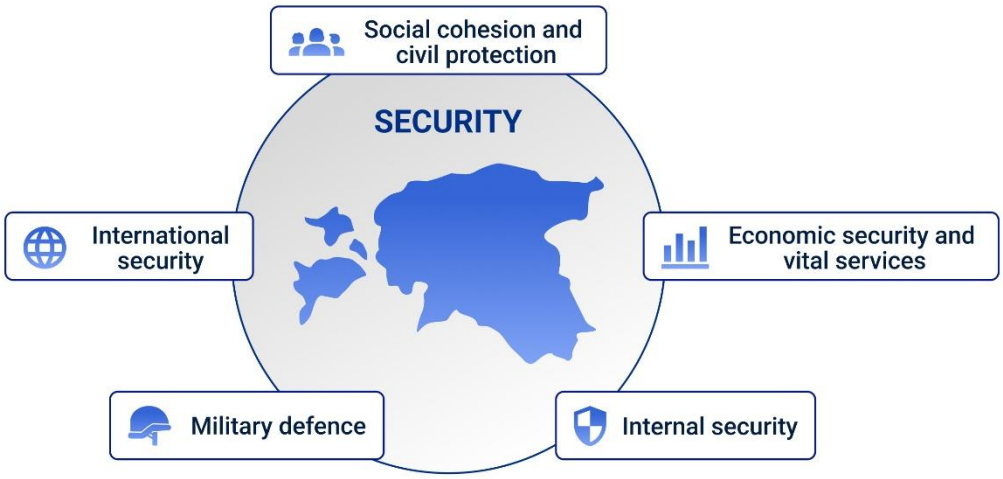

Figure. The five areas of activity in Estonia's security policy

Systematic governance and cooperation ensure effective national security and national defence

The Government Office plays a central role in the state's strategic governance and crisis coordination, supporting the Government in ensuring coherence in security policy objectives, continuity of decision-making and the effective functioning of governance in peacetime, crisis and wartime. Comprehensive national defence comprises national defence tasks assigned to state authorities, enterprises, local authorities and other actors. The tasks of constitutional institutions derive from the Constitution. Each actor must be prepared to fulfil its national defence task. To enhance preparedness, actors must also identify and, where necessary, develop additional capabilities in line with state-defined requirements. In cooperation with ministries, the Government Office ensures that national defence tasks are clearly communicated to all actors, including the private sector.

The expected functioning of public services increases trust in public administration. Providers of vital services must prepare for crisis and war in a manner that ensures the continuation of services at a level adapted to the circumstances.

Ensuring national security and national defence requires the clear and deliberate assumption of political responsibility. Heads of public sector bodies are responsible within their institutions for ensuring security and supporting national defence, including operational continuity and the technical protection of critical systems. The Government Office is responsible for the selection and development of senior civil servants. In developing senior civil service leaders, particular attention is paid to setting long-term direction, shaping strategy, cooperation with the political leadership and ensuring resilience.

Society must function in peacetime, crisis and wartime. To enhance the preparedness of constitutional institutions, the executive branch, local authorities and providers of critical services, Estonia must have a comprehensive national risk assessment, effective governance, including at the regional level, and planning, up-to-date crisis plans and regular exercises at all levels. The implementation of plans requires cooperation between various actors, the operational continuity of each and the necessary reserves.

Systematic cooperation between the legislative and executive branches and local authorities ensures a rapid, accurate and coordinated response to various threats. To this end, Estonia continuously promotes cooperation and clarity of roles, including at the regional level. In resolving crises and ensuring the functioning of national defence, it is crucial to promote cooperation between the responsible authorities, including within regional crisis committees.

Estonia and Europe are strengthening their defence against hybrid attacks by consistently reducing their vulnerabilities and enhancing inter-agency and international coordination. Estonia addresses all hybrid attacks on the basis of their impact on the state, the population and the economy and determines the appropriate response accordingly. Estonia identifies hybrid attacks, addresses them in accordance with applicable law and, where possible, makes them public.

Estonia strengthens security through sustained funding

In a deteriorating security environment and in accordance with the principle of continuity of functions, the systematic and sustained development of comprehensive national defence must be secured. This requires stable and predictable funding under the state budget strategy. Expenditure on military defence amounts to at least 5% of gross domestic product. In addition, state funding must ensure the maintenance of capabilities required to fulfil national defence tasks and address the most critical identified non-military capability gaps, including those related to the implementation of NATO's regional defence plan. Estonia actively seeks funding from NATO, the European Union and other external sources to cover investments set out in the National Defence Development Plan.

Estonia works to secure sufficient and sustained funding within NATO and the European Union to increase defence readiness, develop cross-border transport and energy connections and support Ukraine, as well as to mitigate the negative socio-economic effects arising from Russia's hostile objectives.

4.1. Social cohesion and civil protection

Our objective is a resilient society in which all people share democratic values and a common Estonian identity. Estonian society must be confident in coping in peacetime, crisis and wartime. In a cohesive society, the fundamental rights and freedoms of all are protected. Estonia works to strengthen confidence, social cohesion and mutual understanding, supports vulnerable individuals and risk groups, and prevents radicalisation, while mitigating risks arising from the digital divide and other factors.

One of the cornerstones of a cohesive society is the preservation of Estonia's national identity and cultural heritage. Shared cultural heritage and the associated historical memory provide the foundation for the sustainability of the state. Awareness of and commitment to one's cultural background and roots are directly linked to each individual's willingness to contribute to national defence. As the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage in contemporary armed conflicts has become a means of attacking an adversary's cultural identity and historical continuity, the state systematically secures the protection and preservation of significant cultural heritage in peacetime, crisis and wartime in order to prevent attempts to weaken social cohesion.

Psychological defence strengthens societal resilience

Psychological defence strengthens public confidence and the will to defend and, combined with the broad acceptance of constitutional values, enhances resilience to hostile influence activities against Estonia.

The protection of the information environment and cyberspace is a prerequisite for safeguarding the constitutional order, state sovereignty and territorial integrity. In both the international and domestic information environment, Estonia implements psychological defence through unified, non-partisan strategic communication that engages actors across society.

Psychological defence grounded in constitutional values contributes to safeguarding Estonia's security by developing and maintaining the shared values that underpin social cohesion and a sense of security. Its objective is to enhance people's sense of security, prevent crises and war, and strengthen societal trust, including trust in the actions of the state.

To prevent the shaping of public attitudes in ways that could lead to conflicts threatening the constitutional order or to a decline in societal confidence, divisive developments and foreign information manipulation activities, including disinformation, must be identified in a timely manner and their impact limited. To this end, Estonia promotes the broadest possible acceptance of constitutional values in society through psychological defence and enhances preparedness for rapid and coordinated public communication in crisis and wartime. In addition to official communications, Estonia involves community networks and civil society organisations in the communication process. This increases the credibility of state messages also among groups that remain outside the mainstream media environment. Crisis information must be communicated in a language and format understandable to the target audience.

A key prerequisite for psychological defence is a population equipped with media literacy, critical thinking skills and functional literacy. Individuals who can assess the origin of information, identify manipulative narratives and understand complex texts are more resilient to hostile influence. Estonia therefore systematically develops the media and digital competences of children, young people and adults.

A strong civil society ensures security

Estonia values open and inclusive governance that brings public administration closer to the people and increases public trust in the state. This is supported by active citizenship and a high level of individual and community engagement. Trust, the will to defend, risk awareness, and voluntary contributions to the development of the state and communities, to security and to crisis response and national defence strengthen society.

A strong civil society is the foundation of democracy and security. It ensures that the people of Estonia can participate in decision-making processes, protect human rights, and promote transparency and democratic principles. Civil society can support the state's strategic communication – for example, through participation in public diplomacy. In order to preserve and develop democracy, it is important to support and trust civil society organisations that operate ethically and responsibly and involve people in decision-making. A vibrant civil society is a pillar of social cohesion, helping to uphold shared values and objectives.

Civil protection supports preparedness and saves lives

Civil protection comprises the activities of the state and society that prepare people to cope independently in times of crisis and war, protect them from crisis-related threats, and assist them in managing the consequences. Civil protection forms part of comprehensive national defence.

Civil protection encompasses the overall preparedness and capacity of the state and society for early warning, rescue operations, evacuation, sheltering, first aid and disaster medicine, essential social assistance, psychosocial crisis support, and other assistance indispensable to the population.

Civil protection is not limited solely to activities in times of crisis and war but is a systematic undertaking, extending from the operational continuity of responsible state authorities and critical services to the preparedness and resilience of local authorities, communities and individuals. The effectiveness of civil protection therefore depends on the awareness, skills, preparedness and active role of residents, local authorities, responsible state authorities and providers of critical services, as well as on their cooperation. Achieving this requires a joint effort by different actors in society.

Civil protection is multi-layered. Its foundation lies in the ability of individuals to cope independently in times of crisis and war until assistance arrives and, where necessary, to support one another, recognising that assistance may be limited and delayed. This requires that people are prepared to manage independently for at least seven days and, if necessary, to evacuate on their own.

The role of local authorities in civil protection is to ensure that residents' independent coping in times of crisis and war is not hindered by disruptions to critical services, failure to perform national defence tasks or the absence of information of critical importance.

Estonia develops protective measures to mitigate risks related to civil protection, including early warning, expanding sheltering and large-scale evacuation capacity, training local authorities and individuals for independent preparedness and establishing and maintaining the capabilities of responding agencies in times of crisis and war, thereby strengthening resilience. During large-

scale evacuations, institutions, such as hospitals, may be relocated within the country where necessary. In cooperation with allies and international organisations, designated patients are transferred abroad if the number of casualties exceeds Estonia's treatment capacity.

An integral part of civil protection is the capacity of the healthcare and social welfare systems to operate in times of crisis and war. Estonia ensures the provision of healthcare and social services, including essential social assistance and psychosocial crisis support, throughout the country, supported by cooperation and resilient infrastructure.

4.2. Economic security and vital services

Europe's economic success, including that of Estonia, is a strategic requirement. A strong economy supports resilience and reduces vulnerability to external threats. Economic security rests on a competitive business environment, supported by a predictable and stable tax and legal framework.

Estonia seeks to maintain a business environment based on open and fair trade, a rules-based and transparent international economic environment, strong public finances, reliable physical and digital connectivity, high-quality digital services, advancing technology, diversified and functioning supply chains, and secure access to resources. At the same time, a balance must be struck between economic and security interests. This requires identifying key threats and mitigating military and non-military security risks.

Economic security is based on a strong economy and the deliberate mitigation of risks

Estonia supports the leading role of democracies in technological development. Safeguarding economic security requires mitigating risks that arise from unreliable states, enterprises acting on their behalf, and high-risk economic partnerships and relationships. The public and private sectors must strengthen cooperation, including through data exchange and the joint identification and mitigation of risks. Enterprises must give greater priority to security and crisis preparedness capabilities, including planning, infrastructure protection, cybersecurity and information security.

To protect services essential to the functioning of the state, secure and diversified supply chains must be ensured, transparency in foreign investment and strategic real estate transactions maintained, and risks arising from public procurement systematically assessed and mitigated. The screening of foreign investments helps to identify and prevent security threats in sectors of critical importance at an early stage, mitigating risks without unduly undermining the investment environment.

The field of critical raw materials is of strategic importance. In the event of major crises or supply disruptions, stocks of critical raw materials may be regarded as strategic resources. These stocks must therefore be thoroughly assessed, defined and protected in advance. At the same time, Estonia must secure its role in the value chain of strategic resources, develop the supporting knowledge base and protect enterprises operating in the sector from hostile takeovers, thereby strengthening resilience and Estonia's international position.

Estonia's research and development activities, and the individuals and organisations involved, may become targets of malicious influence, unwanted knowledge transfer and foreign interference. Greater attention to research security, and to the identification and mitigation of security risks in research and higher education, supports innovation.

A strong financial sector and security of energy supply enhance resilience

Enhancing the stability and reliability of the financial sector is integral to economic security. To this end, Estonia supports a unified and rules-based financial area within the European Union, reduces strategic dependencies, and protects the single market from malicious influence and financial risks. To ensure the reliable movement of capital, Estonia enhances the resilience of the financial sector and reinforces the implementation of sanctions and the prevention of money laundering.

Estonia's economic model must be sustainable, competitive, flexible and future-proof. This requires promoting knowledge-intensive entrepreneurship and making targeted investments in strategic technologies and infrastructure, including Rail Baltic and the defence industry, which increase added value and support national security. In the interest of national security, domestic enterprises in strategic sectors, including the development of autonomous systems, must be strengthened.

Energy security is a cornerstone of the functioning of the state and the economy. To secure energy supply, the state seeks to increase the share of domestic electricity generation capacity, enhance the operational continuity of critical infrastructure and diversify the energy mix. This reduces dependence on imported fossil fuels. To mitigate risks to electricity security of supply, Estonia ensures sufficient dispatchable capacity by increasing system flexibility through the wider deployment of energy storage and demand-side management. Distributed generation and storage strengthen security of supply by improving resilience to potential attacks against critical infrastructure and fostering entrepreneurship, thereby supporting the viability of rural areas adapting to demographic decline. Estonia continues to reinforce its electricity system, enhance the resilience of critical energy infrastructure, build up frequency reserves and accelerate the integration of renewable energy, including in cooperation with Latvia and Lithuania.

A well-maintained natural and living environment, combined with environmentally sustainable development, provides a strong foundation for both the economy and security. Nature restoration and other conservation activities that take security needs into account can strengthen defence capability and resilience. Clean and efficient technologies enable the substitution and production of materials required in the defence industry, conserve energy and provide sustainable energy solutions.

To secure a strong economy, security of supply and military mobility, transport infrastructure must be developed. This requires strengthening the competitiveness of the logistics sector, ensuring safety and advancing technologically innovative, higher-capacity transport infrastructure that takes account of security and national defence requirements.

Cybersecurity and digital sovereignty as foundations of state resilience

The security of Estonian society and economic success depend on the sustainable development of the digital society. Digitalisation spans all sectors and increases interdependence between industries and services, including across borders. Estonia's digital sovereignty is based on a balanced, risk-based approach aimed at securing the functioning of the state and society, while maintaining technological neutrality and openness to trusted partners. In critical layers of digital infrastructure, such as digital identity and state registers, Estonia may apply heightened security and autonomy requirements, while avoiding unjustified technological or geographical isolation. Vital digital public services must remain available in all circumstances. It is therefore important to continue mitigating supply chain risks, strengthen the reliability of digital infrastructure, services and connectivity, enhance digital competences, and ensure preparedness for all situations, including crisis and war.

Cybersecurity and information security are integral to national security, affecting the whole of society and the continuity of vital services. The objective is to move towards a more user-centred and secure digital society. This requires security requirements to be user-friendly, so that they are simple, clear and practicable for both primary users of technology and the general public. The state invests in cybersecurity to prevent threats and strengthen detection, response and the implementation of countermeasures, as well as to enhance nationwide situational awareness, response capacity and cooperation in resolving cyber incidents.

The rapid development and widespread use of artificial intelligence create new risks, including opportunities for large-scale cyberattacks, but its prudent use also offers more adaptable and effective protective measures and creates new opportunities for innovation and economic growth. The state, enterprises and researchers must jointly develop solutions that strengthen both defence and civilian domains and accelerate the systematic deployment of artificial intelligence. This also requires expanding Estonia's domestic computing capacity. As advances in quantum computing threaten existing encryption methods, post-quantum cryptographic solutions must be developed and deployed in a timely manner to secure the long-term protection of the digital state and its services.

Vital services and security of supply ensure the functioning of society in crisis

The functioning of society depends on vital services and resilience. The essential needs of Estonia's population include the availability and accessibility of vital services, in particular energy and communications, as well as food, fuel, healthcare services and public service media. It is important to identify interdependencies between different services and to address bottlenecks.

In the event of incidents and crises, such as the disruption of subsea connections or large-scale pandemics, as well as in war, international land, sea and air lines of communication may be temporarily disrupted or suspended. To ensure resilience, security of supply arrangements, including stockpiles, must enable society as a whole to cope for at least 30 days in times of crisis and war, until the necessary connections are restored. This requires preparedness at all levels of society – individuals, enterprises, local authorities and the state. To reduce vulnerability, stockpiles must be geographically dispersed and not centralised.

In cooperation with enterprises, the Estonian state maintains national operational reserves of liquid fuel, natural gas, food and medical supplies. Ensuring the long-term security of supply of food and other essential goods in times of crisis and war, including by safeguarding production continuity, is of primary importance. In times of crisis and war, it is also essential to secure public finances and liquidity and to ensure the functioning of vital payment and cash services.

Critical infrastructure, connectivity and services must be equipped with security measures that ensure national security and enable resilience against both current and future risks. While the Estonian state is responsible for safeguarding the integrity and indivisibility of its territory, territorial waters and airspace, as well as the constitutional order, the owner of a specific vital service infrastructure asset is generally responsible for its basic security and protection and must bear the associated costs. All providers of vital services and the authorities responsible for organising them, including local authorities, must contribute to this.

In times of crisis and war, the state organises the maritime transport necessary to secure the functioning of society and to support vital services and, in cooperation with allies, ensures the security of strategic sea lines of communication.

4.3. Internal security

The objective of internal security is to safeguard the constitutional order and maintain a secure living environment in Estonia, ensuring that any hostile activity or its impact cannot significantly disrupt the functioning of the state and society and that security-related crime remains consistently at a low level.

Attempts to undermine the security of the state and society occur continuously and do not arise only in times of crisis or war. National security is also affected by non-military threats, most of which remain concealed until they materialise. Estonia ensures internal security by mitigating non-military threats and shaping an unfavourable operating environment for hostile actors, whether foreign states or non-state entities. The focus is on counterintelligence, border security and the prevention and repelling of hostile subversive and influence activities, crimes against the state and terrorism. Ensuring internal security requires a clear legal framework and security and law enforcement authorities with capabilities corresponding to the level and nature of risks directed against the state. Their effective functioning depends on a high level of public trust and the responsible use of existing powers.

A strong border and international cooperation ensure internal security

As a border state of the European Union, Estonia prioritises the development of its eastern border by equipping it with modern technical solutions and strengthening cooperation and information exchange with other eastern border states of the European Union in the fields of surveillance, border security and preparedness for instrumentalised migration. Estonia’s eastern border and adjacent areas receive heightened attention.

Estonia promotes common internal security policy within the European Union and the Schengen area. The cornerstones of preventing and mitigating non-military threats, and of

deterrence and resilience, include Frontex, Europol, Interpol and cooperation formats among Baltic Sea states. Estonia attaches importance to, and facilitates, the presence of allies and partners on its territory and at the eastern border in support of internal security, among other areas.

Estonia considers the targeted implementation of European Union and national sanctions essential for supporting international security and mitigating internal security risks. Effective customs control and the prevention and prosecution of sanctions violations are central in this regard.

From the perspective of internal security, immigration must be aligned with public interests. The identification of safe countries of origin, combined with successful integration and adaptation, provides the best safeguard against immigrants posing a threat to public order and security in Estonia.

Maintaining public order and internal defence to ensure the functioning of the state in times of crisis

In maintaining public order, it must be ensured that incidents and trends do not escalate into conflicts threatening the constitutional order, including large-scale intergroup violence, coercive coordinated actions, the violent isolation of a locality or prolonged mass disorder. To uphold public order and a sense of security in society, it is also essential to have the capacity to enforce imposed penalties and to ensure increased compliance with the law following the serving of a sentence.

In the event of a significant deterioration in the security situation, Estonia initiates an internal defence operation to restore national security and public order. Internal defence supports military defence where necessary.

Internal security and internal defence are supported by a crisis reserve. To ensure the continuous performance of critical tasks necessary for the functioning of the state and society, maintain reaction capability, and enable rapid reinforcement when ordinary resources are overloaded or disrupted, volunteers and the crisis reserve must be developed on a sustainable basis.

Estonia must be prepared for the emergence in Europe of new security threats arising from methods and means of warfare refined in the war in Ukraine, including the mass use of drones.

4.4. Military defence

The objective of military defence is to prevent military threats, to defend the state successfully where necessary and, if war is imposed on Estonia, to prevail. The prerequisites for victory are the will to fight, sufficient resources and the timely granting of the necessary authorities for the use of force. To deter an adversary from initiating military action, Estonia adopts a strengthened defence posture based on independent defence capability and collective defence. The organisation of Estonia’s military defence is founded on the principle of democratic civilian control.

Independent defence capability, collective defence and allied presence form the basis of deterrence

For credible deterrence, NATO must be ready to undertake immediate collective defence operations. NATO's strengthened posture on the alliance's eastern flank must be grounded in the principles of deterrence by denial and forward defence, with the aim of convincing a potential aggressor that achieving its objectives by military means would be impossible. Credible deterrence by denial rests on Estonia's strong independent defence capability, the integrated and combat-ready presence of allied forces and designated reinforcement units. It is supported by an effective command structure, pre-positioned equipment, robust defence plans and regular exercises to rehearse them. Credible deterrence is underpinned by both conventional and nuclear capabilities.

Estonia's military defence is based on the principle of active defence, whereby active measures are taken against enemy forces to prevent, nullify or reduce the effectiveness of any form of enemy attack. Estonia is guided by the premise that the Baltic states constitute a single operational area.

Allied contributions to a comprehensive NATO defence posture in Estonia and the other Baltic states, including the military presence of allied forces, form an integral part of military defence. The objective is a continuous and planned allied military presence in Estonia, supported by the necessary stockpiles and capable of operating jointly with Estonian forces. In cooperation with allies, Estonia ensures the necessary infrastructure for the reception of allied forces and military mobility and provides host nation support and training areas in peacetime, crisis and wartime.

Estonia develops military defence across all domains

To strengthen its defence capability, Estonia develops, on the basis of military advice and at pace, fully manned, trained and regularly exercised units that are equipped and adequately supplied. Estonia develops units capable of defeating an adversary on land, at sea, in the air and in cyberspace.

Effective military defence planning and threat prevention require situational awareness, early warning, capable intelligence and counterintelligence and a common threat picture among allies. Early warning enables timely decision-making and the rapid implementation of decisions, which is critical both for raising readiness and for preparing the state as a whole to respond to threats.

The objective of Estonian Defence Forces readiness is to ensure command and control, unit level readiness and situational awareness in order to minimise an adversary's freedom of action across all operational domains. Raising defence readiness enables an effective response to destabilising activities and helps to prevent a conventional surprise attack. To this end, the freedom of action of the Defence Forces and allied forces is secured at the earliest possible stage, including, where necessary, within the regional operational area of the Baltic states and the Baltic Sea. To strengthen the mobilisation system, Estonia regularly conducts refresher training and snap exercises for reserves.

Conscription is the primary means of manning reserve units and maintaining combat readiness, as well as a recruitment base for professional service personnel. To strengthen defence capability, Estonia enhances the attractiveness of professional, conscript, reserve and voluntary service and promotes the participation of women.

The Estonian Defence League, as a voluntary, military-organised and armed national defence organisation engaged in military training, contributes to the preparation of the state's military defence capability and to ensuring security.

Societal support, the will to defend and the defence industry strengthen national defence

The Estonian Defence Forces require civil support for the military defence of the state. The purpose of such support is to ensure the effective activation and functioning of military defence.

A high level of societal will to defend is a cornerstone of Estonia's defence and rests on physical and mental resilience, skills, the necessary equipment and experience. Strengthening these prerequisites requires cross-sectoral effort, to which national defence education contributes by enhancing young people's understanding of the organisation of national defence, civil protection and resilience. Estonia values those who serve in national defence and the contribution of individuals, the private sector and society at large. To reinforce this, Estonia raises awareness of how everyone can contribute to national defence, both militarily and non-militarily.

Estonia's defence industry forms part of national defence and contributes to economic development and innovation, thereby strengthening the state's defence capability.

To strengthen allied security, Estonia participates in collective defence and other international military operations. These operations support international security; participation strengthens allied relations and interoperability and provides the Estonian Defence Forces with valuable experience.

4.5. International security

Estonia is active, goal-oriented and principled in its international activities. Estonia's objective is to ensure that it is never left alone and that it can influence the shaping of European security. In developing allied relations and participating in coalitions of the willing, Estonia seeks to be at the core of decision shaping. Estonia is prepared to act as a leader in international engagement.

Estonia focuses on three main directions in international security: (1) preserving the rules-based international order founded on international law; (2) safeguarding Europe's fundamental principles and ensuring the effective functioning of the European Union and NATO; and (3) cooperating with Baltic, Nordic and Baltic Sea neighbours and other like-minded partners.

Estonia stands for a rules-based international order

Estonia opposes attempts to alter the principles of the international order founded on international law and agreed rules, including the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. Estonia defends human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the principles of democracy and the rule of law.

Estonia actively supports the effective and equitable functioning of international organisations, including reform of the United Nations and its Security Council to make them more transparent, accountable and effective, to ensure fair participation of states, and to strengthen the role of the United Nations General Assembly.

Estonia works to ensure that perpetrators of the most serious violations of international law, including war crimes and the crime of aggression, are held accountable, cooperating actively with the investigative and prosecutorial authorities of other states and with international courts. Estonia advocates international condemnation of the crimes of communist and other totalitarian regimes so that impunity does not encourage further acts of aggression. Estonia also works to ensure that those responsible for wars of aggression compensate for war damage. Estonia participates in the adoption of international sanctions and, in the event of violations of international norms, may impose sanctions unilaterally.

Greater European responsibility and preparedness to secure Europe's own security

It is in Estonia's vital interests to have a Europe that shares common values and security space, in addition to a strong transatlantic relationship. Estonia works to strengthen allied and partner relations, unity and NATO deterrence, including nuclear deterrence, as well as collective defence. Estonia supports the objective that Europe must assume greater responsibility for its own security and develop strategic preparedness and capabilities. Estonia considers it essential to increase European defence expenditure as rapidly as possible and supports this objective through its example and actions.

Estonia works towards the enlargement of the European Union and NATO, which is an integral part of expanding the community of shared values and security and of ensuring it.

In cooperation with allies and partners, Estonia participates in countering Russia's war of aggression and underlying policy, which constitute the principal threat to Euro-Atlantic security, and in establishing a just and lasting peace. Estonia also supports efforts to ensure accountability for Russia's war crimes and compensation for the damage caused. Estonia supports sovereign Ukraine militarily, politically and economically and will participate in the country's post-war reconstruction and security arrangements. Estonia supports Ukraine's accession to the European Union and NATO. To achieve its objectives, Estonia will deepen political, economic and military cooperation and integration within its region and with other like-minded states.

Estonia participates actively in international security cooperation

In participating in potential arrangements on the limitation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, as well as in European conventional arms control and confidence-building measures, Estonia is guided by its threat assessment, the requirements of independent defence capability, and the interests and principles of collective defence.

Estonia works to increase international awareness and resilience in response to non-military hostile activities by adversarial states that are aimed at undermining democratic order and dividing NATO and the European Union.

To strengthen international security, Estonia continues to deepen ties with global partners on the basis of shared principles of multilateral cooperation and international law. Estonia is an active and reliable partner in development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, drawing on its experience in education and in digital and cyber matters, as well as in climate, energy and connectivity.