

PREPARATION OF CITIZENS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA FOR CIVIL RESISTANCE

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No VAE-7

SUMMARY

Audit relevance

The state must be defended by both military and non-military means. Every citizen, regardless of age or place of residence¹, must be committed to preventing threats and resisting aggression and occupation. It is necessary to strengthen citizens' preparedness for civil resistance: to provide them with the necessary knowledge on preparedness for national defence, to develop skills, to be ready to face external threats and to strengthen their will to resist. The Civic Empowerment Index, an indicator measuring the assessment of risks associated with civic engagement, has not changed significantly in recent years (36.7 out of 100 in 2023 and 36.8 in 2024)². Volunteering experience and involvement in non-governmental organisations are important for civil preparedness. The results of the survey show that the public lacks knowledge of how they could contribute to national defence in various forms: only 11% would contribute to the activities of non-governmental organisations, and a similar number would contribute to government institutions (8%) or workplace activities (10%). Potential volunteers are not familiar with the activities of state and municipal institutions, so it is important to involve not only these institutions, but also NGOs, public organisations, the private sector and communities in the process of preparing for civil resistance³.

¹ National Agenda "Strategy for the Preparation of the Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania for Civil Resistance" approved by the Seimas Resolution No. XIV-1102 of 17 May 2022.

² Civil Society Institute. Civic Power Index. 2024: <https://www.civitas.lt/time-line/pilietines-galios-indeksas-2024-m/>.

³ Ibid.

Audit objective and scope

The objective of the audit is to assess whether the preparation of citizens for unarmed civil resistance is ensured.

Key audit questions:

- ✓ whether policy development, coordination and monitoring of preparedness for civil resistance is result-oriented;
- ✓ whether adequate conditions are provided for citizens to prepare for unarmed civil resistance.

Audited entities:

- ✓ The Office of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, which is entrusted with the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the National Agenda "Strategy for the Preparation of the Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania for Civil Resistance"⁴.
- ✓ Ministry of National Defence, and Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania, implementing measures of the Agenda Implementation Plan for 2023-2025.
- ✓ Mobilisation and Civil Resistance Department under the Ministry of National Defence, which is entrusted with participating in the formulation of policy in the fields of civil resistance, civic and patriotic education, organising and coordinating cooperation between the national defence system, state and municipal institutions, bodies and/or NGOs in the field of civil resistance, civic and patriotic education⁵.
- ✓ Lithuanian Riflemen's Union, organising and carrying out unarmed civil resistance⁶.

We are grateful for the cooperation of the audited entities, representatives of other state and municipal institutions and bodies that provided information, representatives of non-governmental organisations, representatives of the Lithuanian Pupils' and Lithuanian Students' Unions, and academics from Vilnius University.

The audit period is 2023-2024. In order to assess changes, in some cases we have used data from 2025.

The audit was carried out in accordance with international standards of supreme audit institutions. The audit criteria, procedures performed and methods used are described in more detail in Annex 2 (Annex 2, p. 36).

Key audit results

Effective preparation of citizens for unarmed civil resistance is only partially ensured: there is a lack of coordination in building citizens' resilience and preparing them for civil resistance and the use of NGOs in case of a crisis, mobilisation or war; the organisation and implementation of unarmed resistance is still in the planning phase; and there are

⁴ Strategy for the Preparation of Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania for Civil Resistance, p. 25.

⁵ Order of the Minister of National Defence No V-225 of 23 February 2011.

⁶ Strategy for Preparation of Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania for Civil Resistance, p. 7.1.

inadequate conditions for citizens to acquire knowledge and skills, strengthen civic will and resilience.

1. Management of the preparation of citizens for unarmed civil resistance needs improvement

- ✓ An empowered leader/entity would be needed to prepare citizens for civil resistance at national level:
 - Three entities - the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, the National Security Commission and the Council for Civil Resistance - are envisaged to provide leadership and coordination functions for the development of citizens' resilience and their preparation for civil resistance. The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania entrusted the Government to lead the process in peacetime and the National Security Commission to coordinate the process. The Government and the Commission approved the plan for the implementation of the National Agenda "Strategy for the Preparation of the Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania for Civil Resistance" for the period 2023-2025, but did not carry out any coordination activities during the period of implementation. The activities of the Council for Civil Resistance, which is supposed to initiate public debates among citizens, NGOs, and interested groups of society, and to make proposals to the National Security Commission on the implementation of this agenda and the long-term development of the civil resistance system, did not take place in the 1st quarter of 2023-2025. Its first meeting was held on 12 May 2025, almost 17 months after its establishment. The Ministry of National Defence and the Mobilisation and Civil Resistance Department are entrusted by law with functions in the fields of civil resistance and civic and patriotic education. The activities of both institutions under the legislation do not cover all the elements of the civil resistance process: building resilience, strengthening civic will, providing knowledge and skills. Their activities cover the field of national defence, while the Department's activities are focused on public information and the organisation and delivery of knowledge and skills training. In addition to the national defence, 15 institutions are implementing measures to prepare for civil resistance in the fields of education, culture, social security and labour, and home affairs. With three entities with leadership and coordination functions, there is no single entity that can undertake the coordination and mobilisation of institutions at national level and ensure inter-institutional solutions in the field of preparation of citizens for civil resistance ([Sub-section 1.1](#), p. **Klaida! Žymelė neapibrėžta.**).
- ✓ Planning for preparation of citizens for civil resistance has deficiencies:
 - The State plans to invest EUR 114,228.81 thousand in the period 2023-2025 to prepare citizens for civil resistance. For four measures, no money is planned (financed from the joint allocations of the Lithuanian Armed Forces and the internal affairs institutions);
 - The indicators and targets in the Agenda Implementation Plan for 2023-2025 are not in line with the indicators and targets planned in the planning documents of the assessed institutions at operational level. 42 (out of 59) indicators planned in the Agenda Implementation Plan are not planned in the Strategic Action Plans of the institutions assessed;
 - There are under- and over-achievements in the indicator values: 8 (out of 96) were not achieved in 2023, 20 (out of 89) were not achieved in 2024; in 2023, 38 (out of

96) were exceeded (31 from 101% to 200%, 5 from 200% to 500%, 2 from 500% to 966%); and in 2024, 37 (out of 89) (26, 7 and 4 respectively) were exceeded;

- The Agenda Implementation Plan 2023-2025 contains measures that are indirectly related to training citizens for civil resistance, and were already underway prior to the implementation of the Agenda measures ([Sub-section 1.2](#), p. **Klaida! Žymelė neapibrėžta.5**).

Planning where the target values for indicators are not properly designed to take account of the circumstances or are insufficiently ambitious, where there are differences in the information provided in the planning documents at the strategic and institutional levels, and where not all the measures have been designed in a rational way, makes it difficult to carry out and monitor the activities of the preparation of citizens for civil resistance.

2. Opportunities for citizens to prepare for unarmed civil resistance should be improved

- ✓ Between 2023 and 2024, the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union carried out measures to prepare for unarmed resistance, such as civic education in schools and participation in exercises. However, there were no plans on how unarmed resistance will be organised and carried out in case of crisis, mobilisation or war. The Ministry of National Defence has prepared a draft concept for Unarmed Civil Resistance in December 2024, which is being agreed upon. In the light of it, the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union will coordinate the organised action of unarmed citizens in the defence of the country and will organise the provision of unarmed support to the Lithuanian Army in times of crisis and to the Armed Forces in times of mobilisation and/or war. The Riflemen's Union plans to develop an action plan in the 4th quarter of 2025 ([Sub-section 2.1](#), p. 18).
- ✓ While civic competence is being developed in the education system, we have identified areas for further improvement:
 - At all levels of general education, from pre-school to secondary level, general civic competence is integrated into the curriculum, but teachers lack methodological materials and examples of good practice. Teaching the basics of civics (grades 9-10) needs textbooks and guidance on how to make lessons more interactive and thus increase pupils engagement. A renewed optional National Security and National Defence curriculum for Gymnasium III-IV (11-12) pupils was launched in 2023-2024, but has been chosen by less than 1% of pupils and is only taught in 14 schools in 10 municipalities. In 2023, 19% of teachers (6 715 out of 34 608) were trained under the priority area of teacher development "Strengthening competences in civic education", while the National Agency for Education has no data for 2024.
 - Two (out of 85) of the VET programmes assessed do not include the development of civic competences, while the rest focus on the development of personal competences, such as communication, cooperation, which is partly in line with the Council of the European Union recommendations. The recommended aspects are missing, such as the development of full participation in civic and social life through an understanding of social, economic, legal and political concepts and structures, and of world events.
 - Civic education is not included in higher education studies. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the Centre for Quality Assessment of Studies do

not have data on civic education and do not evaluate programmes in this respect ([Sub-section 2.2](#), p. 19).

To strengthen the civic will of society by promoting values, citizenship and patriotism, community spirit, voluntary preparation for national defence and the willingness to contribute to national defence when needed, as set out in the civic will strand of the Agenda, it is important to create the right conditions for this to take place in all spheres of education, from pre-school education through to vocational and higher education.

- ✓ Opportunities for access to knowledge and skills for citizens in civil resistance are created and need to be improved in order to extend training to a broader area of the country and to widen access for people with special needs:
 - Civil Resistance training organised under the concept of the Knowledge and Skills for Civil Resistance Programme was not adapted for persons with disabilities. No training for these persons was provided in 2024. As of 2 May 2025, the distance training platform is already available to persons with visual and hearing impairments.
 - In 2024, the number of people completing civil resistance training was higher than planned, with the exception of the remotely piloted aircraft training, which was completed by half as many people (458) as planned (1 000). The target has not been met as the training did not start until September 2024. 74% of those who have completed the basic civil resistance course (distance learning) are those for whom the training is compulsory, and there are no data available on which groups make up the remaining 26% (8 774). Data on those who have completed training modules 1 and 2 are only collected for two groups of persons (civilians and those registered with the military commandant). The training was carried out in 31 municipalities, with more than half of the persons completing the training in major cities (Section 2.3, page 23). ([Sub-section 2.3](#), p. 23).
- ✓ Citizens' practical involvement in the preparation for civil resistance needs to be improved:
 - The assessment of the capacities of NGOs has been entrusted to several institutions: the National Crisis Management Centre - in case of crises and emergencies, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour - for meeting the population's basic needs during the mobilisation process, and the Mobilisation and Civic Resistance Department - to organise and co-ordinate the co-operation of the institutions of the National Defence System with NGOs in the fields of public information, knowledge and skills training, and civic education. From 2022, municipalities have the possibility to use NGOs in crisis and emergency situations, and from 2025 in mobilisation situations. With these opportunities, the coordination of the deployment and funding of NGO capacities at national level becomes crucial to engage citizens in practical ways in preparing for civil resistance.
 - 13 (out of 16) of the selected municipalities have signed cooperation agreements with NGOs, and only 2 have planned specific assistance actions in case of war and evacuation. All municipalities assessed have planned for the continuation of assistance to socially vulnerable persons for those already receiving social services. Their data are available in the Family Support Information System. 8 (out of 16) municipalities do not have data on other persons to be taken care of in case of war or evacuation (e.g. elderly persons not receiving social services).

- Each responsible authority organises the exercise according to its areas of activity (mobilisation and host country support, civil protection), using volunteers, state and municipal authorities according to the specifics of the task. In 2024, one exercise was held to test the national mobilisation system, which was related to the training of citizens for civil resistance. A similar exercise is planned for 2025. Joint exercises increase interaction between institutions, NGOs and citizens by providing practical skills to engage in the preparation for civil resistance ([Sub-section 2.4, p. 26](#)).

Recommendations

To the Government of the Republic of Lithuania

1. To achieve a focused and coordinated preparation of citizens for civil resistance, appoint a coordinating entity following an analysis of the functions of the institutions active in this field (Audit result 1).

To the Office of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania

2. To properly plan for the further preparation of citizens for civil resistance, prepare a plan for the next period, with revised or new measures, indicators and targets, following the analysis of the results of the implementation of the Agenda 2023-2025 (Audit result 1).
3. To ensure the state-wide coordination of the involvement of volunteers and non-governmental organisations to meet the basic needs of the population in times of crisis, emergency, mobilisation and war, to plan the objectives, priorities and modalities of involvement (Audit result 1).

To the Mobilisation and Civil Resistance Department

4. To enable all interested citizens to gain access to civil resistance knowledge, through an assessment of opportunities, resources and needs:
 - 4.1. plan and deliver training adapted to persons with disabilities;
 - 4.2. plan and deliver training in a way that makes it accessible to a wider range of groups and covers a larger area of the country (Audit result 2).

To the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport

5. To develop young people's civic will by providing knowledge and skills:
 - 5.1. expand the provision of national security and defence education in secondary education curricula;
 - 5.2. improve the requirements for the development of civic competences for professional activities in formal vocational training programmes.

We have informed the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport in writing⁷, as the policy-making body for higher education⁸, recommending that measures be taken, in cooperation with the conferences of rectors of Lithuanian universities and directors of Lithuanian colleges, to enable students to take freely chosen modules or to develop competences for resilience-building and/or civics in other ways in higher education institutions.

The measures and timeframes for implementing the recommendations, the expected impact of the audit and the indicators for measuring change are set out in the report in the section “Plan for the implementation of the recommendations” (p. 29). Up-to-date information on the status of implementation of the recommendations, results and developments is published in open data on the National Audit Office website <https://www.valstybeskontrole.lt/LT/AtviriDuomenys>.

⁷ National Audit Office letter No SD-(210-9.3.1-E-6236)-521 of 5 June 2025.

⁸ Ibid, Art. 14(1).