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# What if We Gave Up Conscription?

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for Militære Studier



February 2009

*What if We Gave Up Conscription?* Dansk Institut for Militære Studier February 2009

# Abstract

This report contains a survey of the experience gained in France, the Netherlands, Latvia, and Slovakia in connection with discontinuing conscription. The experience is used to estimate what the consequences of discontinuing conscription in Denmark would be.

There was awareness in France, the Netherlands, Latvia, and Slovakia that their national defence forces would be significantly reduced when they discontinued conscription, but the decision was seen as necessary in order to realise their strategic visions of heightening their ability to take part in international operations.

It was realised in all four countries that recruitment and testing are even more important for professional forces than for forces based on conscription and they were all obliged to increase expenditure in this area.

After the discontinuation of conscription in these countries it has generally been possible to recruit and organise an exclusively professional military that has provided forces suitable to be sent out on international operations. This has led to increasing defence expenditure, but the greatest increase in expenditure stems from committing troops to international operations – not from increased payroll and recruitment costs. Furthermore, experience has shown that it is easier to recruit women to professional armed forces.

The conclusion of the report is that because professional forces can perform a greater number of and more complex tasks than conscripted forces, it is even more important for politicians to progressively and clearly define the role of the armed forces and to ensure there is balance between ways and means.

Dansk Institut for Militære Studier er en uafhængig forskningsinstitution, hvis formål er at kortlægge, analysere og debattere de valg, som dansk forsvar står overfor i en globaliseret verden.

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# Recommendations

This report does not conclude whether conscription in Denmark should be discontinued, modified, or maintained. The recommendations therefore fall into three categories depending on whether or not conscription is maintained in Denmark.

## **Recommendations that do not depend on whether conscription is discontinued or maintained in Denmark:**

Prepare a national security strategy.

Maintain "Armed Forces' Day" (the examination of potential conscripts) - and let it include both sexes.

Recruitment to and retaining personnel in the armed forces should to a greater degree be seen as two sides of the same coin.

Age composition in the armed forces should be adapted to the tasks that are to be performed.

The "Dutch hospital model" should be tried out in Denmark - and be enlarged with functions other than a surgeon's team.

There should be a "Veterans' Day" in Denmark.

The Danish armed forces should be allowed to make an active, visible contribution to youth activities with a military strain such as scouts' camps and sports arrangements.

## **Recommendations if conscription is discontinued in Denmark:**

Do not abolish conscription - simply put it on standby.

Make a greater effort to strengthen recruitment - this should include a bigger organisation and more money.

Establish clear purposes and goals for the armed forces - create balance between ways and means.

Make the decision at a time when competition for manpower is declining.

Create flexible contracts that offer young people the opportunity to try out life in the armed forces before they bind themselves for a longer period of time and also make it possible for the armed forces to evaluate them.

Pay close attention to the relationship between the civilian population and the armed forces.

Establish cost-benefit balances for terms of service and design a motivation structure in accordance with these.

## **Recommendations if conscription is maintained in Denmark:**

Transfer conscription to the Home Guard.

Extend "Armed Forces' Day" to include both sexes.

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# 01 Introduction

Conscription is a subject of debate – with the public, academics, and politicians. This became clear during the preparations of the Danish Defence Agreement for 2005-2009, and over the years, conscription has been a subject of interest to both politicians and the press.

<sup>1</sup> Views in the political world range from the Social Democrats' wish to discontinue conscription to the Danish People's Party's wish that it should be expanded. <sup>2</sup>

In a debate characterised by such strong views, it would probably come as a surprise to most people in Denmark to learn that we know very little about what happens when a country discontinues conscription. No systematic collection and comparison of experience from countries that have abolished or suspended conscription has as yet been carried out in Denmark. Furthermore, isolated statistical information is often used to support various arguments without reference to a broader context. There is therefore good reason to look more closely at the experience from other countries.

But what can we in Denmark actually learn from countries that have discontinued conscription?

Over and above purely practical experience – such as how to demobilise conscripts and build up professional forces in a balanced manner at the same time, and how to avoid a drastic decline in combat readiness and problems on the labour market – there have been political considerations in all of the countries that have discontinued conscription about what should and could be done with the national armed forces and about the social significance of conscription. And, unlike the countries that have maintained conscription, it is possible to learn from their experience – with regard to the direct and derived consequences of discontinuing conscription and the ability to make authoritative statements about the expected and unexpected effects of this.

This report shows what the discontinuation of military conscription has meant for France, the Netherlands, Latvia, and Slovakia in four selected areas that are discussed in greater detail below.

The four assumptions examined in the report are as follows:

1. For the armed forces, conscription constitutes the most economical and efficient recruitment base to the professional forces. This means that conscription is cheaper than purely professional armed forces.
2. Conscription is necessary for the armed forces to be able to perform their tasks in connection with national defence and to commit troops to international operations.

3. Conscription is necessary in order to create horizontal legitimacy in the state – both by making the armed forces transparent and by integrating various groups and classes of the population.
4. Conscription maintains the public's view of duty to society and develops conscripts' sense of responsibility.

With the point of departure in these four assumptions, the report contains an investigation of the considerations, background, and objectives the decision to discontinue conscription were based on and the extent to which the objectives were attained. The report focuses on the expected and unexpected effects that arose in the process – and on which measures were taken in the countries in question to ensure that the objectives were attained. The purpose of investigating the experience gained in the four countries is therefore to put Danish conscription into perspective.

The structure of the report is as follows: the introduction and presentation of conscription in general, and the specific conditions connected with conscription in Denmark, are followed by the section on method. There is then a review of the context conscription was part of in the four countries in order to create a basis for assessing the consequences of its discontinuation. Next follows a review of the considerations and background for the decision in the countries. Then there are three sections on the decision itself, its implementation, and an evaluation of the effect of discontinuation, and finally the conclusion of the report and the perspectives for Danish conscription.

### **What is conscription?**

Conscription existed in various forms in many societies in antiquity and is familiar from ancient Athens, for instance, where civil rights depended on the ability and will to serve as an oarsman or soldier until a very advanced age.<sup>3</sup>

The introduction of modern conscription is normally ascribed to France where, in 1772, Jean Jacques Rousseau wrote that national defence could only be ensured in a state where "it was the duty of all citizens to serve as soldiers".<sup>4</sup> In 1789 The French National Assembly declared that "every citizen must be a soldier and every soldier must be a citizen or we will never have a constitution". Article 12 of the French Constitution from the same year states that "Security for people's and citizens' rights demands public military forces" and article 13: "Common contributions are essential to maintain public forces".<sup>5</sup> The point of departure for conscription therefore was that it constituted a symbiosis between state and citizen in which the citizen placed himself at the disposal of the state's military apparatus in return for the state guaranteeing security and democracy for the citizen.

Conscription as a citizen's duty to contribute to the protection of his country or city state, and – *in extremis* – to die for it, has therefore historically existed hand in hand with other forms of recruitment – in the form of mercenaries, for instance.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, conscription in its modern form within the national state also replaced (transformed, some would say) the compulsory levying of troops for warfare in earlier times.

The central functions of conscription – the citizen's duty to society and the privileges implied by the fulfilment of this duty and society's duty to its citizens – are appropriately summarised by Samuel E. Finer, in citing the old Swedish maxim:

One man, one rifle, one vote!<sup>7</sup>

Down through the ages, however, conscription has been used for many other purposes than to mobilise military forces for the defence of the state – to mix groups of the population, for instance, and thereby create a common national identity – and there has been a general tendency towards a change in conscription in NATO and OECD countries. Since 1995, 11 out of 32 countries have discontinued or suspended conscription – of which eight have done so since 2002.<sup>8</sup>

### **Conscription in Denmark**

The Danish Constitution states that:

Every man capable of bearing arms shall be obliged with his person to contribute to the defence of the fatherland in accordance with the detailed provisions prescribed by law.<sup>9</sup>

These more detailed provisions are laid down in the Danish National Service Act, which states that "every Danish man shall be subject to conscription", and that conscription comprises "service in the armed forces, service in the civil emergency preparedness forces, relief work in developing countries, or civilian work in accordance with the special legislation on this" (conscientious objectors).<sup>10</sup> The Danish conscription model has been changed on an ongoing basis in order to adapt to changes in the international system and developments in the pattern of threat in the direction of asymmetric and transnational threats to security. The Bruun Report, which analysed development tendencies in security policy of significance for Danish defence for the Danish Defence Agreement of 1994 has it that:

... the conventional threat against Danish territory has disappeared for the foreseeable future, for which reason there is no longer a need for the national defence set up to counteract it. At the same time, technological developments mean that if a conventional threat should arise against Denmark again in the very long term, it would probably be necessary to organise national defence in a completely different way to that we were familiar with during the Cold War...<sup>11</sup>

And further:

Viewed overall, developments in security policy demand that the Danish armed forces should increase capacity in two central areas:

- Total defence, including the ability to counter acts of terrorism and their effects
- Internationally deployable capacities.<sup>12</sup>

Specifically with regard to conscription:

However, it must be assumed that there will continue to be a need for manpower for the armed forces' contribution to total defence. Consideration could therefore be given to allowing a possible continuation of conscription to the national defence forces to be central to this and also to make it possible to recruit professional soldiers from the ranks of conscripts.<sup>13</sup>

The evaluations and conclusions in the Bruun Report were later used as a framework for the Danish Defence Agreement of 2004, which concludes on page three that conscription in Denmark should be adapted to national defence.<sup>14</sup> The changes led to a general reduction in the duration of conscription to four months, which was to be evaluated at the end of 2006.<sup>15</sup>

This evaluation, which was carried out by the Chief of Defence Denmark in the first quarter of 2007, states on page three that:

Whereas the former training of conscripts was addressed to the mobilisation-based war strength, the present training of conscripts aims at a focused, relevant total defence content that provides the armed forces with a flexible,

well-trained capacity to incorporate into the framework of total defence. Over and above this, conscript training must be a motivating course of training that addresses the recruitment of personnel for continued training in the operative structure and for subsequent training in connection with international missions.<sup>16</sup>

Where recruitment is concerned, the evaluation report states that:

... there has been success in recruiting more than the 20% outlined that was set up as a goal to cover the structural need. It should be remarked, however, that a large number of conscripts only make up their minds during basic training.<sup>17</sup>

And that:

... in the long term, the right number of people with the right qualifications could be recruited from among conscripts, but it is not possible to cover the need for a number of technical specialists solely among conscripts. This is exacerbated by the fact that it is no longer possible to call up conscripts on the basis of their civil training/competencies...

In other words, the armed forces no longer train conscripts to a level at which they could be used directly in the national defence forces or undergo a mission-specific course of training and be sent out in connection with international operations. Instead they undergo a course of training that aims at getting conscripts to support total defence and creates the basis for recruitment to professional appointments in the armed forces.

In practice, the Danish Defence Recruitment Board<sup>18</sup> calls up all 18-year-old Danish men to "Armed Forces' Day". This takes the form of providing information on education and job opportunities in the armed forces and the Emergency Management Agency. Potential conscripts must present themselves to a draft board which, on the basis of a number of tests and a medical evaluation, sorts participants in accordance with their suitability to do military service. Women also receive an invitation to take part in "Armed Forces' Day" but, unlike the men who are obliged to take part, their participation is voluntary.

Those deemed suitable draw a number while attending the draft. The height of this number determines whether the person in question is conscripted, as the politically established number of conscripts minus the number of volunteers is decisive for where the limit to the number exempting the person from military service will be placed. A low number means that it is highly probable that the person in question will be called up, while a high number means it is less probable. After a person has drawn a number, it is possible for him to volunteer for military service. Those who do so have several advantages in connection with deciding where and when they will be called up. Since 2005, between 61 and 77 percent of those liable for military service have taken advantage of this scheme. It must be assumed that some of these "volunteers" choose to volunteer first and foremost to gain the accompanying advantages, and therefore they are often referred to as "technical volunteers", so the real share of volunteers must be assumed to be lower than shown in figure 1.

Compulsory military service thus includes only men, whereas women can sign contracts to serve what is known as "voluntary military service". Figure 1 shows from left to right the number of young people from a particular year (both men and women) first, then the number of people who have attended the draft, then the number of those suitable for conscription, followed by the number of "volunteers" who have agreed to be conscripted, and then the number of people called up. Column 7 shows the percentage of those called up in relation to the entire number of people from a particular year (both men and women), and finally, columns eight and nine



show the number of women under contract and the number of conscientious objectors respectively.

**Figure 1**

Conscription in Denmark: number of young people from a particular year and their involvement in the draft and compulsory military service (own design).

Year	Number of 18-year-olds in current year. <sup>19</sup>	Number of men at the draft. <sup>20</sup>	Number of suitable people at the draft. <sup>21</sup>	Of whom, volunteers agreeing to be conscripted. <sup>22</sup>	Number called up. <sup>23</sup>	Those called up as a % of people from a particular year.	Women under military service contracts. <sup>24</sup>	Conscientious objectors.
2005	59,419	28,954	15,060	3,877	6,298	10.6	209	537
2006	60,082	31,933	15,404	4,375	5,673	9.3	219	349
2007	62,838	33,120	17,933	5,553	6,125	9.7	452	263
2008	65,339	17,127 <sup>25</sup>	8,207 <sup>26</sup>	unknown	approx. 6,300	9.6	480	unknown

Conscripts are paid a taxable amount of DKK 7,307.14 a month (as of April 2008). After deductions for holiday leave, they receive DKK 7,063.57 a month. To this must be added a tax-free amount for meals of DKK 168.00 a day (as of April 2008), which amounts to approximately DKK 5,040 a month.<sup>27</sup>

That means that a conscript costs the armed forces DKK 12,347.14 a month in wages and services - and in total, the 2,150 conscript man-years cost more than DKK 318 million a year. In addition, there is the training structure and the cost of its operation - plus training costs proper in the form of such things as books, ammunition and fuel. It has not been possible to obtain an overall figure for the cost of conscription for the national defence forces - and this figure would under any circumstances only provide a partial answer to the social costs of conscription. This is discussed in greater detail in section 1.3.

It is also part of the picture of conscription in Denmark that a large percentage of the professional cadre in the armed forces is involved in training conscripts. It goes without saying that some of these personnel are bound to tasks in Denmark while others are frequently sent out on international operations. One of the more positive side effects of conscription is that many of the officers and non-commissioned officers in the armed forces learn valuable lessons regarding management and how to treat manpower through their engagement in training conscripts. It is therefore difficult - even for professionals - to differentiate between the core service that is the foundation of conscription and the positive and negative side effects it brings about.

The Danish conscription model is therefore an adaptation of a general conscription model that has developed since the French Revolution.

In order to investigate the consequences of discontinuing conscription, we must therefore look more closely at its general characteristics. In our introductory reading in connection with writing this report we encountered a number of assumptions of which the following four themes proved to be recurrent:

### **Conscription, economy and recruitment**

As conscripts have normally been far less well paid than professionals and as they have not received payment for being members of the reserve, they have – on paper at least – constituted an inexpensive and effective replacement for professional forces. Furthermore, mobilisation mechanisms have made it possible to acquire a relatively big reserve force in the event of war.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, in most countries, conscription has constituted the foundation for recruitment to the professional armed forces because the most common path to a professional career for enlisted specialists and non-commissioned officers began with national service. There is therefore an assumption that conscription is an inexpensive way of acquiring military forces and that discontinuing conscription would lead to extra expenditure on wages and recruitment to the professional forces.<sup>29</sup>

The costs of conscription as opposed to professional forces can be calculated in many ways and there are good arguments for looking at conscription from an overall socio-economic perspective. What are the consequences for the economy, for instance, if the state devotes more than 2,000 man-years to conscription while the production of export items or services has to be suspended?<sup>30</sup>

The military organisation is part of the surrounding society also when it comes to basic socio-economic contexts. In this connection, the manpower that is part of the military organisation can naturally not be part of the civilian labour market at the same time. The more this labour market is based on highly-trained and specialised manpower, the greater the influence on society will be when this manpower is withdrawn for military service.

The costs of conscription are also greatly influenced by the way the rest of the armed forces are organised and which tasks conscription is to fulfil in connection with the rest of the armed forces. Henning Sørensen provides an excellent demonstration of the way in which the costs of conscription in respectively Denmark, Norway and Sweden are closely connected with widely differing ambitions regarding what use should be made of it. He specifically concludes that conscription in Denmark was primarily intended to function as a recruitment mechanism for the armed forces' international operations as early as the years up to 2004, whereas conscription in Sweden and Norway was primarily intended to be used for the democratic control of the armed forces and the acquisition of national defence forces. According to Henning Sørensen, this difference implies a completely different ratio between the number of conscripts and the number of professionals – and a higher level of costs for conscription in Denmark.<sup>31</sup>

### **Conscription, international operations and national defence**

New demands arose on the armed forces with the end of the Cold War: the already ongoing Revolution in Military Affairs made new technological demands on the capability of the armed forces and their understanding of combat and thereby on soldiers' competencies and their joint training<sup>32</sup>. The need for training at all levels in the

armed forces was thereby on the increase at the same time as priorities switched from national defence to international operations. This made it relevant to look more closely at the best and least expensive ways of acquiring the type of armed forces prescribed by the new situation in connection with security policy. An Advanced Research Workshop, held by NATO in 2003 in Bratislava, showed the difficulties of measuring the efficiency of conscription.<sup>33</sup> For example, Kenneth S. Brower carried out a comparative analysis of the military capabilities of Israel, Syria and the USA in which he demonstrated the relative advantages of conscript-based armed forces as opposed to professional forces.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, Bertel Heurlin's analysis in his contribution, "Revolution in Danish Military Affairs", showed that the Danish armed forces' preparedness for readjustment was hampered by the equipment inherited and by a personnel situation that was bound up with Cold War scenarios that focused on national defence and that change was necessary in connection with organisation and equipment.<sup>35</sup>

As Bertel Heurlin showed, the increasing number of Danish forces engaged in international operations after the end of the Cold War brought about a new view of the significance of the quality of the armed forces' equipment and weaponry. It became clear that the equipment that had been good enough for national defence under domestic skies was inadequate for the new role the armed forces were suddenly required to play in demanding environments far away from Denmark. The new tasks thus brought about a need for more training, extensive investments in equipment, and more soldiers sent on international operations.<sup>36</sup> In Denmark, it was decided in 2003 to reduce the duration of conscription and the number of people called up.<sup>37</sup> As a result, conscription was maintained as a recruitment base, but in principle lost part of its ability to mobilise a manpower-intensive national defence. This released resources for such things as investments in equipment for the professional cadre who would perform the international tasks.

The assumption is thus that recruitment to the armed forces can best be covered by maintaining conscription as a recruitment base and that a shorter conscription period would make it possible to achieve savings that could finance the additional costs of the new tasks. However, the consequences are that conscripts will no longer be trained up to a level where they can be used in combat. Neither will it be (and has never been) possible to send them out on international operations. But as opposed to previously, when the duration of conscription and the goals of training were intended to send home soldiers trained for combat; in 2008 they receive such an abridged version of basic military training that they are no longer capable of going straight from life as conscripts to a goal-oriented, mission-oriented course of training. On the contrary, they must first complete their basic military training, which requires about six to eight months of additional training.

### **Conscription, transparency and social cohesion**

When the talk around the kitchen table turns to conscription, there are almost always experts present in the form of former conscripts – which bears witness to the culture-bearing and identity-creating elements of conscription.

Consequently, conscription has had the effect of bringing young men from society as a whole together in a military-based working partnership. Due to the time limit on conscription the force of conscripts is constantly being replaced, which has ensured that the armed forces have renewed their youngest personnel with a wide range of personnel from all levels of society on an ongoing basis.

This has led to the general assumption that conscription ensures that the composition of the armed forces reflects that of the society around it. As a derived consequence of this, it also leads to the assumption that conscription ensures that the armed forces are transparent with regard to the public. This makes it possible to ensure that they do not become alienated from the public and provides a guarantee that the armed forces are under democratic control.<sup>38</sup> There are also researchers, however, who believe there is a risk that this sporadic recruitment could rather split both society and the armed forces. This risk arises because the duty to become engaged in the state's military machinery is extremely unequally distributed. The problem is exacerbated when only a small part of the population does military service, when the sorting mechanisms for conscription function on the basis of gender, intelligence, physical capacity and drawing lots, and when calculating young people may be lucky enough to avoid conscription.<sup>39</sup>

Furthermore, conscription has helped (in a purpose-oriented manner in some countries) to create cohesion within the state. In his article "Værnepligt og Nationalstat" (Conscription and the Nation State), Uffe Østergaard describes how conscription has been used purposefully in Italy to create cohesion in a fragmented society.<sup>40</sup> By mixing groups of the population from various parts of the country and exposing them to external pressure in the form of missing their homes, families and jobs and subjecting them to military discipline, side benefits have arisen in the form of an emerging spirit of solidarity across traditional local anchoring. This spirit of solidarity – thrust upon them by the state – thereby served the purposes of the state by constituting a central element in military identity – based on a joint effort to defend the country.<sup>41</sup> An example of this is the tradition in intelligence and reconnaissance units of allowing recruits to go under the name of their towns or villages. When, for practical reasons, a recruit is called "Videbæk", he thereby also becomes a symbolic representative of his town – and together the military unit represents Denmark as a whole.

In addition, garrisoning troops played a role as soldiers were often obliged to do their military service at such a distance from their homes that they were unable to return to them during their periods of leave and therefore ended up by becoming integrated into the local communities where the garrisons were located. Not a few of the family trees from modern times thus have their roots in a romance between a conscript and a local woman in a garrison town, and conscription has thereby contributed to the creation of physical integration between groups of the population. Conscription is thereby regarded – along with state churches and state schools – as having been an important element in what is called the construction of the national community, namely the idea of the nation as a special community comprising people of the same nationality.<sup>42</sup>

Conscription thereby also includes a domestic policy dimension – some would claim that this dimension is still a function (that it continues to contribute to the self-knowledge of the Danish nation and the Danish people). Others may feel that the domestic policy dimension is a remnant from the time the state had or could have the power of life and death over their citizens. These issues are basically political because they concern values. They concern how the nation (or the people) and the state in the country of Denmark have stood and must stand in relation to each other. Who owes who what and how much? It also concerns how Danish citizens define citizenship – and how politicians define it.<sup>43</sup> There are naturally differences between the various countries and some countries have more stable models for citizenship, state and national conditions and conscription than others. But these models are not constant: they

vary with the external needs of the state to secure its existence and interests, and with the internal view of what the state should be to its citizens and vice versa.

The degree to which all this is applicable to Denmark has been much discussed. In 1996, Pertti Joenniemi from the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) published a comprehensive study of the changes in conscription in Europe and concluded, among other things, that conscription could only be said to contribute to a special form of Danishness to a minor extent because it is seen as something forced on citizens by the state while the Home Guard, for instance, connects the nation with the state to a far greater extent because this is a question of a voluntary arrangement.<sup>44</sup> While the real connection between voluntariness and Danishness can certainly be discussed, it is worth noting that the majority of conscripts – as shown in figure 1 – are also volunteers, even though some of them must be designated technical volunteers.

However, the assumption still exists that, due to the effects above, conscription helps to create transparency and cohesion in society or, in other words: conscription promotes the state's horizontal legitimacy, and without conscription social cohesion and democratic control of the military would be weakened and the armed forces would become alienated from the population.

### **Conscription, justice and rights**

Conscription was originally reserved for the male part of the population suitable for combat. This in itself brought about an imbalance as both women and men who were not suitable for combat could avoid the burden constituted by conscription. The system could therefore best be defended in states and at times when the defence of the state's interests required the mobilisation of the state's entire resources. But at other times, when the state's existence or vital interests were not threatened, or where large numbers of young people from a particular year and economic considerations meant that the state had no need to mobilise the entire male population suitable for combat, the need for compulsory military service was more debatable. A general obligation was therefore introduced in some states that included the entire population, while other states – as is the case in Denmark – introduced a kind of lottery in which the male part of the population suitable for combat were selected at random. Whether or not compulsory military service was fair has been a major subject of discussion in many countries. In Denmark, the concept "ordinary conscription" is therefore not very precise. When only about one-tenth of young people from a particular year actually do national service, "extraordinary conscription" would actually be more appropriate<sup>45</sup>. Part of the argumentation for maintaining conscription, however, is also connected with the classic assumption that duties and rights should go hand in hand.<sup>46</sup> Some people therefore believe that the absence of traditional conscription could lead to a general collapse in the understanding of civic duty.<sup>47</sup> In everyday language, people can nod in recognition of arguments regarding the educative role of conscription with regard to "difficult" or pampered youngsters – arguments often accompanied by statements such as: "Learning some discipline will do them good!" or: "It is good for young people to learn to take responsibility". It is less clear, on the other hand, why this educative function should be handled by the armed forces rather than by schools and day-care institutions where the youngsters might learn to take responsibility as auxiliary teachers or assistant educators.

The following four assumptions, derived from the issues discussed above, are examined in this report:

1. For the armed forces, conscription constitutes the most economical and efficient recruitment base to the professional forces. This means that conscription is cheaper than purely professional armed forces.
2. Conscription is necessary for the armed forces to be able to perform their tasks in connection with national defence and to commit troops to international operations.
3. Conscription is necessary in order to create horizontal legitimacy in the state – both by making the armed forces transparent and by integrating various groups and classes of the population.
4. Conscription maintains the public's view of duty to society and develops conscripts' sense of responsibility.

The report investigates whether, in the specific cases of countries that have had a long-standing tradition for conscription, but have discontinued it, there are actually examples of the assumptions regarding conscription outlined above. Based on the conclusions of the study, opportunities and problem areas connected with reorganising or discontinuing conscription in Denmark are pointed out in the report.

But conscription involves more than just recruitment and money – even though they are both technical and administrative subjects that the state must prioritise. On the contrary, as mentioned above, the Danish debate hitherto has concerned questions of principle. How much do we owe our country? Can a nation exist without the individual contributing to the broader community in this extreme manner?<sup>48</sup> There are no clear technical answers to questions of this type. They are to a great extent political by nature and must be answered by politicians, but there are technical views to add to the debate on the relationship, or the balance, between deference to the national (administrative, military-technical) and political (value-based) issues.

However, it is important not to underestimate the importance of the political issues because, in the final analysis, they constitute the framework for how conscription can be reformed.

As conscription is a central aspect of a special political narrative on national and military identity, it is difficult to reform and rethink conscription and the role it plays.<sup>49</sup>

Anna Leander and Pertti Joenniemi hereby point out that the basic understanding of conscription in a political context defines whether conscription can be reformed in a given country to any great degree or whether, on the contrary, it will either remain static or disappear completely. Denmark and Sweden are examples of the first, Latvia and France of the second.<sup>50</sup>

## 02 Method

An attempt is made in the report to illustrate the experience gained in the four countries in connection with discontinuing conscription in selected areas. These areas can be described in summary as follows:

1. Conscription, economy and recruitment.
2. Conscription, international operations and national defence.
3. Conscription, transparency and social cohesion.
4. Conscription, justice and rights.

In order to create the best conditions for evaluating the consequences of discontinuing conscription, we decided to investigate two countries that have recently discontinued conscription, and two countries that have had more experience of the consequences of changing to purely professional armed forces. This means that two of the countries are relatively close to the process of change in terms of time and this made it possible to interview personnel who had experience of planning, implementing and following up the reform. On the other hand, the two other countries have had the opportunity to evaluate the more long-term consequences of the change – and to carry out mitigating measures in those cases where professionalization led to unexpected difficulties, or where expected difficulties proved more problematic than anticipated. There is therefore sharper focus on the short-term consequences in two of the countries and on the long-term consequences in the other two.

The two countries where conscription was discontinued most recently are Latvia (where the decision was made in 2005, with the last conscripts being demobilised in 2007) and Slovakia (where the decision was made in 2002, with the last conscripts being demobilised at the end of 2005). There are similarities between these countries and Denmark in two central areas: they are both members of NATO, and there were prolonged discussions as to how reorganise their armed forces from focusing on national defence to the capability to enter forcefully into international operations in the most appropriate and economical manner. These countries also resemble Denmark because of their sizes and populations. However, they are also both former East bloc countries<sup>27</sup> and have therefore had experience in the form of a different organisational, educational and equipment-related inheritance than Denmark. The need to reform the military system was therefore pressing and extensive in both countries and the process of change must therefore be expected to have been more complex than for countries that exclusively wish to change their armed forces from conscript-based to professional.

The two countries with longer experience of discontinuing conscription are France (where the decision was made in 1996 and the last conscripts demobilised at the end of 2001) and the Netherlands (where the decision was made in 1993 and the last conscripts demobilised at the end of 1996). Both countries are also members of NATO, and both were extremely preoccupied with transforming their military capacities so they could generate more forces for international operations. Both countries are also "old" NATO members and have therefore been included in the alliance's strategies and have thereby been able to adapt their military capabilities to fulfil their obligations within the alliance on an ongoing basis. The need for reform was therefore less extensive – but not necessarily less pressing – than was the case with Latvia and Slovakia.

The study was carried out with the point of departure in qualitative interviews with officers and civil servants who were pointed out as "experts" by Ministry of Defence staff or the General Staff in the respective countries. Before these interviews were held, interview guides (see appendix 1 below) were sent to the relevant people and authorities selected so that disputed points could be looked into and clarified in advance to the greatest possible extent. All of the interviews were carried out on a non-attribution basis to promote openness and honesty.<sup>52</sup> They were also held in the respondents' native countries and as close as possible to their own surroundings to make it possible for them to consult reference works, databases, colleagues and find additional documentation if points of dispute arose.

Our investigations in Latvia and Slovakia were carried out respectively in Riga from 25 to 26 April 2008 and in Bratislava from 28 to 29 April 2008. In both cases, we had the opportunity to meet officers of the rank of colonel from the respective countries' Ministry of Defence and General Staff, the people who had been the project managers responsible for planning, organising, performing and controlling the reform programmes and other relevant people were called in from recruitment departments, finance administration departments, and personnel administration. We were also given documentation and data in the form of PowerPoint presentations and, in Bratislava, also hard copies of relevant Acts.

It could justifiably be asked why we did not choose to investigate countries with a tradition of conscription that is more similar to the Danish system. But there are quite simply no other countries where a decision was made to combine extremely brief conscript training with the focus on training conscripts to either join a total defence force or be recruited to the professional part of the armed forces. In other words, the Danish model is unique.

But our considerations regarding the choice of countries to investigate did include the stipulation that the countries selected should have organised their conscription systems in a way that resembled the Danish system as much as possible. France differs most in this connection as there was compulsory national service there for everybody, not only men suitable for combat. Both France and the Netherlands are former colonial powers with a tradition of maintaining military contingents outside their national borders, but as conscripts have had very limited opportunity to serve in these contingents, and only in accordance with their own wishes, this circumstance was considered as irrelevant to the study.<sup>53</sup>



Our investigations in France and the Netherlands were carried out in Paris and The Hague from respectively 20-21 May 2008 and 10-11 June 2008. At the meeting in Paris we had the opportunity to meet a colonel from personnel administration who was involved in the organisation of and following up on the French reform programme, as well as a representative from the recruitment authorities and a researcher from the defence policy think-tank "Centre d'études en sciences sociale de la défense". We also received exhaustive documentation from the French Ministry of Defence in connection with the specific questions in our interview guide, and several publications on the French deliberations on and experience with the discontinuation of conscription. In the Netherlands, we were able to interview a civil servant from the Dutch Ministry of Defence who was involved in the practical organisation of the reform programme and the subsequent follow-up. As it is quite some time since conscription was discontinued in the Netherlands, convening a panel of experts proved to be a challenge, but the person with the relevant resources (who works for the Dutch Ministry of Defence personnel staff at present) was extremely well-informed and well prepared.

It could be argued that the countries selected cannot be compared with Denmark on the face of things and that the results of the study cannot therefore be transferred to Danish conditions. While it is correct that the countries differ from Denmark in many ways, conscription is a general model with national variations, as mentioned in the last chapter, and it is also striking that there have been the same deliberations in all of them. Furthermore, the other Nordic countries have decided to maintain conscription for the present, so the countries Denmark usually compares itself with have no experience whatsoever of discontinuing conscription. In addition, a comparison of the Nordic countries would be meaningless because, as shown by Henning Sørensen, they have different aims for conscription.<sup>54</sup>

The report focuses on military conscription. Several countries have had conscription to other public institutions such as the police force, border guards, or gendarmerie, just as there is conscription to the Emergency Management Agency in Denmark. The report does not touch upon these areas – even though it should be noted that conscription in these areas did lapse in all cases with the discontinuation of military conscription. All figures, evaluations, and effects mentioned in the report have therefore been purged of data regarding conscription outside of the armed forces.

It must be remarked that conscription to the Emergency Management Agency constitutes a central element in the civil emergency preparedness forces. Most recently, the Working Party on the Dimensioning of Danish Emergency Preparedness<sup>55</sup> stated in its report that conscription is a central precondition for national civil preparedness<sup>56</sup>.

During our interviews, we received a number of financial statements in which currency was given either in Euro, Slovak Koruna or Latvian Lats.<sup>57</sup> All of these currency units were converted to Danish Kroner in the report in accordance with the exchange rates current on 17 September 2008. This in itself leads to considerable uncertainty because the figures stated represent many years of currency fluctuation, but it is important to note that economic developments in the four countries have differed widely.

# 03 Conscription in context

## **The duration of conscription**

Of the four countries selected, only France had a form of compulsory military service that included both men and women. The number of women in the armed forces, however, was limited, and in practice most women served in other branches of the compulsory system, "Service Nationale". In Slovakia and the Netherlands, women were not allowed to do national service, and in Latvia, where it was possible for women to do national service in accordance with their wishes, it was an extremely rare occurrence – due, among other things, to rigorous physical requirements.

All of the countries had a selection system or a draft where potential conscripts underwent a medical examination and a psychological test. Conscription age in Latvia and Slovakia began during the year young men turned 19. In France and the Netherlands it was during the year they turned 18 at the earliest. There were systems in all of the countries to defer conscription due to participation in courses of education, family matters, or for other reasons. Additionally, there were systems in all four countries to handle people who did not wish to do military service on the grounds of conscience, and there were sanctions in all of the countries for people who failed to turn up at a draft board that included various types of imprisonment.

The extent of conscription was reduced after the end of the Cold War in all four countries. This was done by reducing the duration of conscription and, in some cases, by reducing the number of people called up.

Military service lasted for 12 months in France up to 1992 and was changed to ten months in 1992. A committee set up by the French president issued a white paper in 1994 in which a further reduction of conscription to four months was debated. This proposal was rejected later on the grounds that it would not be possible to achieve an adequate level of military training in such a short space of time.

The statutory duration of conscription in the Netherlands was 24 months, but in reality the duration was briefer. For privates and sergeants, its actual duration was 14 months, while it was respectively 16 and 17 months for officers, depending on which function they performed. Conscripts were transferred to the reserve for the remaining months. During the transitional period from conscription to professionalism, there were a number of adjustments to the duration of conscription, including a reduction from 14 to 12 or 9 months (depending on function) and pay raises to the same level as that for professionals. The number of people called up was reduced during the

same period – and those who were called up could refuse to do military service freely and without consequences.

Up to 1997, the duration of conscription in Latvia was six months for young men with a university education and 18 months for the majority of those without such an education. This was changed after 1997 so that everybody had to serve twelve months irrespective of their level of education. A reduction of conscription to three months was discussed in parliament, but the proposal was rejected because the basic costs of conscription would remain the same – and because it was felt that three months' conscription would not produce serviceable soldiers.

The duration of conscription in Slovakia gave considerable deference to providers and, up to 2000, they were only obliged to do five months' military service. After 2000, this was further reduced to three months. Military service for those who were not providers was gradually reduced from 24 months in 1989 to 18 months during the period from March 1990 to June 1993, to twelve months from June 1993 to December 2000, nine months from January 2001 to December 2003, and to six months from January 2004 until conscription was finally discontinued in 2006.

### **Registration and selection**

There was national registration, call-up, and mustering of conscripts in all four countries. Mustering was carried out at recruitment centres where physical, psychological, and intelligence tests were performed, after which the final decision was made regarding who was suitable for military service and who had to be rejected.

There were draft boards in France for all young people from a particular year with approximately 50% of those found suitable being accepted for compulsory military service after an evaluation to determine where they could most suitably be placed and in accordance with their own wishes. During their period of service, conscripts could be selected and trained to act as non-commissioned officers and they could be appointed sergeants or second lieutenants, but it was not possible to continue a military career in connection with doing military service. Those who wished to embark on a career in the armed forces had to sign a separate contract after completing their term of service or apply for enrolment at an officers' academy if they wanted to pursue an officer's career.

In the Netherlands, those with a higher education were obliged to attend a draft at special centres attached to officers' schools and this made it possible to recruit suitable conscripts for reserve officer training directly from a draft. The remainder of the young people from a particular year went to an ordinary draft board. After the draft board, the most suitable were selected for military service – and the rest were not selected or actually rejected. This led to the paradox that conscripts were often overqualified in relation to the functions they would be required to perform. After the end of the Cold War, the number of conscripts in the Netherlands was reduced to include about 60% of the suitable young people from a particular year.

The number of conscripts in Latvia fell dramatically at the beginning of the new millennium due to the fact that, up to 2003 when this arrangement lapsed, about half of them were used to perform functions as policemen, border guards, bodyguards and customs inspectors, etc., under the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice respectively.

In Slovakia, there was conscription to the armed forces, service under the Ministry of Transport (railway troops), and the Ministry of the Interior (border guards) until 1995. After 1995, when these

arrangements lapsed, only about one-third of the male population from a particular year was recruited to the armed forces. In both of these countries it was possible for conscripts to be appointed corporals or sergeants during the term of their service, but there were no conscripted officers. If conscripts wished to be enrolled in the officers' academy in continuation of their training, they had to take a special entrance examination and after examination a training course that included full basic military training. There were therefore very few officers who had been through a classic course of training as conscripts.

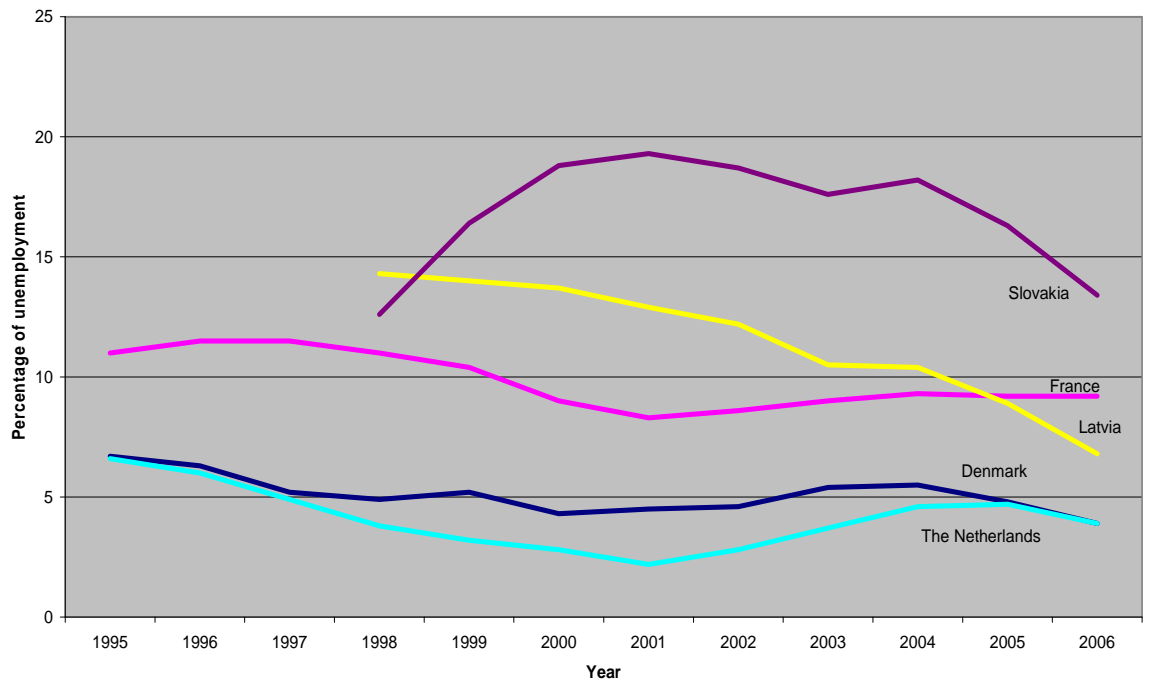
In addition to the systems for deferring conscription, there were limits to the latest age at which men could be conscripted in all four countries. The limit in France was 29 years (unless the reason for the deferment was failure to appear before the draft board or a prison sentence – in which case it was 34 years). It was possible to apply for deferment for up to five years in the Netherlands, due to participation in a course of education, for instance. It was then possible to apply for prolonged deferment for a year at a time, but this required documentation for continued progress in the course of education. In practice, people were not called up if they had been granted deferment until they were 25. In Latvia and Slovakia, military service had to be completed before people reached the age of 30, but it was extremely easy to be granted exemption on medical, familial, or other grounds in both countries.

### General social developments

The decision to discontinue conscription in the Netherlands, Latvia and Slovakia was made at a time when these countries were experiencing high growth rates and increasing employment rates, at the same time as low birth rates began to have an impact. In France, however, the birth rate was fairly stable while employment was declining slightly.

**Figure 2**

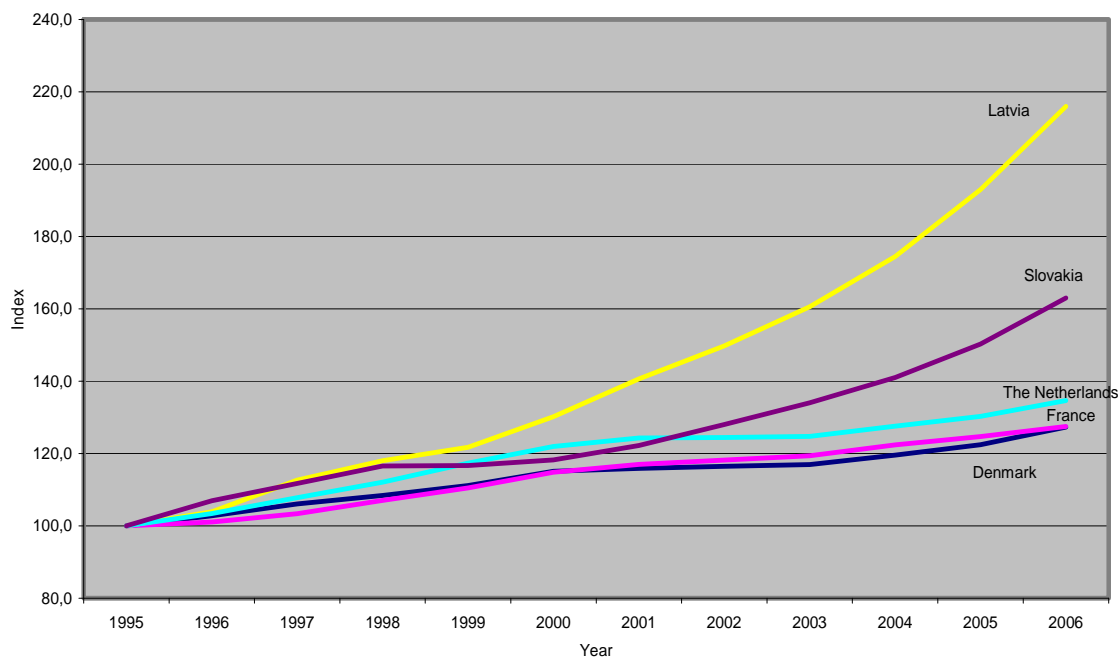
Unemployment percentages for the case countries and Denmark, 1995-2006



Source: Eurostat

**Figure 3**

Development in GDP in fixed prices for the case countries and Denmark, 1995-2006 (Index 1995=100)



*Source: Eurostat*

### **Conscripts and international operations**

The way in which it was decided to use conscription in the four countries led to major limitations on the ability to perform international operations. In Latvia, Slovakia and France there was no statutory authority whatsoever to commit conscripts to international operations. Conscripts in France, however, could choose to take part in national postings outside the French borders. As there was also a tradition for mixing conscripts with professionals in military units in both France and Slovakia, it was extremely difficult to send out military units collectively. Instead, it was necessary to piece together troops by using professionals from several units or send individuals and very small contingents of professionals.

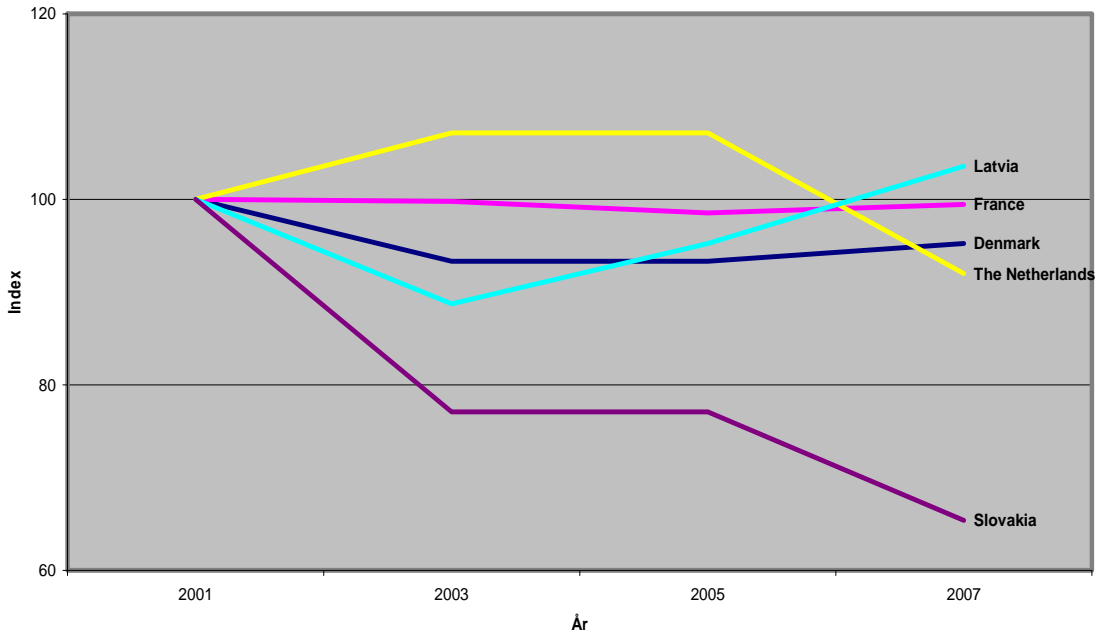
On the other hand, in the Netherlands there was both statutory authority for and a long-standing tradition of sending volunteer conscripts to international operations. However, the Dutch conscripts could at all times refuse, even when they were in a mission area, after which they could stop serving with immediate effect and return to the Netherlands to complete their military service. This led to problems in the Balkans where personnel levels in periods fell to unacceptable levels.

In the nature of the case, all of the countries had arranged their armed forces in accordance with a comprehensive system of national defence. It was possible in France, for instance, to mobilise a total force of almost three million men to defend the nation, but it was still difficult to muster 15,000 men to take part in the Gulf War in 1991. Few resources were earmarked to maintain reservists ready for combat. The policy in the Netherlands was only to re-enlist former conscripts in the event of acute, threatening situations in connection with security policy, natural catastrophes, or war. It was therefore extremely rare for a former conscript to be re-enlisted. Plans and a structure were

prepared in Latvia to carry out re-enlistment – but they were never used in practice, nor were reservists in general re-enlisted in Slovakia.

**Figure 4**

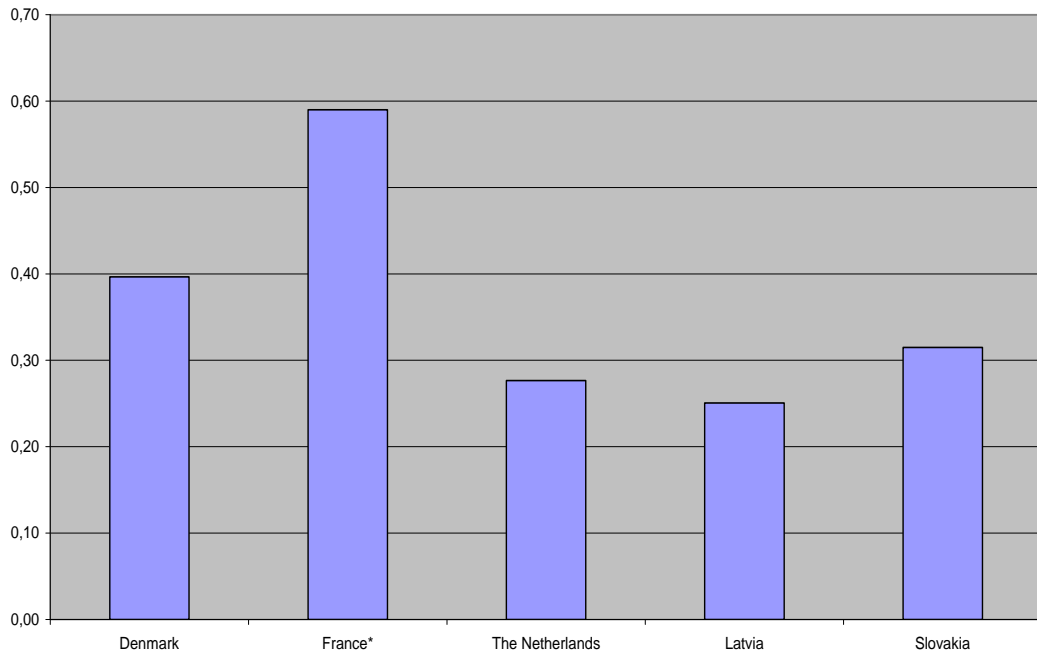
Development in active military personnel in the armed forces in the case countries and Denmark, 2001-2007 (Index 2001=100)



Source: *The Military Balance*

**Figure 5**

Active forces as a percentage of total population 2007



\* The figures for France also include paramilitary forces as they can also be stationed abroad. If they are deducted, the French level of strength falls to 0.43%. Source: *The Military Balance*

# 04 Background

A common point of departure for the four countries in this report is that the change from conscription to professional armed forces coincided with a general wish to carry out a military reform.

The underlying motives for this wish were many and various – but there are four common (and mutually connected) traits for the four countries. First, the ambition in all of them was to strengthen the ability of the military to take part in international operations without appreciably increasing military appropriations. Second, there was general recognition of the fact that technological developments in warfare and the consequent increase of training requirements for the modern soldier could not be fulfilled within the term of traditional conscription. Third, there was a common understanding that the direct military threat of an attack was reduced – and there was therefore more time to respond to an early warning and less need to maintain a large national defence force. Fourth, there was the view that conscription was unfair because it either only put pressure on a small percentage of males from a particular year (Slovakia, Latvia and the Netherlands), or because it had become so easy for the most calculating youngsters to avoid military service that it was really no longer just (France).

Specifically where Latvia and Slovakia were concerned, where the decision to suspend conscription was made in respectively 2003 and 2002, to the end of respectively 2006 and 2010, the need for reform was emphatically underlined by the goal-oriented efforts made in these countries to achieve NATO membership.<sup>58</sup> The Membership Action Plans in the two countries, which were implemented after the NATO summit in Prague in 2002, thus required the countries, among other things, to adapt technologically and organisationally to NATO's standards and to enhance their capability to perform international operations, so they were obliged to implement a process of military reform under any circumstances.

In the Netherlands and France, where conscription was suspended at the end of 1996 and 2001 respectively, there was also a general need for a military reform. In this connection, the people interviewed stated that although their countries were already fully involved in NATO cooperation, the new types of conflict that NATO became engaged in after the end of the Cold War made greater demands on the ability of the military to deploy forces. These new types of conflict – together with the fact that equipment was now being used for purposes other than exercises – increased wear on equipment and brought about the need for completely different equipment. This put pressure on the economy to an extent that made new initiatives necessary.

## France

In France, up to 2001, there was a civic duty, "Service Nationale", which in principle included all citizens. It obliged those suitable for combat to serve in the armed forces while the remainder could perform their civic duty in other areas of society. The point of departure, however, was a need to mobilise forces for the nation's military. For France, the Gulf War in 1991 was an eye-opener as it proved to be the case that although France has almost three million reservists and about 500,000 troops in the standing army, it was only with great difficulty that France mustered a force of about 15,000 to take part in Operation Desert Storm. This was due, among other things, to the fact that conscripts were generally speaking mixed with professionals in the French units after their basic training – and as, according to the French Constitution, conscripts could not be sent to military operations outside France, only a limited force was available.

Later experience in the Balkans also played its part. The tasks there prompted the French people to view soldiers' role as protectors who did good deeds in the world under the authority of international organisations, which led to more support for international operations.

Furthermore, over the years the French people had seen conscription as an element that unified the nation. In step with the general increase of competence in society, a steadily increasing number of young people were taking courses of higher education. This function, however, had been taken over by the education system to a considerable extent. At the same time, there was a growing feeling that it had gradually become so easy for the most calculating youngsters to avoid military service, that there was no longer any justice regarding those who were conscripted. The function of conscription as an element that unified the nation and attached it to the state was thereby weakened. The role formerly played by the armed forces was now to a greater degree handled by various institutes of education.

After the end of the Cold War there was also a certain amount of frustration in France regarding how to finance what was seen as an increasing need to commit troops to international operations at a time when many people had hoped to gain a new peace dividend. Economic motives were therefore also in play – and as conscription on the new security policy agenda was increasingly seen as a financial burden for the state that made no effective contribution to the ability of the military to perform its new tasks, it was an obvious step to channel funds to the part of the military that actually could perform the new tasks.

Viewed overall, there had thus been a change in the views of the French from regarding the military as a combination of a necessary bastion to the east and a patriotic, national-unification project, to a greater priority on the ability to perform international military operations to safeguard the interests of France – also within the framework of international authority. It was the general view that the military's new tasks justified an increase in expenditure.

The new view of the threat and of the role of the military as a unifying social element, combined with the wish to reduce or freeze military expenditure, led to a reduction in the duration of conscription from twelve to ten months during the 1990s, but reducing the duration of conscription failed to release sufficient funds to enable the military to fulfil its objectives. In 1994, a commission set up by President Mitterrand issued a white paper in which a further reduction in the duration of conscription was recommended – to four months this time.<sup>39</sup> During the subsequent debate the conclusion was reached, as mentioned in section 3.1., that it would not be possible to reach a sufficiently high level of training in four months to justify the



maintenance of military service. The white paper thereby had considerable influence on the decision to discontinue conscription.

There was only limited opposition to the suspension of conscription in France. The greatest opposition came from the military itself. The people interviewed consider that the brunt of the opposition came from that section of personnel who were involved in training conscripts and who were afraid of losing their jobs. The discontinuation of conscription coincided with a general recession in France. Furthermore, it was uncertain whether it would really be possible to maintain a suitable level of capability to commit troops to international operations. Finally, there was a general fear of change in the French military.

### **The Netherlands**

Conscription became increasingly unpopular in the Netherlands after the end of the Cold War. Among other things, this was connected with the feeling that conscription was unjust because the system only drew on a small percentage of the young people from each particular year – and a percentage that generally comprised the most sought-after manpower into the bargain. At the draft board, the male part of the population from a particular year was subjected to physical and psychological tests – and the most suitable were conscripted for military service. On the basis of these tests and the level of education of the young people, an administrative body distributed them to the units of the armed forces where it was judged they would be most useful. However, it was possible for the young people themselves to influence the result. Those with a higher education could go to the draft board at the officers' school and could be taken for training as officers of the reserve. This method meant that many young people were placed in functions they were overqualified for – electronics engineers, for instance, who served in tank squadrons immediately after completing their course of education. Thereby, a valuable education became outdated during military service, which was paradoxical since society was undergoing a period of growth and there was a need for highly-skilled manpower. In addition, young people saw military service as a deterioration of their opportunities when, by comparing themselves with their contemporaries, they could see that some could avoid the discipline and limitations of conscription and at the same time be employed at better pay.

Declining birth rates and deteriorating physical fitness in young people meant that decreasing number of young men could be conscripted, and cut-backs in defence budgets prompted the armed forces to call up fewer of them in order to save money. This led increasingly to the feeling that the system was unjust because it discriminated against people who took a course of education and kept themselves in shape.

In addition, the absence of a direct military threat against the Netherlands' sovereignty after the Cold War led to more political pressure for a reduction in the defence budget. For the Dutch armed forces, the reduction in the security threat meant that the military had to redefine its role in order to justify its size and existence. The solution was to participate more actively in international operations at the same time as the armed forces would guarantee national defence and take action if natural catastrophes should hit the Netherlands.

The sharper focus on the ability to commit troops to international operations led to new deliberations on the organisation of the military. Up to 1992, the Netherlands had only a limited number of permanent specialists at manual and middle-management level and in the officers' corps. Most conscripts thus served in conscripted units which were often commanded at divisional and company level by conscripted non-commissioned officers and officers. At battalion level and above, professional soldiers and conscripts were mixed, which meant that if

troops were sent on international operations, the conscripts would either have to be sent with the unit in question or replaced by professionals. This made it impossible to deploy homogeneous units that had built up an *esprit de corps* through joint training and a common understanding of the procedures in the unit and its unique individual strengths and weaknesses.<sup>60</sup>

However, it was possible for volunteer conscripts in the Netherlands to be sent out on peace-keeping or peace-making missions abroad. Dutch conscripts were deployed in Lebanon, the Dutch Antilles, and Surinam, for instance. While conscription was in force, the Dutch armed forces never had any difficulty in recruiting conscripts for international operations.

The voluntary system, however, had the great disadvantage that conscripts could break off their engagement while posted abroad at any time, after which they were sent back to the Netherlands. In some cases, this meant that the fighting ability of units in the mission areas fell to an unacceptably low level, which was a stumbling block particularly in the deployments in the Balkans, Lebanon, and Cambodia. This was one of the reasons why the professional soldiers in the armed forces supported professionalization.

There were arguments in military circles both for and against professionalization. Soldiers who had previously been posted abroad regarded the eight months' basic training conscripts received as inadequate if they were to take part in international operations and were, on the basis of this, keen advocates of professionalising the armed forces. On the other hand, there were permanent personnel in the armed forces that had never been posted abroad or, for that matter, had ever served anywhere but at the base they had been attached to since the commencement of their employment. For this group, professionalising the armed forces represented a threat to their familiar working lives as it could result in being posted abroad, among other things.

Overall, less young men from a particular year, less suitable applicants from each year, less conscripts recruited, briefer terms of conscription, less money for the armed forces, and new assignments (INTOPS), that required longer training, meant that the Dutch parliament set up a commission in 1991 to investigate whether conscription should be maintained.<sup>61</sup> The commission concluded that conscription should be maintained, with the principal argument being that this ensured the connection between the armed forces and the civil sector. Parliament took note of this conclusion and a plan was prepared to enable the armed forces to maintain contact with society. The plan was never implemented, however, as parliament did not regard it as very probable that professionalising the armed forces would lead to their isolation or alienation from their surroundings. This conclusion appears to be correct.

## **Latvia**

For Latvia, gaining NATO membership was a cornerstone of the country's security policy strategy after achieving independence in 1991 and after the end of the Cold War. This goal made a general rearrangement of the armed forces necessary and meant sharpening the focus on organisation, procedures and acquiring modern equipment so that they could contribute to NATO cooperation. It also made it necessary to adjust the focus from national defence to international operations and, according to the Latvian Constitution conscripts could not be used in this connection.

The debate on discontinuing conscription began in October and November 2002 with the new government's "Membership Action Plan",

the first official document to mention the need to transform the armed forces. At the request of the Minister of Defence, the Ministry of Defence authored the part of the document which concerned professionalising the armed forces. The proposal received the support of the Prime Minister and the military from the beginning.

The proposal was also well received by the public as the general attitude to conscription was that the system was unjust because, in spite of its compulsory nature, very few men from a particular year were actually called up. In 2006, for example, 7,200 men were registered as potential conscripts, but only 4,700 of them were found suitable and only 1,070 were actually conscripted. This was due, among other things, to the fact that it was relatively easy to defer military service or avoid it entirely as the law governing conscription opened up a number of legitimate reasons for dispensation. It was particularly men from major cities who applied for deferment.

## **Slovakia**

After achieving independence and after the division of Czechoslovakia into the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic in 1993, the Slovak armed forces were subject to almost constant reform programmes up to 2001. However, most of these programmes were described as "paper tigers" that never really had any significance and actually rather reduced the quality of the armed forces.

The far-reaching transformation of the political system and the orientation of Slovakia in the direction of Western Europe and the USA rather than the Soviet Union called for reforms in the legal foundation of the state and administration and the executive bodies where procedures and the basis of administration were aligned with Eastern European traditions. The Slovak armed forces were therefore far too top heavy and lacked a professional middle-management structure. There was thus an opportunity for a marriage of convenience between symbolic and practical action in which the aim would be to do away with the procedures and structures connected with the old political system. The principal reason for the decision can therefore be found in the fact that the political system was fundamentally changed - with consequent changes in the entire structure of society.

As NATO membership was also a central element in Slovak security policy, similarly to Latvia, the country was obliged to adapt its armed forces to meet NATO standards. The vision of professionalising the military came from the political sphere. The idea was presented by the Minister of Defence on the basis of a general acceptance in parliament that conscription would not help to heighten the quality of the armed forces sufficiently to fulfil the ambition for NATO membership, among other things. However, this made it necessary to increase the number of troops from the armed forces that could take part in military operations outside Slovakia's borders as Slovak conscripts could not be committed to INTOPS under any circumstances. This required soldiers to sign contracts and undergo a full course of training, including unit training and mission-oriented training. Conscripts were called up and given basic training in training units and then distributed to units of the armed forces where they were mixed with professional soldiers. If they wanted to be sent out on international operations, they had to sign a contract for the duration of the mission. One disadvantage of this was that they were often sent out together with an unfamiliar unit that they for obvious reasons had not trained together with during conscription. Furthermore, signing contracts for the duration of missions meant that they were sent home immediately after the mission if they did not sign a new contract - and the period of useful service was therefore far too short when it was only possible to send out soldiers once for each completed course of training. After some time, the contracts were

changed to a three-year period so that it was possible to send out soldiers several times without it being necessary to repeat basic training. But even these contracts failed to provide optimum practical value in relation to international operations.

The decision to discontinue conscription was extremely popular with the public, especially among those who were eligible to be called up. There was a widespread feeling that conscription was unjust and that it was lopsided. The perceived injustice was put into perspective by the fact that wages were increasing in the civilian sector at the beginning of the 1990s and the financial position of conscripts was much less favourable. Conscripts received board and lodging, free uniforms and free travel in connection with leave. Over and above this, they received a small amount in pocket money which corresponded to about one-quarter of a poorly-paid industrial worker's wages. But there were special payments for conscripts who were providers. Furthermore, there were many systems to defer conscription or avoid it completely. The people interviewed stated that it was actually easy to avoid conscription – by feigning illness at a draft board, for instance. Those who refused to do military service on grounds of conscience were transferred to conscientious objectors' service, broadly speaking on the same terms as those in Denmark. The duration of service as a conscientious objector was consistently longer than military service – ordinary military service in 2004 was six months, while it was nine months for conscientious objectors.

There was much discussion about maintaining conscription but organising it in a different way in Slovakia prior to the decision to professionalise the military – for example by further reducing its duration. Experience had already been gained of reducing the duration of conscription from twelve to nine months at the end of 2000, and as part of the reorganisation it was reduced again from nine to six months at the end of 2003. But the previous experience and a comparison of the transition from nine to six months made it clear that the cost of nine months' conscription was only marginally higher than the cost of six months' conscription, which meant that soldiers could be far better trained at a modest additional cost.<sup>62</sup>

A reduction of conscription to three months was discussed, but not accepted because the basic cost of conscription would still be the same. Furthermore, it was considered, as mentioned in section 3.1., that three months' conscription would not produce serviceable soldiers.

The conscription system was also considered extremely inefficient. Conscripts often performed manual functions such as cooking or cleaning – that had nothing to do with military training. This was particularly in evidence during the last year of conscription and was partly a result of the fact that it was not considered possible to train conscripts effectively in only six months. It thereby became a question of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Conscripts did, however, have guard duty at garrisons and also took part in other real military functions after their initial training, but irrespective of the duration and form of military service, according to the constitution conscripts could still not take part in international operations.

One argument in the public debate on military service helping to train young people to feel a sense of responsibility could be rejected on the grounds that parents had had 19 years to do this. How then, could the military be expected to do it in six months if parents had been unable to in 19 years?

The decision to suspend conscription engendered some critical objections due to the fear that it would also discontinue the mobilisation reserve, which would lay the country open to a new Russian invasion. Some people had not recognised the possibility of

achieving security through an alliance or a collective security system, nevertheless the mood of the population was overwhelmingly positive.

# 05 Decision

One feature common to all four countries was that conscription was not abolished – it was merely suspended. According to the countries' constitutions it is therefore still possible to reintroduce conscription, even though legislation in all of them makes various demands on the terms of this. According to the people interviewed, choosing to suspend rather than abolish conscription was connected with the fact that there had been debates regarding the consequences of this for the ability to mobilise reservists for national defence. In these debates, opponents of discontinuing conscription maintained that it was a tried and tested, well-functioning system that should not be completely abandoned because it ensured volume in national defence. However, the people interviewed argued that it will no longer be possible to reintroduce conscription – unless there is a complete transformation of the entire economy. This is due, among other things, to the fact that facilities, outfits, equipment and weapons will no longer be stored and maintained and that the military has not retained the expertise to call up and train such a large personnel force. Furthermore, mobilising a major personnel force would have serious consequences for the national economy because of the direct influence it would have on the private and public sectors alike, both of which are now prepared to take all of the young people from a particular year in their entirety.

## **France**

Suspending conscription was a political decision and, in practice, would only require a new political decision to reactivate, in a crisis, for instance. Both the president and parliament can introduce bills to this effect, but in the final analysis, the president's decision determines the outcome as the president has the right of veto in such matters with regard to parliament.

The public was more responsive to the argument that military service was a civic duty that created a bond between the individual citizen and the state. The decision was therefore made to maintain a system to emphasise the aspect of civic duty and specifically the duty to take part in defending the country with regard to all citizens. It was in this spirit that the decision was made, concurrently with the suspension of conscription, to establish a "Citizens' Day", an introduction for all citizens to their duties in relation to defending the country. In this connection, they also receive information on the tasks of the armed forces and career opportunities in the military. All men born after 1978 and all women born after 1982 must attend this day at some stage between their 16th and 18th birthday. It is interesting that gender equality has been maintained after the suspension of conscription in

France where civic duty is concerned. There has been considerable political debate regarding the duration of this new "civic duty". When conscription was suspended, the government at the time introduced a bill to the effect that it should last a whole week, but it was never adopted and the new government cut the week down to what is now known as "Citizens' day".

In the present security policy situation, the people interviewed felt that it would be practically impossible to reintroduce conscription in the form it previously had. But because conscription has only been suspended in France, they also believed that citizens would still feel an obligation to the armed forces.

As an illustration of the theoretical costs of reintroducing conscription, the people interviewed mentioned that in recent years the armed forces had calculated the cost of prolonging "Citizens' Day" to a seminar lasting several days. The cost of accommodation and board for almost 500,000 young people from a particular year would be so great that it is impossible to gain support for it because the barracks structure and support functions previously used in connection with conscription have been shut down and sold.

### **The Netherlands**

There was no real debate in parliament as such regarding whether conscription should be replaced by professional armed forces. Conscription was still an increasing source of irritation to voters, who regarded the system as unjust. A politician's career could therefore be brief if he or she defended maintaining conscription during a year in which one of the major themes of the election was conscription.

There was a debate in parliament, however, regarding whether it would be possible to re-establish the armed forces and defend the borders of the Netherlands in cases of an attack on the country's sovereignty if conscription were discontinued. As the armed forces could guarantee that the sovereignty of the Netherlands would not come under threat, parliament decided to suspend conscription. But conscription can be re-established in principle without amending the constitution if the security of the Netherlands should be threatened. This would require parliament to adopt a bill on its reintroduction by a simple majority. However, such a vote can only be held at the moment the Netherlands is confronted with an international threat to its security.

As the conscription system has only been suspended, all young men still receive a letter from the authorities on their 17th birthday in which they are called up for military service. This letter, however, is the sole remainder of conscription still maintained. The young men therefore need not attend a draft board or perform any other type of symbolic action regarding duty.

That the Dutch parliament decided to suspend rather than discontinue conscription is very much due to the fact that its complete discontinuation would require an amendment of the Dutch Constitution, as would its reintroduction. Additionally, politicians wished to ensure that it would be possible to reintroduce the system if there were an external threat to Dutch sovereignty.

### **Latvia**

It was suggested in "The National Defence Concept" from 2003 that the focus of the armed forces should be realigned from national defence to international operations and from conscription to professionalization.<sup>95</sup> There was full support for this idea in parliament and therefore no major political debate as to whether conscription should be replaced by professional armed forces. A working party was set up in 2003 under the Ministry of Defence for the purpose of preparing this change. The

working party presented its transition report to the government in 2003. The conclusions in the report were based on interviews in European countries that had previously discontinued conscription, and one of them was that the shorter the transition period was, the better. A transition period of three years was therefore suggested in the report. Parliament adopted the transition plan in March 2005 and established the commencement date as 1 January 2007.

As Latvia's independence in itself led to a pressing need to revise the country's legislation – and as the conscription system was based on legislation enacted during the Cold War – it was necessary to revise the laws governing conscription in order to be able to suspend it. There was not the time to do this during the transition period, however, so the Latvian Parliament therefore initially passed a law discontinuing conscription. Conscription thus remained established by the constitution during the transition period, but the practical instructions on the organisation of the mobilisation system were not covered by it and the Latvian Minister of Defence is in the process of drawing up a new law/new concept for mobilisation. The new mobilisation system will in all probability be similar to the French system where the number of young people from the current year is called up to be registered by a "draft board" and the armed forces can still present their training courses.

### **Slovakia**

Parliament implemented its "Membership Action Plan" in 2002 in collaboration with NATO. The plan was turned into a detailed programme for restructuring the Slovak armed forces by the General Staff.<sup>64</sup> The programme was implemented with the double purpose of implementing a professional structure and break with the Soviet inheritance. The goal of the reform was to build up a small, but fully professional military with a better quality personnel force and better training.

Conscription was thus not discontinued in Slovakia either – it was simply suspended just as in the three other countries. The people interviewed stated that historical apprehension over the threat from Russia was a contributory reason why the decision was made to maintain the possibility of drafting conscripts. They recommended that countries that consider abolishing conscription should settle for a suspension rather than a total end to conscription.

As there is no Home Guard or any other kind of National Guard in Slovakia, the decision was made to establish an "active volunteer reserve" comprising demobilised professionals in order to ensure that the state had reservists at its disposal. In time, this force will replace the former reservists. No reaction time has been established for reservists and no preparedness as such is maintained. However, there is a "centre for mobilisation planning" in the General Staff. The centre is responsible for reintroducing conscription if it should be necessary. All necessary data are stored in the national register if the need arises to call up conscripts again. Reactivating conscription would require a parliamentary decision.



# 06 Implementation

A gradual reorganisation from conscription to professional armed forces was chosen in all of the countries studied and, during the transition periods, a decreasing number of conscripts were called up, while the recruitment and training of professionals was increased. The transition periods were of different lengths, with three years (in Latvia) as the shortest and six years (in the Netherlands) as the longest. The people interviewed generally stated that the transition periods – between three and six years – were of suitable length. In Latvia, however, it was difficult to amend existing legislation and provisions within the time allotted and the people interviewed therefore recommended a longer transition period.

Where implementation was concerned, there was a reduction of personnel in the armed forces in all countries which meant, among other things, that the training structure could be pared down and the number of garrisons reduced, and the general organisation of the military could be changed. But this had the side effect of making reintroduction of conscription practically impossible, as it would be too expensive to recover the necessary structure once it had been sold.

It was necessary to set aside more money for recruitment in all countries, even though the methods of calculating this differ widely, and special recruiting offices also had to be established.

Furthermore, steps were taken in all countries to make a greater effort to create transparency in the armed forces, for instance by holding central "open-house" arrangements. This effort to make the armed forces more visible to the civil population was regarded as an important facet of the recruitment process.

## France

After the political suspension of conscription, made law in October 1997, conscription was maintained for a transitional period that lasted until 2001. During this period the number of conscripts was reduced dramatically each year, whereas it was a little more than 50% of the young people from a particular year before the decision was made.<sup>65</sup>

During the transitional period, France benefited from the fact that it did not suffer from the same decline in birth rates as the other countries studied. On the other hand, it was noted, as in the other countries, that young men's physical condition (in the form of strength and stamina) was declining. This tendency has continued after the suspension of conscription.

The composition and structure of the armed forces were changed concurrently with the move to professionalization. Among other things, the number of military regions was reduced from nine to five.<sup>66</sup>

Professional units were built up and facilities to handle the new professional structure were developed. The total personnel strength of the armed forces was reduced from approximately 573,000 men to approximately 436,000 men from 1996 to 2002, but the costs related to personnel did not fall during this period, instead they increased from approximately DKK 85 billion to approximately DKK 100 billion. This development was partly due to general price movements in society, but also to wage levels being raised in relation to those in the civil sector.

During this period, a number of problems in recruitment were experienced in France and, as a reaction to this a recruitment centre was established at the end of the transitional phase in an attempt to encourage more young people to join the armed forces. The recruitment centre makes use of such means as advertising campaigns, participation in job fairs, and "open-house arrangements".

Furthermore, "Citizens' Day" was implemented, which basically has the same content as and was a source of inspiration for "Armed Forces' Day" in Denmark. All young people must take part in the arrangement between their 16th and 18th birthdays.

### **The Netherlands**

First and foremost, the professionalization of the armed forces and the suspension of conscription led to dramatic reductions in the number of units. For example, before conscription was suspended, the Dutch army could muster a force of two and a half divisions<sup>67</sup>, whereas today, it has only three brigades. At the same time, there was a reduction in all services in the number of bases, aircraft, tanks, etc. Total military personnel were reduced from approximately 128,000 to approximately 50,000 soldiers.

The reduction in the number of units meant, among other things, that the existing units now have better supplies and equipment, which increase their capability to take part in international operations. It has also been realised in the armed forces that international operations today are not short-term missions of a year's duration, but on the contrary, are longer-term efforts often far away from the Netherlands which, where missions in Iraq and Afghanistan are concerned, has meant tremendous wear on the equipment used in the mission areas. Members of the armed forces have also been obliged to acknowledge that a problem has arisen in connection with deployments, training for missions, and, that it is difficult to muster the manpower to take part in international exercises while preparing for - and taking part in - international operations.

When conscription was suspended in the Netherlands, it became necessary to establish a completely new recruitment and selection system as conscription had previously been the source of the professional soldiers the armed forces needed. The recruitment budget was therefore low before conscription was suspended. There are no useable figures for the number of people recruited today as recruitment is not regarded as an independent budget item in the Netherlands, but as an activity designed to maintain balance in the overall personnel structure of the armed forces in relation to the number of people who leave. Since 2001, approximately DKK 373 million has been spent annually on this project in the Netherlands.

As part of professionalization, recruiting offices were established in all major Dutch cities where young people seeking employment in the armed forces must undergo a series of physical and psychological tests before they can sign a professional contract. Unlike the case of Latvia, physical and mental requirements have not been reduced in the Netherlands.

A "Veterans' Day" has been introduced in the Netherlands in order to maintain contact between the public and the military. On this day, tribute is paid to soldiers from missions in the Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan, etc. The initiative has been given a positive reception by the public and veterans are highly respected. The arrangement is supported by the royal house and receives extensive coverage in the Dutch media.

## **Latvia**

The introduction of professional armed forces was facilitated by the fact that the number of conscripts called up since 2003 has been reduced at the same time as the number of professional soldiers has been increased. Furthermore, the terms of contracts for professional soldiers have been extended from three to five years.

It was originally stipulated in connection with the decision to professionalise the armed forces that the process should be completed by the end of 2010. This time horizon was later stepped up by politicians to 2006, when parliament adopted the motion that the last conscripts would be called up in 2005. This meant that the last conscripts left the Latvian armed forces in 2006.

It rapidly became clear that initial expenditure would be necessary in connection with changing to a professional military. The people interviewed pointed out that professional armed forces were less expensive in the long run – and certainly more cost-effective. Expenditure on the armed forces is lower because, among other things, well-trained professional soldiers look after their equipment better and make fewer mistakes than conscripts. However, the greatest savings comes from doing away with much of the training structure. In addition, professionalization made it possible to develop new, more advanced technologies that save resources.<sup>68</sup>

There was a public debate during the implementation phase regarding the discontinuation of conscription in which it was claimed that the armed forces were viewed as an institution that moulded the character of young people and improved their physical ability. In other words, the armed forces were seen as an institution for social upbringing. Another argument that gave rise to concern was that the discontinuation of conscription could result in the armed forces losing contact with civil society. This concern was obviated in part when the Ministry of Defence increased financial support for the youth corps "Jaunsardzes", which is a type of scouts' organisation based on a Russian model.<sup>69</sup> One of the purposes of the organisation is to support healthy interests in young people and keep them away from crime. The organisation has 7,300 members, which makes it bigger than the army. Over and above this, the youth corps has a socially supportive function as its members receive training in such fields as tourism and history and learn basic skills in first aid, among other things, as well as certain aspects of military training. Teachers come from the National Guard or are professional soldiers. The members of the corps are divided into three age groups: 12-14 years, 15-16 years, and 17-18 years. Members of the latter group are offered rifle practice. Participation in the various activities arranged by the organisation is voluntary. There is no formal connection between the youth corps and recruiting professional soldiers, but approximately 10% of the members of the organisation are recruited.

There was considerable concern in the military in connection with implementation that being posted abroad would be a far more common feature in the professional forces. As the armed forces are keen to promote consideration for the family, a rotation system was introduced, which meant that after a professional soldier has been posted abroad, he returns to Latvia for a certain period of time, normally a year, before

the next deployment. The soldiers "relax" during this period and prepare for the next mission in mission training. There is no upper limit to the number of times a soldier can be posted abroad. It should also be mentioned that international operations are viewed in a positive light by civilians, who generally support Latvia's international engagement.

A large number of young people volunteered for the armed forces during the last year of conscription. This was probably due to the fact that this was their last chance to try out life in the military and thereby find out what it had to offer. Conscription hereby functioned as a one-year trial period that did not have the same consequences as entering into a five-year professional contract. In spite of the apparent popularity of the armed forces, however, few conscripts actually signed contracts because they regarded the five-year binding period as too long. Among the conscripts in the latter years of conscription, 25-30% said that they would have signed a contract if it had been for three years instead of five.

### **Slovakia**

The Slovak armed forces engaged a US consultant company in connection with the implementation of the professionalization plan, which prepared an in-depth analysis of the entire Slovak personnel structure.<sup>70</sup> There was also contact with the British and French ministries of defence and great benefit was derived from NATO's Partnership for Peace Programme and its various advisory functions. Most of the advice, however, was obtained from the consultant company. One of the critical shortcomings was that until professionalization, Slovakia had not had a professional non-commissioned –officers (NCO) structure. NCO functions were carried out by conscripts or professional officers. The officer structure was therefore also overwhelming and the entire organisation far too top heavy. This was therefore not a question of an isolated conscription reform – but on the contrary, a complete reorganisation of the Slovak armed forces.

Implementing professional armed forces was planned to be carried out over a period of six years. As conscripts were called up four times a year in Slovakia, a decision was made to reduce the number of people called up from time to time so that the number of conscripts would gradually fall.

The plan was to have fully professional armed forces by the end of 2006. In fact, professionalization went faster than planned and, as early as 1 January 2006, the armed forces comprised 100% professional soldiers. The number of people called up therefore fell gradually from 16,235 in 2001, to 7,201 in 2003, to 2,472 in 2005.

While discontinuing conscription went more rapidly than expected, recruiting professional soldiers did not go quite so fast. The goal of recruiting 15,360 private soldiers and non-commissioned officers by 1 January 2005 was not reached and only 11,188 people were recruited. Among the reasons stated for the difficulty in recruiting professionals was the effect of a low number of men from a particular year in Slovakia, the fact that there was record growth in the country during this period (large-scale car factories were opened), and finally that it was necessary for the Slovak armed forces to create a recruitment culture. Demographics had not been taken into account before the decision was made to suspend conscription – and the people responsible were therefore surprised at the difficulty involved.

Concurrently with professionalization, legislation regarding the personnel benefits soldiers had previously been eligible for was changed. The benefits – including health care and education, for instance – were now withdrawn and this, in combination with the

considerable reduction in career opportunities and increased competition on the labour market for the brightest, prompted many of the best officers to retire at the time the reform was implemented, making it more difficult to carry out a successful reform.

The process led to a complete transformation of the armed forces with major changes at all levels. Total personnel were thus reduced from 46,662 in 2001 to 31,251 in 2005. There were also great changes in the composition of the armed forces. There were 7,265 officers in 2001 while this figure had been reduced to 4,152 by 2005, which was again reduced to 3,326 officers in 2006. There were also considerable changes in the rank structure of the officer corps. At the beginning of the reform, only 64% of all officers occupied posts commensurate with their rank – the remainder were in positions with less responsibility than their rank warranted. The head of one of the country's music corps, for instance, was a general. The changes were handled through a combination of natural wastage, offers of early retirement, and offers of voluntarily demotion by one or two ranks. Job and function descriptions were drawn up for all positions in order to ensure cohesion between ranks and jobs. A completely new bureaucratic structure was established in connection with selection and appointment and the connection between rank, job, training, and retirement age in general created a new and more efficient administrative culture.

The structural changes made it a natural step to close garrisons. In Slovakia, the decision was chiefly to close the smaller of these so that the forces are now concentrated in bigger units around training grounds. The opportunity was also used to close a number of garrisons that were inappropriately located in urban surroundings. This led to some savings, but they have not been calculated in detail. Closing garrisons led to a major political showdown on the location of the remaining installations, but it was not connected solely with the suspension of conscription, it was also due to the fact that there was a great reduction in personnel structure at the same time.

Similarly to the case of Latvia, the decision to suspend conscription led to a record number of young men volunteering during the last years of conscription. There was no need at any time for a national conscription lottery similar to that in Denmark as there were a sufficient number of suitable potential conscripts from all years – and all of those suitable had to do military service.

The military was ordered to hold attention-creating arrangements in order to ensure that the armed forces remained visible and transparent to the population at large and appeared as an exciting and attractive workplace. All units therefore have the production goal of carrying out local exhibitions and shows and contributing to national exhibitions and arrangements to which the military is invited.

Furthermore, the armed forces carry out a central campaign that addresses young people – in the form of "youth camps". These camps are a type of team competition in which young people compete against each other in open-air disciplines with a military character. In addition, various high-profile institutions are encouraged to take part (e.g. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs against the Ministry of Defence) to draw attention to the camps. The camps, insurance, etc., are paid for by the armed forces – and participants are divided into teams by age (14-15 years, 16-17 years and 18-19 years). The camps were held in 2006 and 2007 were also held during the summer of 2008. The winners can try their hand at a military profession for 24 hours "with all the trimmings" and fly in a helicopter or try shooting with live ammunition.

In spite of these measures, the difficulty of recruiting professional soldiers became evident immediately after conscription was suspended – this notwithstanding the fact that a recruiting office had been established in Slovakia as early as 2001. This office is subdivided into

various units and includes a personnel structure office with responsibility for calculating the need for intake to all courses of training in the Slovak armed forces and to create cohesion in the rank structure on an ongoing basis. Annual recruitment production targets are established at the recruiting office. In general, output of all kinds must correspond to analogous input - and it has proved to be increasingly difficult to attain these goals. This is not least due to economic growth in Slovakia which has led, among other things, to major auto industry factories opening (among them, Volkswagen). The armed forces are unable to compete on wages, but are otherwise considered as an employment opportunity offering good job security.<sup>7</sup>

There is also a marketing centre under the recruiting office that handles all advertising measures and initial contracts. Among the central advertising activities, personal contacts, advertising in printed and electronic media and on the Internet are emphasised. Among other things, the centre's web site contains an activity calendar that shows which recruiting activities, shows and other arrangements are to be held so that people with an interest can keep up to date.

The difficulties of recruitment are illustrated by the fact that it was only necessary to perform 0.31 activities per recruit in 2002, while 3.6 activities were necessary in 2007. (A recruiting activity in this example could be an exhibition and a recruiting visit to a village or an upper secondary school).

Approximately DKK 3.7 million is spent on recruiting annually. The means are distributed with about DKK 370,000 that can be used by the personnel office, while the remainder is connected with the Ministry of Defence with the right to draw on this amount at the personnel office. This pays for the costs of advertising in the printed and electronic media and on the Internet. Attention-creating activities on the part of the military units are not included in this amount.

Calculations by the General Staff show that it costs DKK 2.5 million to recruit 700 suitable applicants to the armed forces - corresponding to approximately DKK 3,700 per recruit. Last year, 14,000 people had to be contacted directly to attain the goal of 765 recruits. When professionalization was introduced, it was sufficient to contact 6,000 people to recruit 2,000. The people interviewed stated that there is a close connection between visibility and recruitment. It is easier to recruit people in the areas where an effort is made at garrisons and where garrisons are very prominent.

The Slovak recruitment budget has not been changed in step with the increasing difficulty of recruiting people. Currently, the latest surveys show that three percent of suitable people from a particular year want to be professionals, while nine percent "consider it".

The task of building up a military reserve was given to a Mobilisation Planning Centre which is supposed to create an "active reserve" of volunteers and suitable demobilised professional soldiers. The plan is to perform the first exercise with the reserve in 2009. There are still about 800,000 reserves in Slovakia - of whom about 15,000 are former professional soldiers. The aim is to replace this force with a smaller reserve of 20-60-year-old volunteers comprising former professional soldiers under contract with the armed forces who will make themselves available for further training for up to 15 days a year for privates and 30 days a year for specialists and non-commissioned officers. The reserves are paid during their training if the company they work for does not provide compensation for loss of income. Contracts have a duration of three years at a time and the responsibility for appointing those who are qualified, so that contracts are not entered into with unsuitable people, lies with the General Staff personnel office. Another aim is to use the active reserve to recruit people for the professional forces.

Recruiting difficulties have prompted the armed forces to consider increasing retirement age and to reduce enrolment requirements. Retirement age today depends on the rank attained, but for people with a retirement age of 55, consideration is being given to increasing this to 60 years.

It should be noted that the need to strengthen the middle-management structure has led to a situation in which non-commissioned officers cannot become officers and highly qualified non-commissioned officers earn more money than younger officers.

Wage levels for the armed forces were frozen by the national defence agreement that applies during the entire period up to 2010. The level is politically established in such a way that the relationship between the youngest man's wages and Defence Chief's salary is 1:5.26.<sup>72</sup> It might have been a good idea to adjust wage levels during the term of the agreement, but this is not possible on budgetary and parliamentary grounds.

One urgent wish in connection with the reform was to change the career structure of the military. A "Personnel Centre" with responsibility for selecting and promoting personnel to specialist functions or the next highest rank was established for this purpose. This applies to all personnel up to and including the rank of lieutenant colonel. Selecting and promoting personnel was previously the responsibility of a local leader, but as it was misused through nepotism, corruption and cultivating other private interests, it was abolished with the reform, which led to many angry reactions on the part of local leaders.

Finally, the responsibility for carrying out initial tests of all applicants, and thereby constituting a significant element of recruitment, lies with the "Psychological and Sociological Centre". Candidates for service abroad on the staff and in INTOPS are also screened at the centre.

# 07 Evaluation

It is noted in all of the countries that capacity and ability to perform international operations has improved and that the main purpose of changing from conscripted to professional armed forces has thereby been fulfilled.

The generally declining physical standard among young people, known respectively in Latvia and the Netherlands as the "computer generation" and the "beer generation", was noted in all of the countries studied. This has been of particular importance as the number of applicants has decreased because it meant either rejecting a larger percentage of them or lowering enrolment requirements and increasing the duration of training to get recruits into a physical condition in which they could perform military service effectively.

It was also noted in the four countries studied that there were more female applicants, and the number of female soldiers has also increased since the suspension of conscription. This may be because all of the countries involved have made attempts to broaden the recruitment base which, among other things, led to a change in the nature of job campaigns that now target female applicants.

Another reason could be, as stated in all countries, that measurements and evaluations unanimously seem to indicate that the social prestige of the armed forces has increased after the suspension of conscription. (This does not necessarily mean, however, that soldiers have become more popular in the business community, for instance. In fact, the people who were asked in France said that there were no advantages to be gained from including military service in CVs).

Another common feature is that all four countries experienced opposition from groups of professionals in the armed. The people interviewed stated that this was partly due to a fear of change – and, quite specifically, to concern that restructuring would lead to personnel being posted abroad on international missions, whereas they had hitherto lived stationary lives at the same garrison throughout their careers.

Another central point is that while recruitment is important, retaining people is at least equally important. This is because it is cheaper to retain and "reuse" soldiers than to recruit and train new. Personnel staff in both France and the Netherlands estimated that the optimum employment perspective for private soldiers is eight years in the system.

It was also noted in all four countries that demographic and socio-economic conditions are very important for recruiting and retaining personnel. Competition for suitable manpower is therefore strongly influenced by the number of young people who are available from each

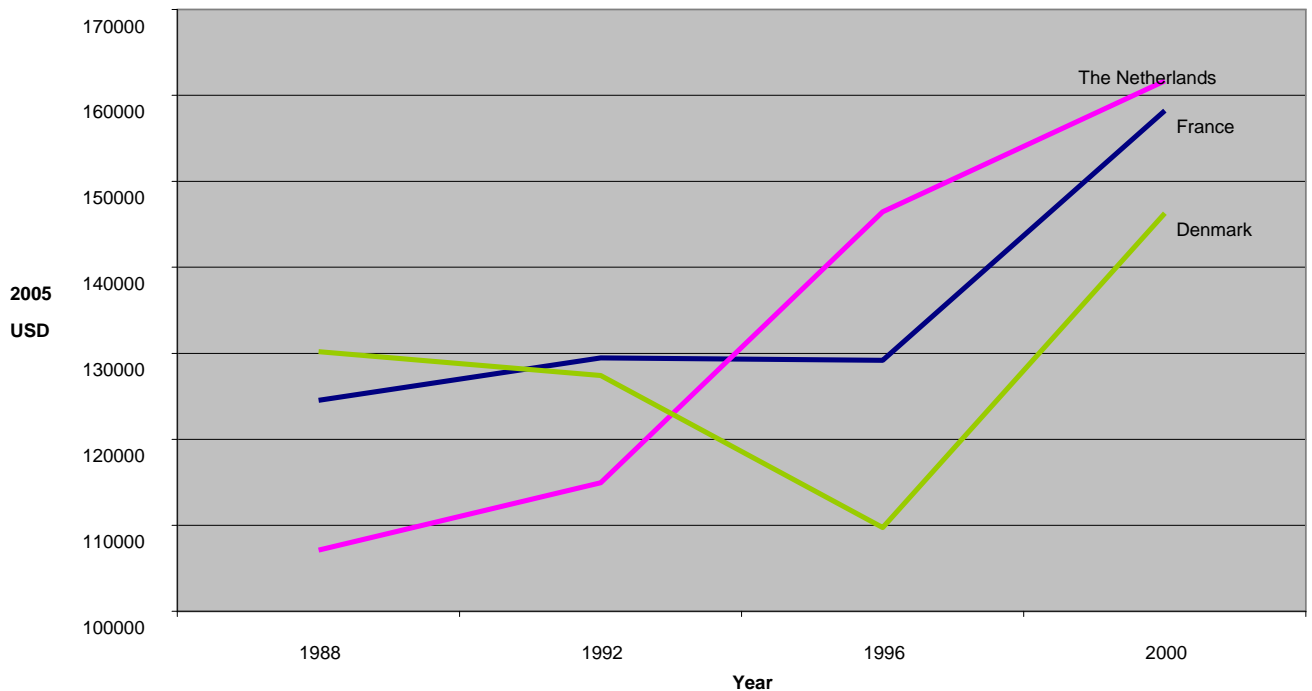


particular year, at the same time as the state of the financial market influences the demand for manpower on the part of the business community. The worst possible situation (for the armed forces and the business community alike) occurs when few young people from a particular year are in great demand with a business community that is experiencing growth.

Finally, it appears that the new professional forces are not less expensive than the conscription system, which is not only due to the organisation of the armed forces in itself. The defence budgets in Latvia and Slovakia were increased on an ongoing basis throughout restructuring, but in both countries this was to an equal degree an aspect of the goal of living up to NATO's objectives that member states should spend two percent of their gross domestic product (GDP) on the military. (And the two countries have not only increased the share of GDP spent on defence - GDP has also increased, so in actual figures, this is a question of a considerable increase). Where the Netherlands and France are concerned, military expenditure has also increased after the suspension of conscription. It was stated in all four countries that the costs of acquiring equipment and the wear on this in connection with international operations and the major costs connected with transport and logistics for these operations play an important role.

**Figure 6.**

**Development in costs per soldier in France, the Netherlands and Denmark, 1988-2000 (fixed prices, 2005 USD)**



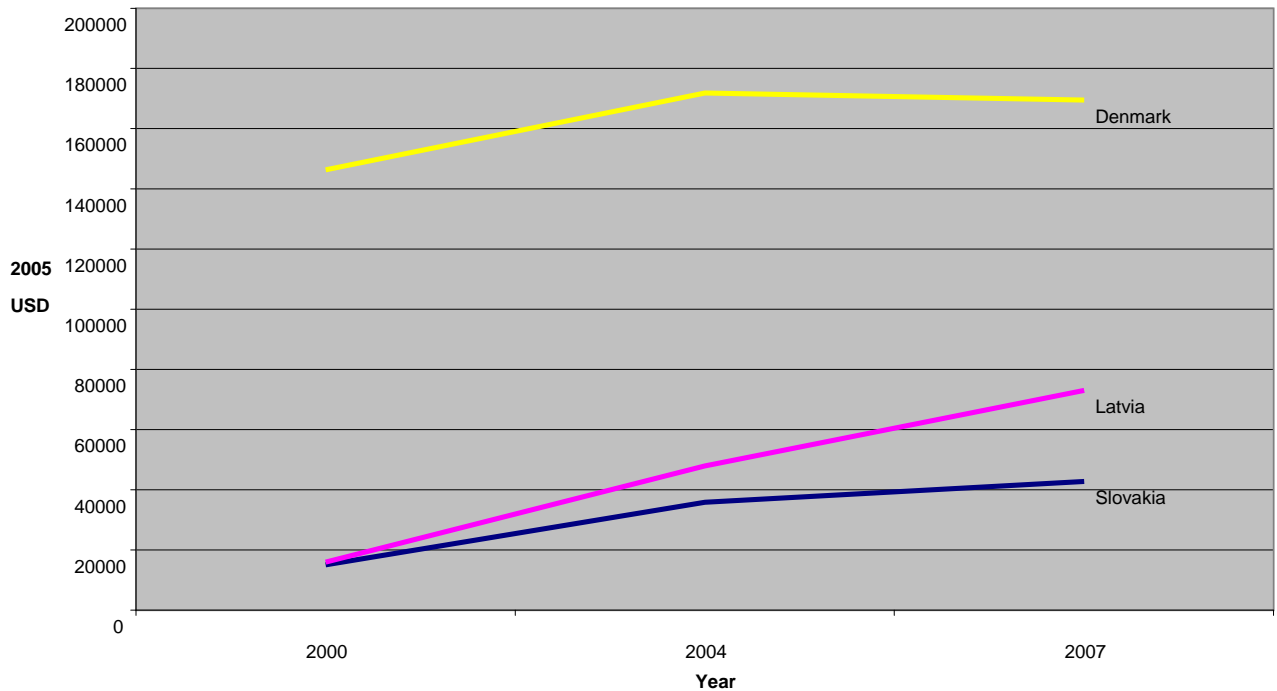
*Source: SIPRI and Military Balance*

The increasing cost levels are illustrated in figure 6 and the figure shows the development in defence expenditure per soldier in France, the Netherlands and Denmark during the period 1988 to 2000 (i.e. during the period when conscription was suspended in the Netherlands (from 1993 to 1996) and France (from 1996 to 2000)). There is a remarkable displacement between the countries in relation to resource consumption per soldier, so that from being the country that devoted most resources per unit, Denmark became the country that devoted least, whereas this was the opposite for the Netherlands. It is particularly interesting that the increase in Dutch resource

consumption per soldier coincided with the introduction of the professional army in 1992. During this period it was possible to reduce resource consumption per unit in Denmark so that Danish resource consumption is slightly more than 25% lower than that of the Netherlands. It is also remarkable that the level of costs in France also increased with the introduction of a professional army. However, as this increase can also be seen both in the Netherlands and France, it cannot be explained solely by the suspension of conscription.

**Figure 7.**

**Development in costs per soldier in Latvia, Slovakia and Denmark, (fixed prices, 2005 USD)**



*Source: SIPRI and Military Balance*

Figure 7 illustrates the same development in Slovakia, Latvia and Denmark during the period 2000-2007 - i.e. the period during which the two first countries suspended conscription. The same interesting increase in costs in the two countries can be seen during the period in which they introduced a professional army. By way of comparison, the development in Denmark led to a fall in total costs. It is remarkable in this connection that costs in both Slovakia and Latvia have increased continuously and sharply (by approximately 450% in Latvia and 280% in Slovakia) in a relatively short period of time. The increase in the two countries is thus considerably higher and more uniform than is the less clear picture for France and the Netherlands. This indicates that the increase in costs cannot exclusively be ascribed to the change to a professional army. The transition to NATO membership and a general need to improve military equipment can therefore be seen as contributory factors to the defence costs per soldier in the two countries.

In summary, military costs have increased in all four countries since conscription was suspended. The higher costs in all four countries are due to a combination of initial costs for organisational changes and costs that can be ascribed to a higher level of activity - plus the fact that wage levels in the armed forces had to be adapted to developments in the rest of society.

## France

The overall impression is that recruitment to the French armed forces in general was not a problem while conscription was in force, nor was there even an organisation involved in recruitment during that time. It can therefore be assumed that conscription was adequate to advertise the armed forces so that no special measures were necessary.

Initially, there were many costs connected with the restructuring process. Among other things, it was necessary to invest a considerable amount in a recruiting centre.<sup>73</sup> Payroll costs in the armed forces also rose appreciably, but on the other hand it was possible to save on structural costs – by closing barracks and other facilities, etc. As previously mentioned, there was a minor problem with recruitment during the transitional phase up to professionalization, something that was unusual in the French armed forces.

The people interviewed were not of the impression that there had been any noticeable recruitment problems after the transitional phase and the establishment of structures to handle the change in the recruitment procedure. On average, the armed forces must recruit about 30,000 young men each year and there are many types of employment on offer. The system is extremely flexible, especially for the NCO group who sign one-year contracts. They can enter into these contracts four times, after which they are obliged to change to a different employment category. The officer system is separate from the NCO system, but it is possible for sergeants to be trained as officers and advance to the rank of captain at most. The people interviewed acknowledged that this was an expensive solution and that it functioned as a kind of conscription in practice, but the system has been maintained in order to get young people interested in trying out life in the armed forces and giving time for them to be evaluated before they sign longer-term contracts. Furthermore, measures have been implemented in an attempt to retain the group of privates. A model has been set up in which the armed forces pay individual soldiers a bonus after a number of years' service with the aim of encouraging them to continue serving for the desired average of eight years. Today, the first bonus is paid after five years.

The general recession on the French labour market may provide part of the explanation to the French success with recruitment. As there is a relatively high rate of unemployment among young people in France, many of them join the military, which is actually the second-largest employer in the country.

The people interviewed felt that the flexible terms offered by the military also played a role on a labour market that does not otherwise have a reputation for flexibility. Over and above flexibility, the armed forces can naturally also offer stable employment for those who choose longer-term contracts and there are also several advantageous offers for personnel, such as inexpensive flats – an offer that a large number of young people value highly. On the other hand, the people interviewed were of the opinion that having experience from the armed forces was not an advantage, which is often the case in Denmark, for instance, when seeking employment in the civilian sector.

There has been a clear tendency in connection with restructuring for the military to employ many more civilians to perform the administrative tasks that were previously performed by the armed forces' own personnel.

The sporadic opposition to discontinuing conscription seen in the armed forces before discontinuation has generally been overcome. There is a pragmatic acceptance that it is structurally almost impossible to reintroduce conscription today in the same form it had previously as, among other things, the physical framework for such a step is no longer available.

On the other hand, the violence in the suburbs of Paris in 2005 breathed new life into the discussion in civilian society and among politicians on the reintroduction of conscription as an educative element to discipline young, uncontrollable forces. The people interviewed, however, did not believe that reintroducing conscription would find support among the public or gain a majority in parliament. They emphasised that the change of attitude in the public from viewing the armed forces as a patriotic project to viewing it now as a practical tool that the state can use for humanitarian purposes is so well established that they cannot imagine a return to conscription in its old form.

Where "Citizens' Day" is concerned, the public auditors in France recently raised the question as to what benefit was actually derived from the money spent on this day each year. They felt that there was too little return on the arrangement if it were merely regarded as an advertisement for the armed forces, and that DKK 5.2 billion a year was too high a price to pay for maintaining a "direct mailing list" to young people who might be interested in a military career.<sup>74</sup>

### **The Netherlands**

In spite of major personnel and structural reductions, expenditure on the armed forces has risen by approximately 17-20% compared with the level before conscription was suspended. The individual soldier today is more expensive than formerly. This is first and foremost due to the fact that the costs of active participation in international operations have been higher than expected and that this has led to extensive purchases of new equipment. Professionalising the armed forces also led to higher costs to maintain the size of the personnel force.

The wage level for a professional soldier is broadly speaking unchanged as a professional soldier's initial pay is still higher than for a private sector employee with a similar level of education. Experience in the Netherlands has also shown that pay is not the most important means of recruiting and retaining people in the armed forces. On the contrary, variables such as career opportunities, long-term deployment, and the question regarding whether a soldier can combine his/her work with the role of parent, play a decisive role for the individual soldier.

Furthermore, the experience gained in the armed forces since the suspension of conscription indicates that the new professional soldiers must be treated, instructed and trained in a completely different way compared to the period when there was conscription in the Netherlands. This is not least due to the fact that those liable to be conscripted – who were, as mentioned, selected from among the young elite – were more enterprising and had better intellectual qualifications because of their high level of education. Today – when the people recruited are not among the most proficient – procedures must be practised far more thoroughly and repeated more frequently in order to ensure satisfactory learning.

As the physical and intellectual minimum requirements on applicants have been retained, the qualifications of the recruits (even though they are lower today than during conscription) have generally been satisfactory. It has not been possible, however, to recruit the necessary intake of about 5,000 people a year at the recruiting offices. The Dutch armed forces are therefore at present down to about 80% of their approved personnel force. It is particularly difficult to attract specialists such as mechanics and people with a technical background. The Dutch military has therefore implemented a new initiative designed to attract older, better-educated people (over 30 years of age). Furthermore, there has been a lack of doctors in the Dutch armed forces for some time as conscripts previously constituted the majority of medical staff. There are professional doctors in the armed forces today and there are at

present no problems in recruiting doctors, but this could become a problem in the future because 85% of newly qualified doctors in the Netherlands are women, who are traditionally not prepared to work full time, which is a requirement in the armed forces.

To ensure sufficient medical capacity, the Dutch armed forces have paid for an extra operation team at ten Dutch hospitals in return for the hospitals in question placing a voluntary operation team at the disposal of the armed forces that can be deployed for six months to a mission area together with the soldiers. The operation team is thereby chosen at the hospital and not by the military. The project has been a great success as many doctors want to have experience of combat surgery. Experience they cannot obtain in many other places than in mission areas. The success of this project has meant that a decision was made in the armed forces to extend the idea to other groups of specialists such as mechanics and other technicians.

The Dutch Minister of Defence formulated a vision to the effect that 30% of military personnel should be women as it was felt that this would improve the dynamism of the armed forces. The armed forces have therefore implemented a "gender project" that purposefully aims to recruit women and to retain the women who are already in the armed forces. Several new initiatives have been implemented in which there is more consideration for pregnant women, for instance. However, it has been emphasised that the Dutch military will not give female officers special treatment to make it easier for them to pursue a career. At present, about 7% of armed forces personnel are women, which is an increase compared to the time before conscription was suspended. Women can serve in all units with the exception of the Dutch Marine Corps and in submarines.

A major problem for the armed forces today is that the physical condition of young people has deteriorated in relation to previously. Approximately half of them are unable to live up to the physical requirements in tests and about one-third of these are categorised as permanently unsuitable. These figures are in glaring contrast to formerly when about 70% were fit for service. The Dutch armed forces have not chosen to lower the physical and mental requirements on young people applying for enlistment in the hope of increasing recruitment, as is the case in Latvia, for instance. Young people who cannot live up to the physical requirements are advised to train for two or three months and then come back and take the tests again.

The biggest problem for the Dutch armed forces is to retain personnel and this has led to the introduction of very flexible contracts of two, four, and six years. The goal is to retain short-term personnel in the armed forces for eight years, which is expected to provide a satisfactory balance between investing in training and useful service, and a bonus system has been introduced with a bonus that increases in step with seniority. Furthermore, the armed forces pay for courses of education for personnel so that they are well prepared to return to a civilian career. The goal is for all military personnel to leave the military with a higher level of education than they had when they entered. Additionally, the armed forces offer personnel a number of social privileges such as health insurance. Among other things, these measures have meant that the armed forces have ranked as the Netherlands' third best workplace for the past two years, according to an annual nationwide survey, and they have never ranked lower than number five. This in itself constitutes an invaluable advertisement for the armed forces in Dutch society.

It is now regarded as an established fact that re-establishing conscription is no longer possible and it would be meaningless to attempt to mobilise demobilised conscripts. This is due, among other things, to the fact that the armed forces no longer have the quantity of

equipment (boots, uniforms, etc.), that re-establishment would require, and that the value of the military training given in the mid 1990s must be seen as having been extremely limited. The initial cost of acquiring weapons, uniforms, equipment and stores would be enormous and there would be a discussion regarding which particular year the first people should be re-conscripted from.

In spite of the challenges that a potential reintroduction of conscription would present, there are forces in Dutch society that demand the re-establishment of the conscription system. These groups are concerned about the difficulties of achieving a satisfactory level of training for professional soldiers. A university graduate, for instance, would seek employment in the private sector rather than the armed forces. The biggest party in the Netherlands, the Christian Democrats, finances a think-tank that sometimes puts out feelers with ideas for a new form of conscription that would also involve women.

### **Latvia**

The decision to suspend conscription was given a positive reception in Latvian society. When the decision was made, about 80% of the population supported it and this figure is unchanged after the reform has been completed. There was also great satisfaction in military circles regarding the course of the reform and, after the completion of professionalization, the prestige of the armed forces has risen so that it now ranks number four among the country's most prestigious professions. The people interviewed felt that this is first and foremost because the armed forces now appear to be better trained, because wages have been raised, and better equipment acquired.

All political parties supported the decision to suspend conscription. The transformation was therefore seen as a great success in political circles and there has been no discussion regarding the value of suspension. The introduction of modern, high-tech equipment in the armed forces has meant that training for individual soldiers has been intensified, which is one of the reasons why the costs of training are five or six times as high as they were before conscription was suspended<sup>75</sup>. Due to this – and in order to live up to NATO requirements – the government has increased the defence budget annually since 2003, which at present means that 1.79% of GDP is spent on the armed forces (the increase should also be seen in the light of the fact that GDP has increased significantly).

The reforms were also viewed in a positive light in the armed forces. But it will still take some time to change the mind-set in the officers' corps as the tone used among professional soldiers is essentially different to the tone between professionals and conscripts. In coming years, an attempt will therefore be made to change officers' management style from elementary command to cooperation and involvement.

Originally, the plans in Latvia were to concentrate on incentives in the form of facilities such as sports and recreation centres and officers' clubs, etc., as it was believed that the establishment of such centres would lead to greater satisfaction with the workplace so that personnel could be retained by the armed forces. However, these plans had to be shelved as the cost of realising them proved to be much too high.

The experience in Latvia has also been that it is very important that there is a prospect of career opportunities for the individual soldier, so it is important to show potential soldiers all of the options for development the armed forces can offer in connection with recruitment.

There were very good years for recruitment in 2005 and 2006. In 2005, 285 conscripts signed professional contracts and this was bettered the year after when 628 people signed contracts, 230 of whom were

conscripts who wanted to serve as professionals after their military service. After the suspension of conscription, however, it has become more difficult to recruit people to the armed forces. This, among other things, has meant that 5-6% of the available positions have not been filled.

Another reason why recruitment has become more difficult is the demographic and economic variables. Due to fewer young people being born in a particular year (which is already having an effect now), in the years to come there will be even fewer young people to recruit. As there has also been a high rate of growth in the Latvian economy it has been difficult for the armed forces to attract young people. Private sector wages in big cities are higher than those the armed forces can offer. The expectation is that it will be easier for the armed force to recruit people during times when the Latvian economy is growing more slowly or is in recession.

Figures from the recruitment offices show that it costs about DKK 1,185 in direct advertising to recruit a soldier to the armed forces. The annual advertising budget for the Latvian armed forces is DKK 754,000. The radio and the Internet have proved to be the most effective media in connection with recruitment. In 2007, the recruiting offices reached 70% of the planned recruitment goal and it is expected that the figures for this year will increase because of a decline in economic growth. The armed forces can offer potential soldiers a fixed, stable income that lies slightly above the average wage in the country and is not influenced by market fluctuations. The central recruiting arguments thereby appear to be stability in connection with wages and employment conditions.

The training and education system has been changed in order to recruit and retain more soldiers as the young people from a particular year today are in poorer physical shape than previously. The physical demands made on soldiers on recruitment to the military have been lowered. The focus of the first three months has now been goal-oriented to improve soldiers' physical condition. The educational requirements have also been lowered as conscripts were required to have had an upper secondary school education before the suspension of conscription if they wished to become professional soldiers. Today, nine to ten years' schooling are sufficient even though soldiers are required to pass an upper secondary school examination during the course of a five-year contract.<sup>76</sup> Soldiers without an upper secondary school education can only serve in infantry units and not in specialised technical or intelligence functions. Finally, the age limit has been lowered from 19 to 18 years so it is now possible to go straight into the armed forces from the school system. People with previous military training (e.g. former conscripts or members of the Youth Corps) can avoid the first three months of basic training.

The modification of the criteria above has meant that there has been a minor fall in the quality of the people applying for a professional contract in the armed forces. However, the quality of the applicants to the officers' academy is at the same level as previously.

The average age of soldiers is the same as previously. Army officers have an average age of 33-35 years and this is 25-26 years for privates. The armed forces comprise 18% women. This figure has not changed significantly, but there has been a minor increase. Most women work in administrative functions.

At present, there are no advantages in the armed forces for soldiers with families. But this will be an area of special interest in the future if the military wishes to retain its soldiers and renew their contracts. The hope for the future is that, by offering soldiers special advantages, it will be easier for the armed forces to recruit and retain personnel. Financial support has already been provided by the Ministry of Defence

in the form of building kindergartens and schools, etc., close to military bases that can be used by soldiers' families.

With the benefit of hindsight, a three-year transitional period was too short. A longer transition period is necessary to create the necessary platform for communication and organisation between the various working parties involved in such extensive reforms. There were examples of laws and provisions establishing the terms for the armed forces (including terms of employment and demobilisation) that were not updated in time.

## **Slovakia**

All in all the ability to conduct international operations has improved as the quality of the soldiers sent out has increased. In general, the training level of the Slovak forces has been dramatically increased, and it is estimated that the country is now capable of fulfilling its international obligations. Slovakia thus expects to take on greater responsibility in e.g. Afghanistan in the future. It has not been difficult to recruit troops for international operations in spite of the fact that it is possible for everybody to cancel their contracts at short notice and without appreciable consequences. This also goes for personnel who are on the verge of being posted abroad.

Military expenditure has increased. When the decision was made in 2001, conscription cost DKK 13.2 million. A projection to 2010 price levels based on developments in the national economy showed that costs could be expected to rise to approximately DKK 65 million. This included training and billeting, etc. The total cost of 3,000 professionals is hereby higher than the cost of 12,500 conscripts would have been due, among other things, to the fact that the professionals are actually used on international operations and therefore have a higher level of activity.

Professionalization has led to the appointment of appreciably more women in the military. The share of women is now about eight to nine %. Before professionalization it was about two %. At the time, it was necessary for a soldier to go through the entire conscription period before he could become permanently employed, whereas it is now possible to do so immediately. The recruitment of more women was explained through our interviews by the fact that many women (an estimated 70%) apply in order to gain social advantages such as job security. Others really want a military career, while others again want to serve in administrative positions. Another explanation could be that factory work in Slovakia has become a high-wage area and therefore attracts more men. Many of the women who are recruited come from families with a military tradition. Women generally have the same rights as men – but mothers and motherhood enjoy special protection under the constitution – women are entitled to 28 weeks' maternal leave (beginning a month before giving birth). Women sent out on international operations are pregnancy tested before their deployment in international missions. They cannot be deployed if they prove to be pregnant. However, women can be employed in staff positions in the NATO structure even though they may be pregnant.

After professionalization, there was a strong desire that homogeneous units that had been trained together could be sent out on international operations. This was impossible in the old structure in which conscripts constituted part of the units, but could not be posted abroad.<sup>77</sup> This has now become a reality and is described as a great success.

With regard to the reflection of the civilian sector in the professional armed forces, it has proved to be difficult to ensure the representation of minorities in these. Slovak data protection legislation prevents the registration of the population on the basis of ethnic, religious, or other



grouping – but there are many minority issues to take into account. The people interviewed estimated that there is generally a fair balance in the armed forces, but that the numbers of Hungarians and Roma in the armed forces are not representative to that of their share of the population. The people interviewed said that it is important, but impossible at present due to data protection legislation, to certify that the military force reflects the composition of the population.

Another important element is that professionalization has created more distance between officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates. The people interviewed described this as a positive element that, over and above more effective leadership, allowed all groups to have professional pride. It has also proved a good choice to establish a professional, well-functioning cadre of non-commissioned officers – this has been an important element and remains a priority issue.

Support for the armed forces has increased notably since the suspension of conscription. The people interviewed said that the number of citizens who took a positive view of the military in 2007 had increased to 72%. Before the decision to suspend conscription this was less than 50%. The increased support is also connected with the fact that people are no longer forced to do military service. Furthermore, discipline has been significantly improved in the armed forces. Soldiers have a more professional appearance and, at the same time, a smaller force of well-trained soldiers means that there are sufficient resources for proper equipment and better and more modern weapons. The military therefore emanates greater professionalism, which again has a positive effect on the public. In general, the people interviewed felt that there was more prestige in being a soldier after the suspension of conscription.

The Ministry of Defence is preparing a job satisfaction survey among professional soldiers. Among other things, the survey will result in proposals for social bonus schemes – such as access to first place on public waiting lists, for instance.

# o8 Summary and general observations

This section is a summary of the observations regarding the four assumptions examined in the report:

## **Assumption 1:**

Conscription, economy and recruitment.

*It is quite possible to recruit the necessary number of professional soldiers if conscription is discontinued – but market fluctuations, the number of young people from a particular year, and terms of employment are decisive factors.*

All countries had difficulties in recruiting specialists such as mechanics – but the same applies to countries where conscription has not been discontinued (e.g. Denmark). The ability to find recruits for the classic military functions varies from country to country – and the people interviewed generally stated that the number of young people from a particular year and conditions in the business community (and hereby job opportunities and wages outside the military) are decisive elements in the ability to recruit people. Another major factor is that soldiers' prestige has generally increased among the public after the suspension of conscription. Terms of employment also proved to play a central role. Experience has shown that the wording of contracts is important. Contracts must provide the military with the opportunity to assess potential soldiers before they sign contracts and retain them under terms of employment that give the best possible result from the money spent on training them. This should be supplemented with thorough tests. In addition, terms of employment must be experienced as flexible. This makes it necessary to thoroughly analyse the needs of the armed forces and the wishes of the target group and to design contracts in accordance with these. Experience also shows that it is not an advantage to retain all personnel in lifelong positions. In the Netherlands, for instance, it has been found cost-effective to retain manual level personnel for eight years.

*It costs a great deal of money to reorganise a country's military from conscript-based to professional forces, but most of the costs are connected with the fact that reorganisation increases the opportunity for active participation in international operations – and thereby also the need to prepare for them. And this is more expensive than training soldiers in national defence.*

In all four countries military expenditure had increased since the suspension of conscription. This development is due to three mutually independent circumstances: First, there have been higher payroll costs;

second, recruitment and selection have become more expensive; and third, there have been costs that can be specifically ascribed to a change in the tasks performed by the military (from national defence to international operations).

The higher payroll costs are due to the fact that professional soldiers are generally paid more than conscripts, and therefore vary exclusively according to the number of soldiers and their wage levels, something that was predictable because this development was bound to follow the general wage development outside the military. Overall military strength had been considerably reduced in all four countries as part of the reorganisation, but it has generally also been necessary to raise the wages of professional soldiers in order to be able to maintain the desired personnel force (this does not apply to the Netherlands, however).

The higher costs of recruitment and selection are partly due to higher campaign costs, and partly to a greater need to test applicants. Recruitment costs can to a certain extent be counterbalanced by structural savings caused by reduced costs of maintaining barracks and the training structure when conscription is discontinued. However, recruitment costs vary (similarly to payroll costs) with the development of the national economy and demographic developments, which together determine the competition for manpower.

The third parameter, the higher costs involved in using the armed forces, depends on several factors: First, it depends on whether the increased international capability is used for anything at all, and then where soldiers are used, how they are used, and for which purposes play a major role. Broadly speaking, the change from conscription to professional armed forces could be compared to a family that exchanges its family car for a four-wheel drive vehicle because they intend to take a holiday in the mountains. The classic family car can be used for all of the day-to-day purposes and fuel economy and service costs are known – but it is not so suitable for (and could not negotiate) the mountains. Changing to a four-wheel drive vehicle involves initial costs – but once it has been bought and is parked in the garage, it costs about the same to keep it there. The real difference becomes evident when it is driven – because the four-wheel drive vehicle is more expensive where fuel and service are concerned – but on the other hand, it can stand up to a trip in the mountains that would be problematic for the family car. The family must therefore decide whether to buy a four-wheel drive vehicle that will probably be parked in the garage most of the time because they cannot afford to fill it up and maintain it. Statements from the four countries indicate that they have either increased their participation in international operations or expect to do so – and the unanimous verdict is that the costs of participating in international operations are far higher than the costs of maintaining a national defence force.

*Professional armed forces appear to be more attractive to women than conscript-based forces.*

There has been a bigger influx of women to the military after the suspension of conscription in all four countries. It is difficult to decide, however, whether this due to the reforms themselves or whether it can be ascribed to general changes in the labour market and gender culture. But it can be noted in all of the countries that, after suspending conscription, there has been focus on enlarging the field of applicants for positions in the military and that all of the statements indicate that professional armed forces have greater prestige than conscript-based forces had.

*Recruitment is important, but retaining personnel is at least equally important.*

It is important not to focus exclusively on recruitment when changing from conscription to professional armed forces. In principle, each contract prolongation means a saving on the recruitment budget. The decision made in the Netherlands was to regard the costs of maintaining the politically-established personnel force as a single pool, in which recruitment costs and incentives designed to retain personnel are two aspects of the same calculation. Experience in the Netherlands and France has shown that the most cost-effective term of employment for privates is eight years, and they have had dearly-bought experience in Latvia and Slovakia with types of contract that were not flexible enough. Systems have been introduced in both the Netherlands and France that offer bonuses for prolonging contracts – military service in both Latvia and the Netherlands entitles soldiers to acquire competencies during their term of service that can be used in civilian life.

*Keep a conscription-type window open for young people who are interested – it can be used to watch in both directions!*

The final year of conscription in Latvia and Slovakia was the most popular ever. Assessments from both countries indicate that the young people saw it as their last chance to try out life in the armed forces in a non-binding manner before conscription was suspended. One-year contracts, which are easy to terminate for both parties after the first year, have been retained in France. In practice this means that both parties can look each other over before a binding contract is signed or the young people are sent out on international missions. The shortest possible contract term in the Netherlands is two years and this is the only country where it has been stated that the quality of its forces has deteriorated and that training procedures must be adapted because the professionals are less intellectually able than conscripts were previously. It must be remembered, however, that the selection of conscripts in the Netherlands was extremely elitist so that the alternative to conscripting only the most highly educated would inevitably result in a decline in standards.

#### **Assumption 2:**

Conscription, international operations and national defence.

*Professional armed forces are capable of performing a greater number of and more complex international tasks than conscript-based forces.*

Statements from all countries indicate that the ability to perform INTOPS has improved, and the opinion in France, Slovakia and Latvia is that the quality of their soldiers has generally improved. This is due, among other things, to the fact that soldiers can now focus on their core military tasks in a goal-oriented manner and training can take the time necessary. Professional forces are therefore better able to operate advanced equipment and the increased participation in INTOPS means that equipment is modern and well functioning. Furthermore, the military units can be set up and trained together to a greater extent, which is important for *esprit de corps* and cooperation, and ensures that the soldiers are all familiar with each other, their own tasks and the tasks to be performed by the units. In the Netherlands, however, it has been necessary to change the training system in the military because the soldiers who are recruited generally have shorter and lower levels of education than was the case with conscripts.<sup>78</sup> But statements from the Netherlands indicate that the conditions for performing INTOPS have improved after the suspension of conscription.

*It is not possible to maintain military reserves in a professional military to the same extent as with conscript-based forces.*

There has been concern in all four countries studied regarding the consequences of suspending conscription for national defence. This problem has been handled in different ways, but it appeared in all cases

that the further training of reservists was either inadequate or non-existent. This makes it probable that reservists have rather had symbolic value than real military significance. None of the people interviewed expressed concern about the development in the armed forces' contribution to total defence after the suspension of conscription since conscription in these countries was focused on establishing a classic national defence.

*If conscription is once discontinued, it will be extremely difficult to reintroduce it.*

If the structure on which a standardised conscript training programme is based is once dismantled, not only will professional expertise be lost, but the entire support structure in the form of uniforms, equipment, weapons, stores will also disappear as will, not least, the garrisons and training grounds that are necessary to train a large volume of conscripts<sup>79</sup>. Experience from the countries studied shows that this entire structure must be phased out rapidly in order to finance the change to professional armed forces – including establishing recruiting offices, acquiring new equipment, and possibly higher wages for the professionals. The most decisive element is probably the physical structure in the form of training grounds and garrisons. If these facilities are first sold off, it will be extremely difficult to reverse the development because, in all probability, it would make it necessary to nationalise private property and confiscate nature reserves and similar areas, and institute huge capital expenditure to reintroduce conscription. Weapons and boots could be acquired relatively easily while the training structure could also be left open in the professional armed forces (which must naturally also perform training). So, reacquiring barracks and training grounds would be the financially weightiest and most difficult investments.

### **Assumption 3:**

Conscription, transparency and social cohesion.

*Conscription plays an important role as a link between the military and the rest of the population, and there should be goal-oriented plans to maintain this connection if conscription is suspended.*

There was concern in all of the four countries studied with regard to how the abolition or suspension of conscription would affect the public's view of the military. A dedicated effort was therefore made in all four countries to ensure the continued profiling of the military through various initiatives. These measures worked, and the status of the military was therefore not influenced in a negative, but rather a positive, direction. Another recurring feature was that the professional military cadre – after initial opposition – views the reforms as a success. It was emphasised in all four countries that the role of conscription as a link between the military and the rest of the population is among the most important considerations to take into account in connection with discontinuing conscription. Initiatives such as the Youth Corps and summer camps, for instance, addressed to young people were favourably received in Latvia and Slovakia, and "Citizens' Day", with the mandatory participation of both sexes in France and the centrally imposed military "open house arrangements" in all countries can provide inspiration. "Veterans' Day" in the Netherlands fulfilled a function by drawing attention to the armed forces and national unity around the nation's military contribution.

### **Assumption 4:**

Conscription, justice and rights.

*The concept of civic duty is not influenced by suspending conscription.*

This is because the civilian population generally feels there is a connection between duty and rights – and if special rights do not accompany the special duty constituted by conscription, it is difficult to discern the meaning of a duty. Furthermore, a majority of the population believes that responsibility for the educative function and upbringing in general lies with parents and the school system.

**Subsidiary conclusion:**

This study of four assumptions about conscription shows that the central challenges that would be presented by discontinuing conscription are connected with economy and capability. Economically, professionalising the armed forces would require a number of initial costs, which could partly be financed through savings on the operational structure. Where recruitment and pay are concerned, an increase in costs can be expected, but the greatest burden can be expected to come from the additional costs consequent on participating in international operations. This is due to the fact that fully professional armed forces are capable of committing to such operations more frequently and in more demanding scenarios than conscript-based forces.

On the other hand, the study shows that there is no automatic connection between suspending conscription and alienating the armed forces from the population as a whole. But ensuring the connection between professional armed forces and the civilian population requires conscious prioritisation and careful planning. However, the study also shows that the reputation of the armed forces improves with the discontinuation of conscription. This is not least due to the fact that the element of duty is seen as unjust when only a very small part of the population is liable for conscription.

On the basis of this, the conclusion of the report will focus on the connection between economy, recruitment, and military capability because the influence of conscription on social cohesion, and the view of the significance of the armed forces and conscription for the concept of civic duty is only discussed at a general level. The conclusion will similarly summarise the experience gained in the four countries that could be of particular value for Denmark.

# 09 Conclusion and perspectives

Deciding whether there should be conscription in Denmark is a political issue. As can be seen from the introductory sections of this report, conscription is an institution which, over and above its purely military function, serves a number of other practical and symbolic purposes. The debate on conscription should therefore also include elements other than those regarding how it would be possible to procure and organise military forces after having suspended conscription. Otherwise, there is a risk of overlooking the potential for developing conscription and the functions it fulfils. As Pertti Joenniemi writes: "There is, of course, no denying that conscription in its modern tapping has had its day. To put it mildly, it is not booming as a system of manpower recruitment, although it can also be stated that there exists more options for the system than merely remaining on the scene in its traditional form or going totally down the drain. The matter is not one of either-or."<sup>80</sup>

All deliberations should include the fact that conscription manifests itself in a unique context in every country that has or has had it. As Henning Sørensen's analysis shows, the Danish conscription model has already been adapted to the ambition that the armed forces must be able to contribute to international operations. It is also far removed from the Norwegian and Swedish models, which to a far greater extent focus on national defence and – he argues – on maintaining a popular base for the military.<sup>81</sup>

The four countries studied thus represent four different political inheritances, and these political differences lead to military traditions that it is difficult to compare and that imply completely different historical narratives on conscription and its significance. We cannot therefore transfer experience or conclusions from the four countries direct to Denmark, but we can observe the challenges the countries were faced with and derive inspiration for our own debate on the advantages, disadvantages, limitations and opportunities of a military system with or without conscription.

The decision to suspend conscription in all four countries was part of a broader vision for the armed forces. Where Latvia and Slovakia were concerned, the goal was first and foremost NATO membership, as it was expressed in the Membership Action Plans. The decision was thereby made as part of a complete reorientation of security policy in the two countries. Where France was concerned, the first Gulf War in 1991 was an eye-opener as it prompted an analysis of the organisation of the armed forces. Experience thus led directly to the recommendations in the 1994 white paper to reduce the duration of conscription which,

based on the subsequent debate, paved the way for the decision to professionalise the armed forces. In the Netherlands, the findings of a commission led to the debate that resulted in the decision to suspend conscription. This was thus a question in all four countries of a compromise with broad support as a follow-up to a national vision of reorganising the armed forces to handle new tasks. The debate on the role of conscription should therefore not be held in isolation from a general debate regarding what the armed forces should be used for. The problem hereby resembles the deliberations regarding the future Danish need for an air force – including fighter planes – which similarly requires a general analytical, progressive approach, as pointed out in Henrik Ø. Breitenbauch's report "Kompass og kontrakt" (Compass and contract) on the need for a Danish national security strategy.<sup>82</sup>

The debate should also include the fact that the experience from all four countries studied shows that conscripts are unable to perform all of the tasks that are required in consideration of the focus of modern warfare and contemporary focus on international operations. There were thus deliberations in all countries regarding the extent to which conscription could be continued in a reduced time span of three to six months. The conclusion in all of them was that conscription tied up such a large share of military resources in the form of manpower in the training structure, equipment and building structure that it was necessary to discontinue it and release these resources so that they could fulfil their military objectives.

The study thus shows more specifically that by reforming their armed forces through the discontinuation of conscription, states find that they can send out a larger proportion of their forces on international operations, and that the ability of these forces to perform these international tasks is improved. It also shows, however, that there is a series of costs attendant on professionalising the military and that the goal – enhanced ability to enter into international operations – also leads to higher costs in the longer term.

The most important military point in the report is therefore that professionalising the armed forces increases the quality of soldiers and the general ability to send out troops to international operations. This is first and foremost because technological developments and the complexity of international operations make greater demands on training soldiers that requires a goal-oriented effort on the part of the armed forces as a whole – and focuses on tasks in the international environment. The unanimous assessment in the four countries studied was that these requirements could not be fulfilled within the actual duration of conscription and that prolonging the duration of conscription to a length that would make the necessary training possible was not politically viable. Experience has also shown that professional armed forces *vis-à-vis* conscript-based forces can to a greater extent be mustered and deployed together – which offers a number of military advantages in the form of *esprit de corps*, unified training and personal knowledge of specific individual relationships between soldiers.

Furthermore, the fact that the task of training conscripts kept a significant part of the military organisation in a paradigm where the focus was on putting conscripts through a brief course of training for national defence purposes should not be underestimated. This meant that major areas of the military training organisation devoted their mind-set to optimising training for national defence and the ongoing development, evaluation, and adjustment of basic military training thereby received most of its input from conscripts who had never intended to enter the professional cadre and therefore focused on national defence. By discontinuing conscription it was possible to focus on professional soldiers where basic military training was concerned – and all development, evaluation and adjustment of training measures were therefore performed in the knowledge that, when their training



was completed, the soldiers would have to be capable of carrying out complex tasks – also in international surroundings. This paradigm shift (from the focus of basic training being on national defence to focus on international operations) meant that the organisation could direct its undivided attention towards a single task instead of two tasks and thereby focus on the development of doctrine, for instance, and acquiring equipment for international operations, without expending energy on processing input which would support training for national defence to a greater extent.

The most important economic point in the report is that professionalising the military with the aim of committing more forces to international operations led to more expenditure on the military. This is not necessarily because maintaining professional armed forces is more expensive than maintaining conscript-based forces – certainly not if neither of them were used for any purpose. Paradoxically, the reason for the higher expenditure is probably rather that professional forces will actually be able to perform the tasks that politicians give the modern military. As preparation for and participation in international operations is far more expensive than the traditional drawing up of national defence forces, more intensive participation in international operations would in itself increase the costs of the armed forces. This general development depends on whether or not there is conscription – but when professionalization proves to increase capability, the problem becomes more acute. The greater applicability of professional forces could present decision-makers with a dilemma because investments in enhanced military efficiency will be unprofitable if the heightened capability is not used. To return to the example of the four-wheel drive vehicle, the Danish family could end up by selling their family car in order to buy the vehicle which, while it might be decorative in the garage, they would be inclined to leave there because it is too expensive to fill up.

So, irrespective of whether the Danish conscription model has already been optimised to prioritise international operations, full professionalization could exchange the approximately 2,150 conscript man-years for professional forces – and this would unavoidably change capability.

Another important point involves recruitment. Conscription has traditionally been seen as an effective instrument from which the military can acquire a constant flow of professional soldiers. The study shows that this could probably be done equally well without conscription. On the other hand, it would require sharper focus on establishing employment criteria and on testing and screening applicants. It would be necessary to develop testing systems that could efficiently and rapidly measure applicants' skills against well-defined criteria and establish terms of employment that resulted in retaining them. In this connection, it is also the case that conscription today fulfils an important function as, in its current form, it provides the military with a four-month window through which it is possible to observe and evaluate potential soldiers who could be employed under contract, and allows potential soldiers to try out life in the military. If conscription is discontinued, careful consideration should be given to how it would be possible to create a similar trial period contractually – with the help of short-term contracts with a mutually non-binding termination clause, for instance. Furthermore, it would probably be necessary to find more money for recruitment campaigns and perhaps higher wages and more costs as incentives for professional forces.

The study also shows that that it is a mistake to become hypnotised by the function of conscription as a recruiting mechanism. If there is a wish to maintain an economically and professionally well balanced military force, it is at least equally important to be able to retain soldiers once they have been recruited and trained. Even the most efficient recruiting mechanism will run into major challenges and a

cumulative problem if the armed forces lose personnel at high speed. The more people who resign prematurely, the greater the burden of recruitment, and dissatisfied personnel would spread the story of why they resigned and thereby contribute to the picture of an unsatisfactory workplace – which could influence the public's general view of the armed forces and that of the specific target groups recruits are to be found in. Just as with a serious wound, the thing to do is stop the bleeding as quickly as possible – the problem cannot be solved solely with the help of blood transfusions. Retaining people and recruitment are two sides of the same coin, namely maintaining the workforce.

The study also shows that "Citizens' Day" (as in France) and maintaining a draft register (as in the Netherlands) provide military recruitment staff with access to databases for direct-mail campaigns. Irrespective of whether conscription in Denmark remains unchanged in the future, is suspended, or adjusted, consideration should be given to extending "Armed Forces' Day" to include young people of both sexes and to use the arrangement to register interested women in a database for the purpose of performing direct-mail campaigns. Experience shows that the view of conscription as unjust was a strong argument for discontinuing it. If conscription is maintained in Denmark, an effort should be made to prevent it from appearing unjust by ensuring the equality of young people of both sexes.

Furthermore, experience from Latvia and Slovakia shows that a goal-oriented effort in relation to young people can lead to good results where recruitment is concerned. This could take the form of the military making an active contribution to open-air activities such as scouts' camps. Initiatives of this kind, however, pose a number of political and ethical questions and it is doubtful whether the experience from Latvia and Slovakia in its specific form could be transferred to Denmark.

Where national defence is concerned, suspending conscription would gradually lead to a reduction in reservists. This caused some concern in the Netherlands, Latvia and Slovakia, but less in France. However, the decision was made with open eyes in all countries – and in this connection prioritising the ability to play an effective role at a high level in international operations weighed more heavily than prioritising the ability to draw up a national defence force. These countries have hereby placed their security in the hands of their allies to a greater extent. In the light of the historically long early-warning period and what has become dramatically reduced conscript training and the increasing demands made on soldiers on the modern battlefield, the value of reservists is estimated to be limited under any circumstances. Technological developments therefore present not only modern military forces with challenges when they are sent out on international operations, they also make it highly doubtful whether it would ever be possible for a conscript-based military to be mobilised, trained and deployed before the battle had been lost and the war ended.

No concerns were voiced in any of the countries regarding the suspension of conscription in relation to the total defence of their countries, and only in the Netherlands has specific legislation been enacted on re-conscription in connection with such events as natural catastrophes, for instance. This could be due to the fact that the total defence in these countries is organised in essentially different ways and places completely different emphasis on the role of the armed forces in this area. As Denmark, however, has placed great emphasis on the ability of the armed forces to help to perform tasks connected with total defence, careful consideration should be given to how a change in or discontinuation of conscription would influence the performance of this task. This would make it an obvious step to look into which synergy effects could be obtained by linking the remaining military purpose of conscription – namely preparing conscripts to perform military-related tasks in the total defence system – more permanently to the other

military elements in the total defence system. This would first and foremost mean a more central role for the Home Guard.

If there is a will to maintain conscription in Denmark, and if this is justified by the need for resources for total defence, consideration could be given to transferring part or all of the organisation of conscript training to the Home Guard where volunteers are already trained in disciplines and at a level that do not differ dramatically from the training that conscripts receive.

A solution of this kind, as described by Christian Brøndum in his article in *Berlingske Tidende*, could comprise the armed forces calling up conscripts and handling the first part of their training, after which the Home Guard could take responsibility for the remainder, which could target their being drawn up in the total defence system,<sup>83</sup> a suggestion which would mean the armed forces were still visible to conscripts. Furthermore, considerations could also include the possibility that this solution would enable armed forces' personnel to be used during those periods when they were not taking part in international operations, but the model is problematic. This is because a period lasting only four months would mean that transferring conscripts between two authorities alone would be a heavy administrative burden. It would be necessary to maintain the organisation and structure to train conscripts both in the armed forces and the Home Guard and it would probably require additional resources to perform the administrative transfer of about 6,300 people a year between the two authorities.<sup>84</sup> In addition, this thinking is symptomatic of conscript-based national defence. And if conscription was discontinued there would be no need to search for tasks for the forces between the periods of deployment to international operations: A professionalised military that takes part in international operations would have enough to do recovering after missions or planning and preparation for the next mission. There would be no need to maintain conscription as a "gap-filler" between missions.

Another, more far-reaching model could be to place the entire conscription period under the Home Guard. This is particularly appropriate if the most important function of conscription is still seen to be the maintenance of a force of reservists who can be drawn up in the total defence system. This would make it possible for conscript training to be planned, organised, performed and checked in a goal-oriented manner with the aim of drawing up conscripts for the total defence system – and under the same authority. In the long term, this would make it possible to obtain the greatest rationalisation benefits because complete training in the Home Guard would to a great extent make it possible to utilise the existing administration, training structure, buildings and support facilities. Over and above enhancing the role of the Home Guard in the total defence system and its public profile, a solution of this kind would ensure that training conscripts for tasks in the total defence system could be coordinated to the optimum and would also maintain conscription as a recruitment base for the armed forces. Additionally, it would allow the armed forces to concentrate on the operative tasks of preparing and performing international operations. The costs of basic training for conscripts would be defrayed by the Home Guard where there is already basic military training, and it would clarify what conscription actually costs society as the appropriations for the armed forces and the Home Guard would necessarily require adjustment after the changes in their complex of tasks. It would also maintain an opportunity for young people to try out military life at the same time as it would be possible to assess their ability to pursue a professional career in collaboration with the Home Guard. For the armed forces, a scheme of this kind would make it possible to concentrate efforts on preparing and performing international operations.

It is considered that conscription under the auspices of the Home Guard would also make it possible to maintain the recruitment base for the

armed forces. However, this would make it necessary for conscripts to consider service in the Home Guard as part of their common military reality. This could be achieved, for instance, by allowing the armed forces' personnel to teach modules or entire courses in connection with conscript training or lending out instructors. The armed forces could teach a module on "international operations", for example. It is felt to be less complicated, however, to maintain a close link between conscription and posting on international operations if this remains with the armed forces rather than it being performed by the Home Guard. It would therefore be much more appropriate for the Home Guard to perform the entire training course for conscripts in relation to these deliberations.

If allowing the Home Guard to take over responsibility for conscription in whole or in part is considered, deliberations on this should include which purpose conscription and the Home Guard are expected to serve in the future. This also indicates a need for a unified strategic vision for the armed forces.

Two other functions of conscription are looked into in greater detail in this report. The first, the significance of conscription in creating transparency and social cohesion, was paid close attention to in the reform processes of all four countries investigated. The study shows that assessments of the image of the armed forces were carried out in all of them – and that all of these assessments indicated that the image had been enhanced after the discontinuation of conscription. Goal-oriented and structured campaigns were also carried out in all four countries – in the form of "open house arrangements", for instance, and "Veterans' Day" and, in this connection, the military units were all directed to carry out local attention-attracting arrangements. In summary, this was regarded in the four countries as an important area to carry out measures in – if conscription were discontinued – but neither those asked, nor the general developments in society, indicated that the reorganisation had been of consequence for the cohesion of the state.

The other function investigated in the study was the element of duty in conscription. That is, the extent to which importance should be ascribed to conscription as a civic duty and whether suspending conscription basically influences the public's view of the relationship between rights and duties. The study shows that in all four countries, one of the two common central decision-making parameters was that conscription affected people unevenly and unjustly. (The other common central decision-making parameter was the desire to send out more forces on international operations). As only a small percentage of young people from a particular year were called up, it appeared odd to talk about duty. And as those called up were sorted by gender and qualifications, at the same time as the national economy was running in top gear, the view of conscription as unjust was exacerbated.

With regard to timing, experience from the four countries showed that when and how conscription was discontinued was not unimportant. If the reform is carried out during a period of favourable economic development, the armed forces would appear as a new player on a market where competition for young people was fierce and ruthless. In such a situation, a concerted effort to recruit the young people it needed would have to be made even at the most experienced company – and, in this connection, the armed forces would lose out to companies that could adjust wages. Experience from the four countries shows that job security, development and career opportunities, and a prestigious job are all incentives it would be more realistic for the armed forces to play up.

Furthermore, attention must also be paid to demographic developments. Suspending conscription during a period when the number of young people from a particular year is declining will in itself

lead to heightened competition for these people. If this coincides with economic growth into the bargain, it will present recruitment staff with an extremely challenging task.

One of the more innovative and successful measures highlighted in this conclusion is the Dutch model for acquiring operating teams that specialise in combat surgery. It must be possible to find a broader application for the idea of entering into a mutually-binding collaboration with the private sector or other elements of the public sector in order to acquire specialised professional groups – and this is not necessarily connected with making a decision on the future of conscription. In the specific case, this is a question of a contract that obliges hospitals to provide the armed forces with operating teams at a given term of notice and on agreed terms in return for the armed forces paying the wages of the operating teams. The model can therefore be used directly in areas that, under domestic conditions, are covered by instances other than the armed forces, but where the armed forces are obliged to take over the task during international operations (e.g. also dentists). Consideration should also be given to whether the model could also be adapted to other areas where the armed forces perform tasks under domestic conditions, but where the extent of the task, its urgency or character, changes during international operations – for instance workshop and maintenance tasks that do not necessarily require a military background. Depending on the status the people in question are given when they are sent out on international operations, the concept is to a greater or lesser extent related to the use of what are known as private military companies that perform tasks in mission areas in return for payment so that the military need not use soldiers to perform them. The Dutch model might possibly provide an opportunity to avoid some of the problems connected with the use of private military companies and to make agreements with professionals in areas these companies do not cover.

Over and above the authors' conclusions, this conclusion also includes two pieces of good advice that the people interviewed in all countries pointed out on their own initiative:

First, conscription should not be abolished – it should only be put on standby. This maintains the constitutional possibility of reintroducing it, which makes good sense. Over the years, several countries have discontinued and then reintroduced conscription – among them Great Britain and the USA – but where most countries are concerned, amending the constitution requires either a referendum or at least a large parliamentary majority.

Second, and this piece of advice may appear to contradict the first, it should be noted that once conscription has been discontinued, there is broadly speaking no way out. History naturally shows that conscription can certainly be reintroduced – but the cost of doing so for a society that lacks manpower and when there is only a small number of young people from a particular year – would be enormous. It would not only make it necessary to regain lost expertise and change the culture of the professional armed forces (which would differ from conscript-based forces), it would also be necessary to make huge investments in equipment, uniforms, weapons, exercise grounds and buildings.

Whether or not conscription should continue in Denmark is, as mentioned above, a political question. And this is due to the fact that the significance of conscription outreaches its formal military function. Today, this formal function comprises training personnel who can form part of a force of 12,000 men for total defence. Conscription in its present form does not produce soldiers who are ready for combat, but it does help to draw young people's attention to the armed forces. Recruitment to the armed forces thereby has an important, relevant function. However, there are also many costs connected with it in the form of a training structure, buildings, administration and logistics.

Consequently, the training structure ties up a large number of the armed forces' most experienced personnel – who are not preparing purposefully to take part in international operations, but on the contrary, are booking shooting ranges and preparing teaching materials when they could be on their way to international operations instead. It also follows that each year, the armed forces finance approximately 2,150 conscript man-years distributed between about 6,300 young men. But each year, the armed forces send home about 75 percent – or a total of 5,000 of them – without them signing contracts. Payroll costs and board for conscripts who are sent home without signing contracts alone amount to at least DKK 250 million a year and to this must be added the costs of billeting and training as well as a considerable amount of administration.<sup>85</sup> This money could be spent instead on making service in the armed forces as a profession more attractive and thereby help to retain highly-qualified and experienced soldiers. If an enlisted private with five years seniority prolongs his contract, important expertise is retained that it would take several years to regain through recruitment, training, and posting abroad. In this sense, successfully retaining personnel is more cost-effective than recruitment. If this fails, the armed forces lose expertise that is at present compensated for by recruiting new soldiers. Focusing on recruitment rather than on retaining personnel therefore leads to the view that the military is dependent on conscription. This view can prevent new thinking in relation to the overall manpower situation in the armed forces. Such new thinking could range from specific incentives designed to retain personnel to work on creating an organisational culture that corresponds to politicians' visions for the armed forces.

A rigid view of conscription must not be allowed to stand in the way of the progressive development of the armed forces.

# 10 Recommendations

The question as to whether conscription in Denmark should be suspended, modified, or retained is outside the perspectives of this report. The recommendations therefore fall into three categories: recommendations that should be given consideration if conscription is discontinued; recommendations that are relevant if it is maintained in some form or other; and finally, recommendations that are relevant irrespective of whether conscription is discontinued or maintained.

## **10.1. Recommendations independent of whether conscription is discontinued or maintained in Denmark**

*Prepare a national security strategy.*

A national security strategy would help politicians to organise professional armed forces that are well balanced in relation to visions and goals, as well as threats and opportunities. The future of conscription could thereby be clarified for politicians as part of an overall evaluation of the opportunities and limitations it provides for the role of the armed forces and an assessment of its other functions in society.

*Maintain "Armed Forces' Day" – and let it include both sexes.*

Maintaining "Armed Forces' Day", based on the French model "Citizens' Day" (which includes both sexes) would give the armed forces the opportunity to prepare a direct-mailing list of all young people in the recruitment target group. Extending "Armed Forces' Day" to include both sexes could only be seen by politicians and the public as just and in line with Danish efforts on behalf of gender equality. Irrespective of whether conscription is maintained or discontinued in Denmark, men and women should be regarded as equally qualified – and women are therefore entitled to the same purposeful orientation on the armed forces and the same job offers as men.

*Recruitment to and retaining personnel in the armed forces should to a greater degree be seen as two sides of the same coin.*

If the armed forces are more successful at retaining personnel this would save money not only on recruitment, but on training as well. The Armed Forces' Personnel Service should therefore work on the basis of flexible budgets that make it possible to reorder the priorities between training personnel and recruitment. It might be more cost-effective to cancel recruiting campaigns and spend the money on bonus schemes for specialists instead.

*Age composition in the armed forces should be adapted to the tasks that are to be performed.*

Experience from France and the Netherlands shows that professional armed forces are better served if manual-level personnel are employed for an average of eight years. Consequently, very short-term employment is not financially viable, but it would also mean that professional armed forces would need fewer administrative jobs and training positions that are used in conscript-based forces as classic "withdrawal" posts. Professional armed forces also need fewer lifelong jobs and this would bring about a need for schemes designed to facilitate reabsorption into society. Age composition should also be given close consideration in conscript-based armed forces – regardless of whether or not a career in the armed forces begins with conscription. A complex of tasks that is very physically demanding would make it necessary to have more 25 year-old than 55 year-old personnel.

*The "Dutch hospital model" should be tried out in Denmark – and be enlarged with functions other than a surgeon's team.*

An investigation should be carried out in the armed forces to see if there are areas in which contracts could be signed with the business community or public sector institutions that oblige them to provide the armed forces with technical specialists at a given term of notice and on agreed terms in return for the armed forces defraying payroll costs. A scheme of this kind would help to make the armed forces more flexible in areas that require a high degree of specialisation, but where the need to man specialised functions under "barracks conditions" in Denmark is limited.

*There should be a "Veterans' Day" in Denmark.*

The armed forces' image in the four countries investigated was enhanced after the suspension of conscription, but great attention was paid to the challenge of maintaining contact between the public and the armed forces. Professional armed forces that primarily perform tasks outside the borders of a country will need to celebrate their own heroes while emphasising their links with the population as a whole. A "Veterans' Day" could contribute to this. A scheme of this kind could be used as a marketing measure that would help to "brand" the armed forces and provide an opportunity to strengthen the image of the individual soldier.

*The Danish armed forces should be allowed to make an active, visible contribution to youth activities with a military strain such as scouts' camps and sports arrangements.*

Even though the models in Latvia and Slovakia described above could not be directly transferred to Denmark under existing conditions, it is not unthinkable that the armed forces could increase their visibility among young people – through "branding" the armed forces' sports culture, for instance, by directly and indirectly supporting open-air activities. Such activities could strengthen the profile of the armed forces with regard to the target group for recruitment.

## **10.2 Recommendations if conscription is discontinued in Denmark:**

*Do not abolish conscription – simply put it on standby.*

Putting conscription on standby maintains a constitutional opportunity to reintroduce it. A change in the constitution would therefore not be necessary. In addition, the standby option – at least at a symbolic level – would maintain the connection between the public and the armed forces. A solution of this kind would make it easier for politicians to reintroduce conscription if this should be appropriate and the duty to take part in defending the country in cases of crises or wars would continue to have a place in the minds of the public.



*Make a greater effort to strengthen recruitment – this should include a bigger organisation and more money.*

Experience shows that more money is necessary to market the armed forces as a workplace and that the recruitment organisation must be enlarged when conscription is discontinued. In connection with recruiting campaigns, account should also be taken of the fact that experience shows that when conscription is discontinued, the armed forces attract a higher proportion of female applicants. A greater effort to recruit people would mean that more money would have to be set aside for this purpose and new methods of screening applicants developed.

*Establish clear purposes and goals for the armed forces – create balance between ways and means.*

It would be possible for professional armed forces to perform a larger number of and more advanced military tasks than could conscript-based forces. Therefore, this makes it even more important for politicians to balance their priorities and objectives in accordance with a general strategy.

*Make the decision at a time when competition for manpower is declining.*

Experience shows that a coincidence between a small number of young people from a particular year and a lack of manpower get professionalization off to a poor start. An effort should therefore be made to implement any abolition or suspension during a period when this would create as little as possible turmoil in the armed forces and the business community.

*Create flexible contracts that offer young people the opportunity to try out life in the armed forces before they bind themselves for a longer period of time and would also make it possible for the armed forces to evaluate them.*

One-year contracts have proved to be very suitable in creating a broader view of matters for both parties. In practice, such a contract term would resemble the conscription models that were current in Denmark during the 1990s – but with the great difference that all participants would be volunteers.

*Pay close attention to the relationship between the population and the armed forces.*

Make open-house arrangements and other attention-creating activities established production targets for military units. In addition to public support, visibility and transparency also give results in the form of higher recruitment. Consider activities that address young people in particular, for instance – and hold a "Veterans' Day" at which soldiers who have returned from international operations and veterans are celebrated.

*Establish cost-benefit balances for terms of service and try to design a motivation structure in accordance with these.*

If, for instance, it proves to be the case that eight years is the optimum term of employment in a given function, the incentive structure should be arranged in accordance with this. A bonus could perhaps be given after five years and another after eight years to those who prolong their contracts and comply with the terms of these. This would dramatically reduce training costs in the armed forces – and the level of experience among personnel would also rise.

### 10.3. Recommendations if conscription is maintained in Denmark:

#### *Transfer conscription to the Home Guard.*

A partial transfer to the Home Guard would possibly ensure a more goal-oriented training effort in the direction of a total defence system. However, it would unavoidably lead to doubling-up on some administrative and logistics functions and it would only release limited resources in the armed forces. Savings would therefore also be limited. On the other hand, transferring the entire conscription system to the Home Guard would concentrate the responsibility for training and drawing up reservists in a total defence system and relieve the armed forces of a heavy burden, so that it would be possible to focus on international tasks and military training proper. Unlike a partial transfer, a complete transfer would make it possible to utilise the existing training structure in the Home Guard and possibly also ensure a higher utilisation rate of the Home Guard's facilities.

A scheme of this kind would release armed forces' personnel so that they could become part of the operative structure which is at present tied up with training reservists for the total defence system. In addition, all of the armed forces could focus on development and training in connection with their operative tasks and international operations.

#### *Extend both "Armed Forces' Day" and conscription to include both sexes.*

There is no practical obstacle to women doing military service and no rational reason why women should not take part in Armed Forces' Day. Experience has shown that the view of conscription as unjust is a powerful argument for discontinuing it. If there is a desire in Denmark to maintain conscription, an effort should be made to prevent it from being seen as unjust, so young people of both sexes should be placed on an equal footing. This would improve opportunities for the armed forces to market their training with regard to women and could result in broadening the group of applicants. For the public, it would mean gender equality in the area of conscription.

# 11 Appendix

## Interview guide: Defence without conscription

### Intro

- Short presentation of the persons representing DIMS and DIMS as an Institution.
- Tell where the report will be published and what purpose the report is hoped to serve.
- The topic in our report is "Defence without Conscription". Foreign experiences with abolition of conscription". Theoretical articles. Your "story" is giving the theoretical a face by painting a picture of the debates, arguments and motives, which were behind your decision before you decided to abolish conscription.
- The experiences you are telling us about **don't need to be your own**. It can also be knowledge about the process you have heard about from other people involved in the process.

Name

Rank/job

Institution

What role/position did the interviewed person have during the abolition of conscription?

Questions

We would like to begin this interview with some questions regarding the organisation of the conscripts system you had before abolition.

**Please tell us a little about the demographic in regard to conscription before abolition.**

- Did conscription apply to both genders? If not: was there any special arrangement for those not included in the draft?
- At what minimum age could conscripts be drafted?
- What was the total number of personnel/youths potentially available for conscription? (Please provide details of the development over the last ten years of conscription.)
- What was the total number of youths potentially fit for conscription? (Please provide details of the development over the last ten years of conscription.)

- How many conscripts were actually drafted per year? (Please provide details of the development over the last ten years of conscription.)

### **How was the conscription system organised before the abolition?**

What was the total number of man-year available from conscription?

How and how much were conscripts paid? (Please provide models and details of development over time.)

- What was the duration of conscription when it was abolished? And have the duration changed in the last 10 years? If yes: How has it changed?
- Please describe if there were any forms of mechanisms to avoid conscription available? (E.g. moral considerations.)
- For how long (if possible) and until what age could conscription be postponed?
- Please describe what mechanisms and reasons were valid for postponing conscription (E.g. educational considerations.)

What was the role of the conscripts in the armed forces?

- Did conscription provide personnel for other services than the military sector? If yes: which?
- How was conscripts organised – in units with only conscripts or in mixed units?
- Were conscripts allowed to fill in functional duties in regular military units (i.e. provide regular military service) or were they only allowed to go through training?
- Were conscripts trained or enrolled as NCOs, or in the officer corps (as regulars or reserves) while conscripted?

### **Please tell us a little about conscription and re-drafting before the abolition of conscription.**

- How often could conscripts be legally re-drafted after their initial duty?
- How often were they actually re-drafted? (Please provide details of the development.)
- What was the maximum age, maximum number of re-drafts and maximum time that conscripts were obliged to serve after their initial duty?

We would like to hear how conscription and INTOPS was organised before the abolition.

- Were conscripts obliged to serve in national operations outside national territory as part of their initial duty? (Please provide details.)
- Were conscripts allowed to serve in national operations outside national territory as part of their initial duty? (Please provide details.)
- Were conscripts obliged to serve in international operations as part of their initial duty?
- Were conscripts allowed to serve in international operations as part of their initial duty?
- If conscripts were obliged to serve in international operations: Could they then be re-drafted to take part in international operations?

Did the MoD encourage conscripts to sign a contract and thereby become professional soldiers?

- Were there special recruitment campaigns targeting conscripts for professional military duty? (Please describe.)
- Were there special incentives for conscripts who signed up for professional military duty? (Please describe.)

We will now like to know something about the decision process, which went before the final decision was taken to abolish conscription.

How was the decision process initiated?

- Who initiated the debate for or against conscription? (Military, politicians or the public?)
- Were there any specific reasons why the debate started at the given time? (Bigger focus on INTOPS etc.)
- If possible please try to describe the arguments, motives and reasons for and against abolition of conscription, which must have surfaced before the decision to abolish conscription was taken? (Were the motives economic, political, horizontal legitimacy or something else?)
- Who were the first people/institutions to raise these arguments? Was it inside military, political or the general public?
- Did the argument about conscription seen as a question of duty ever surface during the debate?

We will now like to know something about how the decision of abolishing conscription was implemented.

How was the decision implemented?

- When the decision about abolition of conscription was taken was conscription then totally abolished by constitution or was it put on standby?
- If conscription was put on standby: What is the national alert (expected time frame) to re-activate conscription?
- If conscription was put on standby: Please describe the considered organizational response to re-activate?
- Under which circumstances can conscription be re-activated?

We have now heard and talked about how the conscription system was organized before the decision to abolish conscription was taken, what initiated the abolition process and how the decision was implemented after the decision to abolish conscription was taken. We would now like to hear about the situation in the armed forces after the abolition of conscription. So please tell us about the results/consequences within the military establishment.

What were the results/consequences within the military establishment?

- Was the garrison structure affected? (Were garrisons or military installations closed?)
- Did recruitment to the professional military forces drop after the abolition of conscription? (Please provide details of recruitment statistics stating internal and external recruitment.)
- What was the development in expenses to recruitment after the abolition of conscription?

Has the development of male-to-female ratio of professionals changed since the abolition of conscription? If yes: how?

- How has the ability to generate troops to international operations been affected since abolition of conscription?

Please tell us what the societal results/consequences have been since the abolition of conscription.

In your opinion what considerations for the future military structure and employment do the experiences with the abolition of conscription pose?

How was and has the decision about abolition of conscription been perceived within the society, political and military apparatus?

Have there been any forms of change of opinion within these segments over time?

Finally we would like to know if you think there are any questions or topics we haven't talked about and which you regard as important.

## Schematic list

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### Questions

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<b>Recruitment/economic</b>	<b>Territorial defence/International Operations</b>	Horizontal legitimacy	Question of duty
Please tell us a little about the demographic in regard to conscription before abolition.	What was the role of the conscripts in the armed forces?	How was the decision process initiated?	Please tell us what the societal results/consequences have been since the abolition of conscription.
How was the conscription system organised before the abolition?	Please tell us a little about conscription and re-drafting before the abolition of conscription.	How was the decision implemented?	
Did the MoD encourage conscripts to sign a contract and thereby become professional soldiers?	We would like to hear how conscription and INTOPS were organised before the abolition.	When the decision about abolition of conscription was taken was conscription then totally abolished by constitution or was it put on standby?	
What were the results/consequences within the military establishment?	If conscription was put on standby: What is the national alert (expected time frame) to re-activate conscription?	Under which circumstances can conscription be re-activated?	
	If conscription was put on standby: Please describe the considered organisational response to re-activate.	Please tell us what the societal results/consequences have been since the abolition of conscription.	
	Under which circumstances can conscription be re-activated?		
	How has the ability to generate troops to international operations been affected since abolition of conscription?		
In your opinion what considerations for the future military structure and employment do the experiences with the abolition of conscription pose?	In your opinion what considerations for the future military structure and employment do the experiences with the abolition of conscription pose?	In your opinion what considerations for the future military structure and employment do the experiences with the abolition of conscription pose?	In your opinion what considerations for the future military structure and employment do the experiences with the abolition of conscription pose?
		How was and has the decision to abolish conscription been perceived within the society, political and military apparatus?	

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- The Bruun Report, "De sikkerhedspolitiske vilkår for dansk forsvarspolitik", August 2003.
- Forsvarsforliget for 2005-2009 (The Danish Defence Agreement for 2005-2009).

# 13 Notes

The authors would like to express their warm thanks to former military attaché Colonel Jozef Zigray, Slovakian Embassy in Denmark; military attaché Major Gunars Ozolins, Latvian Embassy in Denmark; and military attaché Colonel Christian Dirchsen, Danish Embassy in France, for their great help in connection with research. We would also like to thank the Danish Defence Personnel Service from which we received help in gaining access to data regarding conscription in Denmark, and Senior Lecturer Henning Sørensen PhD for his extremely thorough, perceptive review of the report. Finally, special thanks to Peter Vesterskov, Ditte Folke Kikkert Henriksen, and Jon Rahbek-Clemmensen MSc (political science) for their unfailing, dedicated support while this report was being written.

The report is exclusively an expression of the authors' analysis and they are solely responsible for the evaluations and views it contains, which are therefore not an expression of any official view on the part of the Danish Institute for Military Studies or any other organisation.

<sup>1</sup>See Anne Knudsen's leading article in *Weekendavisen*, 15 October 2004 "Mere nyt arbejde", for instance, or Christian Brøndums article in *Berlingske Tidende* 7 September 2008 "Hjemmeværnet skal uddanne soldater". But also Mouritzen 2000 and Østergård 1998.

<sup>2</sup>"Nye trusler – nyt forsvar", The Social Democrats' proposal for reforming the Danish armed forces of 1/5/2003, <http://socialdemokraterne.dk/A-Socialdemokraterne-Nye-truslernyt-forsvar-default.aspx?func=article.view&id=55008>", 27 August 2008, "... It appears relatively clear that proper training of soldiers cannot be carried out during such a short period of conscription – even though an attempt would still be connected with major costs. The purpose of maintaining conscription can therefore solely be a matter of principle – or directed towards recruitment. When the high costs of conscription and the relatively limited recruitment are taken into account, it no longer appears reasonable to allow these arguments to stand in the way of a more rational organisation of the armed forces." And item 21 of the Danish People's Party's working programme, of October 2007, "Forsvarspolitik", <http://www.danskfolkeparti.dk/Forsvarspolitik.asp>: "As prescribed by the Constitution, every man capable of bearing arms has a duty to contribute to the country's defence. The Danish People's Party considers conscription a vital part of a democratic military and an important contribution to the public's

understanding of the terms under which the armed forces operate. Only Danish citizens should be enrolled in the armed forces. The Danish People's Party wishes conscription to be extended to include natives of the Faeroe Islands and Greenland, who in this way can contribute to the defence of the entire Kingdom."

<sup>3</sup> Østergaard, *Værnepligt og nationalstat*, Fokus, 5, DUPI, 1998, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Flynn, *Conscription and Democracy. The Draft in France, Great Britain and the United States*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002, p. 3. ..."Out of this theory came the concept of "the nation in arms", which served the French well during the revolutionary wars".

<sup>5</sup> Bernard D. Rostker, *America Goes to War: Managing the Force during Times of Stress and Uncertainty*, RAND National Defense Institute 2007, translation from Danish.

<sup>6</sup> For more details of this, see Keegan, *A History of Warfare*, Pimlico, 1993, p. 228 and pp. 233-234, for instance.

<sup>7</sup> Samuel E. Finer, *State and Nation-Building in Europe: The Role of the Military*, 1975, p. 155. "... The notion which the French had generated: sacrifice, hence equality of sacrifice since the fatherland was a common patrimony - this notion was destined to drive on. In the end it brought its obvious counterpart, equality of sacrifice, equality of benefits. In the Swedish expression, "one soldier, one rifle, one vote."

<sup>8</sup> Eleven OECD and/or NATO member countries have abolished conscription (or put it on standby) since 1995. Eight of these countries have made the decision since 2002. They are Belgium (1995), Bulgaria (2008), France (1996), The Netherlands (1996), Italy (2005), Latvia (2007), Portugal (2004), Romania (2006), Slovakia (2006), Slovenia (2003) and Spain (2002). Thirteen countries still maintain conscription: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Lithuania, Mexico, Norway, Poland, Switzerland, Sweden, South Korea, Turkey and Germany. Finally, eight countries have never had conscription or discontinued it earlier. They are Australia, Canada, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Great Britain and the USA. Cf. CIA World (<http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>).

<sup>9</sup> The Constitution of the Kingdom of Denmark, Section 81.

<sup>10</sup> The Executive Order on the Danish Conscription Act, LBK no. 225 of 13/3/2006, cf. consolidated Act no. 1242 of 12 December 2003, with the amendments consequent on Section 19 of Act no. 69 of 4 February 2004 and Section 1 of Act no. 1391 of 21 December 2005, Sections 1 and 2.

<sup>11</sup> Bruun-rapporten, p. 23.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>14</sup> "Among other things, the armed forces' training of conscripts for the mobilisation-based war strength has meant that Danish society could derive benefit from the fact that many Danes have received training in a number of disciplines that now have greater relevance. This applies, for example, to guard duties, first aid, catastrophe help, defence against atomic, chemical, and bacteriological weapons, etc. In the present situation other aspects of traditional conscript training for national defence have lost a great deal of their relevance, but there is still a need for manpower so that the armed forces can continue to contribute to total defence. The duration of conscription established in Section 81 of the Constitution should therefore be adapted in accordance with this."

From the text of "Forsvarsforlig 2005-2009", p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> But the duration of conscription in the Royal Life Guards is eight months, in the Guard Hussar Regiment Cavalry Squadron it is twelve months, and on the Royal Ship Dannebrog it is nine months.

<sup>16</sup> "Rapport vedrørende evaluering af værnepligtsordningen", Bilag 1 til FKO-KDP2 skr. nr. 0601967-34 af 2007-0306, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>18</sup> In Danish: "Forsvarets Rekruttering".

<sup>19</sup> Source: StatBank Denmark, BEF 1A07: Population as at 1 January by area, gender, civil status and age, table generated 3 September 2008.

<sup>20</sup> Source: The Danish Defence Recruitment Board (*Forsvarets Rekruttering*), [http://forsvaretsuddannelser.dk/ForsvaretsDagOgVaernepligt/Pages/udfaldet\\_af\\_sessionerne\\_paa\\_landsplan.aspx](http://forsvaretsuddannelser.dk/ForsvaretsDagOgVaernepligt/Pages/udfaldet_af_sessionerne_paa_landsplan.aspx), 3. September 2008

<sup>21</sup> As note xi.

<sup>22</sup> The figures in this column were obtained from "The Conscientious Objector Administration" (*Militærnægteradministrationen*), [http://ma.inforce.dk/graphics/Statistik/V%C6RNEPLIGTIGE%20OVERF%D8RT%20TIL%20MILIT%C6RN%C6GTERTJENESTE%20I%20FORHOLD%20TIL%20TVANGSU\\_DSKREVNE%20M%D8DT%20I%20FORSVARET%20OG%20BEREDSKABSSTYRELSE\\_N.pdf](http://ma.inforce.dk/graphics/Statistik/V%C6RNEPLIGTIGE%20OVERF%D8RT%20TIL%20MILIT%C6RN%C6GTERTJENESTE%20I%20FORHOLD%20TIL%20TVANGSU_DSKREVNE%20M%D8DT%20I%20FORSVARET%20OG%20BEREDSKABSSTYRELSE_N.pdf), 3 September 2008.

<sup>23</sup> The figures in this column come from the Danish Defence Personnel Service and were provided by the head of the "Conscription element" (*Værnepligtselementet*), Commander Jørgen Hansen on 28 August 2008. The figures have been checked against figures from "The Conscientious Objector Administration". There are minor differences (+/- approx. 300 people), which can be ascribed to different methods of calculation (e.g. whether conscripts are still registered as called up after possibly having their call-up deferred).

<sup>24</sup> The figures in this column are from the Danish Defence Personnel Service and were provided by the head of the "Conscription element", Commander Jørgen Hansen, on 28 August 2008.

<sup>25</sup> Only the figures for the first six months of 2008 are available.

<sup>26</sup> As note xvi.

<sup>27</sup> Source: The web site of Danish Defence Conscription and Recruitment, (*Forsvarets Værnepligt og Rekruttering*) [http://forsvaretsuddannelser.dk/ForsvaretsDagOgVaernepligt/Pages/vaernepligt\\_sloen.aspx](http://forsvaretsuddannelser.dk/ForsvaretsDagOgVaernepligt/Pages/vaernepligt_sloen.aspx), 3 September 2008.

<sup>28</sup> See for instance Kenneth S. Brower, *Measuring Military Power, Building Sustainable and Effective Military Capabilities*, Kristina Spohr Readman (ed.), NATO Science Series, IOS Press, June 2004.

<sup>29</sup> For a discussion of the cost of conscription for society, see Flynn, *Conscription and Democracy. The Draft in France, Great Britain and the United States*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002, pp. 161-187.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.: Flynn, *Conscription and Democracy. The Draft in France, Great Britain and the United States*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002, summarises the difficulties of establishing the cost of conscription on p. 179: "There was also the problem of estimating the actual cost of conscription as opposed to an all-professional force. When a new draft law was being prepared in the summer of 1970, a debate began on this problem. It was clear that conscription represented an economic plus for the military, but there were economic minuses for the civilian population. One had to balance the cheap cost of a conscript against the negatives of constantly training new men, of the indifferent utilization of labor while in uniform against the loss of civilian labor in the civilian economy. This tax on the young was also unfairly borne... Cost estimates also had to consider the loss to the armed forces of well-trained youth who would not likely enter under a volunteer system. The growing civilian economy also needed such men. In the end, the new law was accepted without resolving the economic problems, but by stressing the non-economic considerations, such as the concept of

military service as a debt paid from one generation to the next in defense of the nation."

<sup>31</sup> Sørensen, Henning, *Conscription in Scandinavia during the Last Quarter Century: Developments and Arguments*, *Armed Forces & Society*, 26(2), 2002, pp. 313-344.

<sup>32</sup> "Revolution in Military Affairs" describes the integration of modern computer technology, broad-band links, and weapons systems, as well as the interplay of these elements on the battlefield and the consequences of new technology for battle conditions.

<sup>33</sup> *Building Sustainable and Effective Military Capabilities*, Kristina Spohr Readman (ed.), NATO Science Series, IOS Press, June 2004.

<sup>34</sup> Brower's discussion is based on a number of debatable premises. Among the basic premises in the analysis is that Middle East forces should be deployed in their own neighbouring area, while US forces must first be moved across the Atlantic. In this way, Brower fails to maintain uniformity in the parameters for deployment – and a comparison will end up by favouring the forces that can be deployed in their own neighbouring area. The example illustrates the difficulties of comparing different types of systems organised on the basis of different premises, which has been included in this report with the emphasis on considerations regarding the choice of study objects.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* Part III, Chapter 10, Bertel Heurlin, *Revolution in Danish Military Affairs? Professionalization and Network Centric Warfare. From Building Sustainable and Effective Military Capabilities*, Kristina Spohr Readman (ed.), NATO Science Series, IOS Press, June 2004.

<sup>36</sup> Also see Williams, *Ibid.* Chapter 8, "From Conscripts to Volunteers".

<sup>37</sup> Forsvarsforliget (The Danish Defence Agreement) for 2005 til 2009.

<sup>38</sup> See for instance Henning Sørensen, *Conscription in Scandinavia during the Last Quarter Century: Developments and Arguments*, *Armed Forces & Society*, 26(2), 2002, pp. 313-344.

<sup>39</sup> As Leander writes: "It is hard to claim that conscription constitutes a real bond between the community and the army, an anchor that would allow the community to influence the culture within the armed forces, and perhaps even prevent the military from acting against the interests of the community. Instead, conscription is increasingly argued to split and divide communities; it is viewed as an unjust burden disproportionately placed on the weaker in society. Leander, *Drafting Community: Understanding the Fate of Conscription*, *Armed Forces & Society*, 30(4), 2004, p. 582.

<sup>40</sup> Uffe Østergaard, "Værnepligt og nationalstat", *Fokus*, 5, 1998, pp. 9-10. Østergaard also concludes on p. 18 that the significance of conscription in creating national identity is so valuable that it will be necessary to find a substitute for it if it is discontinued.

<sup>41</sup> "...conscription is argued to have provided a direct way for conscripts to learn about each others' habits, language, world views, and understanding. Conscripts got to know the national community and gained a wider view than that of their own village on who was part of the community and what the other participants actually looked like. They got a sense of the realities, hierarchies, and problems that might have existed elsewhere. But conscripts also got an understanding of the social life outside their own community. They took part in traditions and social events where they were stationed, and might even marry, cementing the social links more permanently. More than simply meeting a place, conscription has often been portrayed as promoting social mobility. Conscription offered young people of modest means an opportunity to begin a career, perhaps even make it to the top of society, by advancing in the military or by using specialized

skills in civilian jobs after service ended. This myth is silent on the crucial questions of who is part of society and which groups are integrated (and excluded?), and how effectively, by conscription. Leander, *Drafting Community: Understanding the Fate of Conscription*, *Armed Forces & Society*, 30(4), 2004, p. 574.

<sup>42</sup> See for instance Frevert, *A Nation in Barracks*, Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2004, pp. 4-5.

<sup>43</sup> "The terms themselves whether *soldat citoyen*, citizen soldier or the post-war 'citizen in uniform', all indicate how deeply conscription affected, and affects civil life, and hence how much it needed, from the very start, convincing political, cultural and social justifications. In this way, the history of conscription, the struggle over alternatives, and the myriad acts of resistance against its introduction and implementation provide fascinating insights into how civil societies see themselves, a debate not only focusing on the relationship between civil societies and violence, and the state monopoly on violence, but equally questioning concepts of citizenship, social integration and gender policy." Frevert, *A Nation in Barracks*, Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2004, p. 2.

<sup>44</sup> "Farewell to Conscription? The Case of Denmark". Joenniemi, *The Changing Face of European Conscription*, DIIS, 2006. Joenniemi and Østergaard adopt different premises for the integrating effect of conscription. While Østergaard believes that the compulsory element of conscription creates fraternisation between social groups based on their common need to ensure the state's existence and opportunities for action and thereby helps to create Danishness, Joenniemi claims that the Danish public has not accepted conscription, but connects it rather with lost wars and sees it as an instrument that provides politicians with an opportunity to pursue power politics. Østergaard thus focuses on the dynamics of the conscription system and emphasises its ability to form a feeling of nationality among those who are called up as conscripts, while Joenniemi places more emphasis on the fact that certain areas of the population gain no personal experience in connection with conscription, but on the contrary become spectators looking on as the state uses conscription as an instrument for its own ends. (Østergaard also points out that conscription should be extended to include all citizens).

<sup>45</sup> See table 1.

<sup>46</sup> "While military concerns may have been the primary impetus behind the reform of conscription, the reform's attention to equity suggests that concerns over fairness played an important role. Athenians, after all, could have improved the speed of mobilization by a less dramatic reform of conscription (...). Significantly, however, they chose instead to speed up mobilization through a system that also distributed more fairly among citizens the obligation to risk life in battle." Christ 2001, 418.

<sup>47</sup> Per Mouritsen writes in his article "Værnepligt og solidaritet" about the significance of duty and the concept of duty in the modern state but does not wish to draw any overall conclusion regarding the significance of conscription. Mouritsen, "Værnepligt og solidaritet", *Politologiske studier*, 8 November, 2000.

<sup>48</sup> As Anna Leander writes: "... there is a link between conscription and the expansion of individual rights, and the development of civil and later democratic states. But this link is tenuous at present, as the understanding of citizenship and rights entitlement is far removed from one where these are exchanged for military service. One can package the idea that conscription is important for building civilian states as a bargain between civilian institutions and conscription." Leander's point is that conscription is no longer viewed as a condition that must be fulfilled before the individual has rights. In modern, de-

militarised society, the view is that the individual is born to have rights instead and retains these rights as a citizen, so long as he/she pays taxes or takes part in political life. Leander, "Drafting Community: Understanding the Fate of Conscription, *Armed Forces & Society*", 30(4), 2004, p. 578.

<sup>49</sup> Also see Flynn, for instance, "Conscription and Democracy. The Draft in France, Great Britain and the United States", Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002, pp. 246-248. "When conscription is a central piece in a specific political story about the national and military identity, it becomes difficult to reform and rethink conscription and the role it is playing." Leander and Joenniemi, Conclusion: *National Lexica of Conscription* 2006, p. 167.

<sup>50</sup> In France, the people interviewed stated, for example, that while the decision to suspend conscription was made on the basis of a desire to increase the ability to participate in international operations, the public's view had also changed so that it no longer saw national defence – but rather institutes of education – as the central, unifying element for the nation. See section 4.1.

<sup>51</sup> Both countries became NATO members on 29 March 2004.

<sup>52</sup> Which means that all statements from the interviews can be freely used in the survey or quoted elsewhere, but without referring specifically to the person who made the statement.

<sup>53</sup> France has forces in Djibouti in Africa's Horn, and the Netherlands has forces in the Dutch Antilles.

<sup>54</sup> Henning Sørensen's table 9, on page 328, gives a fine overview of the different purposes of conscription in the Nordic countries.

<sup>55</sup> In Danish: "Arbejdsgruppen til undersøgelse af dimensioneringen af det statslige redningsberedskab" (AGDIMSUN).

<sup>56</sup> *Undersøgelse af dimensioneringen af det statslige redningsberedskab*, September 2008, The Danish Ministry for Defence.

<sup>57</sup> According to the Danish National Bank's list of exchange rates of 17 September 2008, the exchange rate for Euro is DKK 745.99, for Slovak Koruna DKK 24.66 and for Latvian Lats DKK 1076.79.

<http://www.nationalbanken.dk/dndk/valuta.nsf/side/Valutakurser!OpenDocument>.

<sup>58</sup> Both countries received an invitation to attend introductory negotiations on accession at the NATO summit in Prague in 2002 and were thereafter included in the NATO Membership Action Plan. Both countries officially became members on 29 March 2004. Prior to this, in 1999, Slovakia had presented its national action plan which was designed to prepare the country for the coming accession negotiations. Where Slovakia was concerned, the decision regarding the date of implementation was later adjusted so that the process was stepped up – first to the end of 2006 and later to the end of 2005.

<sup>59</sup> "Le Livre blanc de la Défense nationale", published 1994.

<sup>60</sup> It should be noted that there will almost always be a need to supplement the units sent out with personnel from other units. This is due to the fact that it is necessary for soldiers from the units to be replaced due to sickness, injury, or family matters, for instance. There would thereby be no guarantee that units could be trained and sent out without replacing personnel if conscription were discontinued.

<sup>61</sup> Established by mandate in "Defensienota 1991 (Twede Kamer, vergaderjaar 1990-1991, 21991, nos. 2-3).

<sup>62</sup> The people interviewed stated that the cost of nine months' conscription was approximately DKK 12,200 per person and that of six months' conscription approximately DKK 9,700 per person.

<sup>63</sup> In reality, this a defence policy white paper. The document must be approved by parliament and presents civil servants' and politicians' plans and visions for a four-year period.

<sup>64</sup> Long-Term Plan for the Structure and Development of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic.

<sup>65</sup> Act no. 97-1019 of 28 October 1997 on an amendment of Service Nationale.

<sup>66</sup> Responsibility for a number of logistical and administrative functions in the national defence system lies with the military regions. As does coordinating and planning total defence measures within a geographically delimited area and coordinating these measures with other military regions. They therefore constitute the local organisational anchoring of the total defence system.

<sup>67</sup> A brigade is the smallest unit that, according to Western doctrine, can fight independently. It normally comprises from 4,500-5,000 men. Three or four brigades combined with various support units constitute a corps. Two and a half brigades together constitute a force of at least 70,000 men.

<sup>68</sup> If marksmen are more accurate, it will be possible to adapt the tactical doctrine from a burst of fire to individual shots and thereby save ammunition.

<sup>69</sup> In the tasks it performs and in its organisation, "Jaunsardzes" is reminiscent of the Soviet "pioneers". Even though the comparison may appear controversial, the body of the work carried out by the Youth Corps and its purpose are not so far removed from the positive elements of the "Hitlerjugend", namely to strengthen young people's cooperativeness, their spirit of solidarity, and patriotism, and teach them a number of socially useful skills.

<sup>70</sup> The company is "Cubic". A description and profile can be found on the company's web site at [www.cubic.com](http://www.cubic.com).

<sup>71</sup> The monthly wage of a private soldier in 2008 is about DKK 4,100 as against about DKK 5,000 – 6,000 in industry.

<sup>72</sup> The consultant company suggested that the difference should be 1:7 with a gradual transition from rank to rank throughout the rank structure.

<sup>73</sup> The costs of recruitment are about EUR 130 million a year. This figure has remained constant over the past three years. In 1996, total manpower was 573,081 soldiers. Personnel-related costs amounted to approximately EUR 11.4 billion. In 2002, the now professional armed forces had shrunk to 436,221 men/women, while the personnel-related costs were not reduced, but rose to approximately EUR 13.4 billion.

<sup>74</sup> It has not been possible to clarify precisely how this figure was arrived at, but an estimate indicates that it is a total assessment of the armed forces' recruitment costs and the costs of "Citizens' Day".

<sup>75</sup> This figure is probably also connected with the major development in wage levels in Latvia.

<sup>76</sup> This is probably because, during conscription, it was only possible to permanently employ specialists and military leaders who, when employed, had an upper secondary school education, while professionalisation paved the way for the appointment of a large number of manual personnel.

<sup>77</sup> This problem could have been solved, however, by dividing the force into purely professional and purely conscript-based units.

<sup>78</sup> The experience from the Netherlands is probably due to the fact that the range of volunteers cannot match the elite recruited during the period with conscription.

<sup>79</sup> The training structure in general comprises a cadre of permanent instructors and a supporting structure that provides a standardised course of training on a cyclical basis (for each group called up). Training is adjusted on an ongoing basis and requires a certain amount of specialisation, and an organisation and



facilities are maintained in the form of billeting areas, dayrooms, armouries, depots, meeting rooms, teaching facilities etc.

<sup>80</sup> The whole passage reads: "There is, of course, no denying that conscription in its modern tapping has had its day. To put it mildly, it is not booming as a system of manpower recruitment, although it can also be stated that there exists more options for the system than merely remaining on the scene in its traditional form or going totally down the drain. The matter is not one of either-or. Conscription is not just booming or disappearing, although most presentations on the future of conscription tend to treat it in this kind of bifurcated manner. For a start, an important opening is provided by conscription being depicted as a socially constructed phenomenon and therefore also variable across time and space. In fact, a loosening up of the perspective applied and going beyond the usual either-or lineage may yield not only interesting and more nuanced but also rather relevant aspects of the story, aspects that the standard approaches tend to underestimate, overlook or perhaps miss altogether". Joenniemi, *The Changing Face of Conscription in Europe*, Ashgate, 2006, p. 5.

<sup>81</sup> Sørensen, *Conscription in Scandinavia during the Last Quarter Century: Developments and Arguments*, *Armed Forces & Society*, 26(2), 2002, pp. 313-344.

<sup>82</sup> "Danmarks behov for kampfly", Rasmussen and Breitenbauch, 2007 and "Kompas og kontrakt", Breitenbauch 2008.

<sup>83</sup> Christian Brøndum, "Hjemmeværnet skal uddanne soldater", *Berlingske Tidende* 7 September 2008.

<sup>84</sup> The approximately 6,300 conscripts is the number who is called up annually at present. The figure is arrived at because the majority of conscripts serve for four months, while conscripts in the Guard Hussar Regiment Cavalry Squadron serve for twelve months, conscripts in the Royal Life Guards serve for eight months, and conscripts on the Royal Ship Dannebrog serve for nine months.

<sup>85</sup> It has not been possible to obtain data for the derived costs of conscription, but a structure that trains approximately 2,150 conscript man-years is roughly estimated to tie up at least a further 1,000 permanent personnel in training, administration, and logistics posts. Apart from the wages and benefits for these personnel, which are estimated to amount to approximately DKK 300 million a year, the armed forces defray a large number of costs for such areas as training, billeting and transport.