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The Defence Action Plan 2020–2023 for the Area of Government of the Ministry of Defence describes national defence objectives and the required resources for achieving those objectives, in the allocation of which we are proceeding from the National Development Plan for Defence for the Period 2017-2026, the military advice of the Commander of the Defence Forces, and NATO capability targets.

The swift development of Estonia's military defence continued in 2018. The second large-scale training exercise Siil (Hedgehog) was held from 2-14 May, with more than 18,000 participants involved it was the largest military training exercise in Estonia following the restoration of independence and the second largest within NATO in 2018. In addition to the standard training of combat tasks the exercise provided the opportunity to test command capabilities of territorial defence. Territorial defence districts ensure national defence through the application of whole-of-government approach and synchronised operation with civilian institutions in crisis and wartime situations. At the end of October, with the volume of a battalion, the rapid response readiness exercise Okas (Quill) took place, in which 647 active service members and reservists from the Logistics Battalion of the Support Command took part. With regular exercises, Estonia can be considered a leader in organising readiness exercises for reserve forces in the Baltics as well as in the whole of Europe.

Last year, the Defence Forces grew in numbers by 135 reservists to a total of 3422 reservists. In 2019, an extraordinary decision was made to raise the average salary of active servicemen from the current average of around 30% to 33% above the Estonian average. As a result of the strong resolve of the Defence Forces, the dropout rate from conscript service fell to a record low level in 2018.

In 2018, the last 16 of the 44 ordered infantry combat vehicles were delivered, and an agreement was signed for the acquisition of 12 K9 Thunder self-propelled howitzers from South Korea. Large-calibre ammunition (120mm, 155mm) was acquired, with an additional quantity of Javelin anti-tank missiles and logistical vehicles from Germany and the Netherlands.

To ensure defence readiness, over the past few years the goal was adopted to significantly increase investments in ammunition stocks. In 2019 the ammunition stocks of wartime units will be supplemented in the volume of EUR 75.5 million. During the period 2020-2023 an additional investment of EUR 172 million will be added, to which EUR 20 million will be added annually from the national defence investment programme. In addition, the supplementing of wartime ammunition stocks is being supported, in large part, by the United States of America. Investments in defence readiness and combat readiness and rapid response readiness exercises show that we take our defence seriously. This has been done, in great part, through the systematic reduction of other operating costs.

The development of Defence Forces and Defence League infrastructure also continued last year. The Defence League's Männiku shooting range was renovated; two barracks, areas for technical equipment and garages were erected at Tapa. In cooperation with our allies, an old canteen was rebuilt into living quarters for soldiers and the objects built in previous years by the United States of America were put into service. The first phase of the Tapa training area and the first elements of the

practice area were completed. A modern facilities for vehicles and equipment were completed in Jõhvi. The building for regional air operations command centre was completed within the Juhkentali campus, the infrastructure of the Kellavere radar station was renovated and Ämari's new waste-water treatment plant was opened. A result was reached in the construction of the Nurispalu training area's shooting range, which allowed for the firing of mortars, with works being completed by the summer of 2019. With the support of the United States of America, an additional airplane maintenance hangar, fighter squadron operations building, a freight handling platform and a dormitory style barracks were completed.

The new action plan ensures all of the large-scale developments found in the current development plan:

- the replacing of rifles and machine guns;
- the acquisition of night vision equipment, as well as body armour and flak jackets;
- the further development of a mechanised infantry battalion within the 1st Infantry Brigade;
- logistical and tactical vehicles for the 2nd Infantry Brigade and the territorial defence structure;
- the equipping of new territorial defence companies;
- acquisition of laser tactical training systems;
- acquisition of long-range anti-tank systems;
- ensuring the mobility of air surveillance radar and the construction of an air operations command centre;
- development of sea surveillance;
- modernisation of mine hunting vessels;
- development of the logistics and combat engineering battalion of brigades;
- the development of an interoperable command and communications capability with our allies;
- acquisition of anti-aircraft radar and fire control centres for the 2nd Infantry Brigade;
- supplying of battalions with medical kits; and
- creating a maritime C2/C3 capability that meets NATO requirements.

The Action Plan calls for additional developments in the form of:

- Significant development of C3 capabilities of the Defence Forces;
- the equipping in full of Cyber Command, a new branch of defence;
- acquisition of 12 systems of self-propelled howitzers and support equipment;
- the starting of replacement of anti-tank rocket launchers, by 2023 a total of 1/3 of the Defence Forces structure will have new rocket launchers;
- the combat engineering battalions of both brigades will be fully supplied;
- the combat service support battalions of both brigades will be fully supplied;
- completion of the 1st Infantry Brigade's modular mobile surgical hospital;
- continuation of the supplying of the Support Command Logistics Battalion.

In 2019 the Air Force will receive M-28 aircraft. The modernisation of Ämari Air Base will continue. Air surveillance radar will receive identification-friend-or-foe capability. The decision was also made to continue using An-2 aircraft, to preserve operational fire extinguishing capability at training areas.

During the planning period the Navy will receive 2 patrol boats and mobile sea surveillance radar, which will better ensure the survivability of sea surveillance. A BRASS (Broadcast Ship to Shore) communication system, meeting NATO requirements, will also be built in full.

In the case of the Defence League, annual operational support will increase by more than 1 million euros per year, reaching up to 43 million euros by 2023. In addition, the supplying of territorial defence units, formed on the basis of the Defence League, will continue equivalent to that of Defence Forces units performing similar tasks. As with the previous Action Plan, this Plan calls for the creation of additional posts within the Defence League, the acquisition of personal equipment for volunteers, and the continuation of the patriotic education programme.

We will continue to focus on the intelligence and early warning capabilities as part of the development of national defence, making extensive investments in the various capabilities of the military intelligence within the Defence Forces and the Foreign Intelligence Service. In addition to the development of military defence, the Action Plan provides funding for research and development activities, as well as support for Estonia's defence industry sector, the total volume of which grew by EUR 800,000 in 2018.

In terms of capability development, corresponding NATO capability targets were taken into consideration. During the period the number of persons from the Defence Forces engaged in international service will increase, including, inter alia, those detached to Multinational Division North. Development of Defence Forces and Defence League infrastructure, including training areas, will continue.

In 2023 the Estonian Defence Forces will be equipped with modern communications and command systems as well as modern anti-tank systems, the 1st Infantry Brigade will include 3 armoured battalions (1 consisting of infantry fighting vehicles and 2 of wheeled armoured vehicles), the 2nd Infantry Battalion will be able to assemble more rapidly and will have greater mobility, with a light infantry company being added to the 4 more mobile battalions of the territorial defence structure. Defence Forces combatants will receive enhanced protection gear (body armour and flak jackets), equipped with modern firearms and machine guns as well as night-vision devices, the 2nd Infantry Brigade's anti-aircraft capability is notably more efficient, combat support capability has improved, air-surveillance is mobile and with greater survivability, and marine communication and situational awareness corresponding to wartime needs and enabling marine support for allies.

The subsequent 4-year Action Plan ensures that the goals set in the National Development Plan for Defence for the Period 2017-2026 will be achieved within the established timeframe. The goal of the national defence investments is to develop actually manned and assembled combat capable units, which are ready, on the basis of a reliable warning, to react in as short a time as possible to that threat together with our allies.

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