National Security Concept

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National Security Concept (Summary)

The national security of the Republic of Latvia means the ability of the state and the public to protect, strengthen and develop the interests of the state and the individual security interests of every member of the population and the basic values as laid down in the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia. National security policy is the sum of internal and external policy measures targeted at the prevention of threats and potential risk factors, as well as international co-operation and the strengthening of solidarity among allied states.

The main task of the National Security Concept (hereafter – Concept) is to determine the strategic basic principles, priorities and measures for preventing a possible threat to the state. Many of the principles of operation included in the previous National Security Concept remain unchanged, however new conclusions need to be reached on certain issues.

Within a comparatively short period of time Latvia has become an equal partner in co-operation with other European countries in strengthening the security of the common European space. During recent years certain positive changes have taken place in Latvia's external and internal security environment, however, there exist potential threats to economic security, unresolved issues of environmental protection, and the problems of organised crime and corruption. Latvia's participation in international peace keeping operations has given the state an opportunity to become more widely involved in global political processes and to receive allied support in implementing national security interests, however, at the same time this can give cause for terrorist organisations to identify Latvia as a target.

Increasingly more often, global threats: terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction and threats to the environment – cause local and unforeseeable consequences. Temporary and one-off measures with regard to individual threats will not make it possible to stop these threats entirely. It is not possible to fight any of the types of the aforementioned threats with the national means available to one single country. Thus the importance of inter-state cooperation becomes ever greater.

An adequate level of security for Latvia may be achieved by implementing a united, targetted and systematic state and public policy, ensuring a stable internal political, social and economic situation, developing effective defence force bodies appropriate to the security conditions, improving crisis management and civil defence systems, strengthening the system and institutions of a rule-of-law state, encouraging involvement and support of the public in achieving the goals of the national security policy, honouring

international obligations and standards, as well as continuing active involvement in European and transatlantic security, defence, political and economic structures. Thus an especially important prerequisite for the successful implementation of the national security policy of Latvia is public understanding of the goals stated in this Concept as well as its involvement in and support for the implementation of these goals.

The priorities set forth in the Concept form the basis for activities of state institutions and the promotion of mutual co-operation amongst them in shaping the comprehensive security policy of the state and developing plans and programmes of individual sectors.

The priorities determined by the Concept must be taken into account when preparing new policy planning documents and programme documents. Based on the priorities determined by this Concept, the Cabinet of Ministers shall prepare the National Security Plan which will set out next year's priorities for the improvement of the situation as regards national security..

Narional Security Concept (Information Section)

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Introduction

The opportunities and experience that Latvia has gained in the three years since becoming a member of the European Union (hereafter - EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (hereafter – NATO), as well as the signing of the border treaty with Russia and its ratification by the Saeima is confirmation of a positive improvement of the national security environment of Latvia. Although many principles of operation have remained unchanged since the approval of the previous National Security Concept, changes have taken place in certain areas which affect national security and measures for the prevention of new threats. An awareness of the newly-acquired experience and opportunities, and an initial assessment allow us to draw up an appropriate National Security Concept (hereafter – the Concept).

The main purpose of the Concept is to determine the strategic basic principles, priorities and measures for the prevention of possible threats to the state.

In implementing security policy Latvia observes the principles of international law included in the Charter of the United Nations (hereafter – UN), documents of the Organisation for the Security and Cooperation of Europe (hereafter – OSCE), as well as other international agreements binding to Latvia. The security policy of Latvia is implemented without threat to other countries.

The situation in the area of national security is affected not only by internal factors – the democratic base, economic development, the situation with respect to fighting crime, social security, environmental quality and other factors, but also the foreign policy and military policy situation.

An adequate level of security for Latvia may be achieved by ensuring a stable internal political, social and economic situation, by developing effective structures of the defence forces corresponding to the security circumstances, developing a crisis management model corresponding to the present situation and perfecting the civil defence system, strengthening the system and institutions of a rule-of-law state, encouraging the involvement and support of the public in achieving the goals of security policy, observing international commitments and norms, and continuing active involvement in European and transatlantic political, economic, security and defence structures.

The status as a member country of NATO and EU continues to significantly improve the external security environment of Latvia, maximally reducing the external military and political threat. During a relatively short period of time Latvia has become an equal partner in co-operation among European countries in enhancing the security of the common European space. During recent years positive changes have taken place in the external and international security environment of Latvia, however, there still exist certain potential threats to economic security, unresolved issues of environmental protection, problems of organised crime and corruption. Latvia’s participation in international peace keeping operations has given Latvia the opportunity to become more involved in global political processes and to gain allied support in implementing the

interests of national security. At the same time, this is a reason for terrorist organisations to identify Latvia as an object of their goals.

Latvia has become a member state of the most important global and regional international organisations. The EU and NATO may be considered guarantors of Latvia's independence and security, and an opportunity for economic growth. By becoming a fully fledged member state of EU and NATO, Latvia has achieved the most important foreign policy goals of the last decade. Notwithstanding the small territory and limited resources of the country, it is in the interests of Latvia to participate constructively and on equal terms in international organisations, thus ensuring the most active role possible in developing international security policy.

National security policy and achieving its goals is the responsibility of all state institutions and the population.

1. The national security of Latvia and national security policy

The national security of the Republic of Latvia is a state achieved as a result of common targetted measures implemented by the state and the public, in which the independence of the state, its constitutional system and its territorial integrity, as well as free development perspectives, welfare and stability of society are guaranteed.

The interests of national security include the ensuring of prerequisites necessary for the long term development of the state and society, the preservation of the language and culture of the population of Latvia, the maintenance of the defence system, ensuring operations of the civil defence system, development of scientific and technical potential, ensuring sustainable environmental development, and the security and development of critical infrastructure, telecommunications and information technologies. National security must also be assessed also in an international context, taking into account both threats and opportunities, and the resources for addressing these.

The national security policy is a total of internal and external policy measures targeted at identifying threats and potential risk factors, their possible reduction or prevention, as well as international co-operation and the strengthening of solidarity among allied countries.

Increasingly more often global threats cause local and unforeseeable consequences. The main global threats are known, namely terrorism, the threat of the spread of weapons of mass destruction, climate changes and related environmental risks. At the same time, new types of threats have emerged, such as, for example, cyber-terrorism, giving rise to additional challenges for security policy. Implementing only one-off and temporary measures in relation to individual threats will not make it possible to stop these threats. It is not possible to fight any of the aforementioned types of threat with solely the national resources of one country, thus the importance of inter-state cooperation becomes ever greater.

The international situation, especially in certain regions of the world, may be noticeably affected by the rapid economic development of states and an increase of their influence, the issue of the decrease and availability of natural resources, and the tendency towards increased arms drives. In our region the situation as regards conventional armament is affected by a decrease in mutual trust and predictability, related to Russia's unilateral decision to terminate its performance under the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe.

An important factor of threat to national security are also the operations of foreign security services in the territory of Latvia. The operations of the foreign security services against Latvia and its interests may be divided into three types: political, economic and military reconnaissance. Operations of foreign security services affect both the national interests of Latvia as well as aspects of co-operation with NATO and EU.

In order for the state to be able to effectively address the entire spectrum of potential problems, from natural and man-made disasters to economic, political or military crises - the general crisis management capacity must be increased. Planned, harmonised and co-ordinated activities of state administration institutions, the public and the armed forces, based on civilian and military co-operation, is still one of the most important prerequisites for the efficient capability of the Latvian state to prevent, overcome and deal with the consequences caused by the threats, both by its own resources and also with assistance as stipulated in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

National security is ensured by implementing a common, targeted and systematic government and public policy – developing a stable internal, social and economic environment, developing an effective internal system, National Armed Forces (hereafter – NAF), consolidating crisis survival ability, developing a rule-of-law state, observing international laws and participating in European and transatlantic political, economic, security and defence structures and their international operations. The present situation is characterised by the significant increase of the circle of state administration institutions and non-governmental organisations whose role in international co-operation is increasing.

Thus public understanding of the goals mentioned in this Concept and its participation in and support for the implementation of these goals has become an especially important prerequisite for the successful implementation of the national security policy of Latvia.

2. Priorities for the prevention of threats to national security

2.1 Foreign policy

Latvia's foreign policy is directed towards protecting its national interests under rapidly changing conditions of international politics, globalisation, extremism and climate change.

Participation in international organisations and maintenance of external relations is a means to strengthen Latvia's independence, security and economic growth, as well as protecting its national interests in the wider world. Participation in the shaping of external relations of international organisations considerably increases Latvia's ability to favourably influence international processes. This helps to increase and make more effective Latvia's contribution to international relations, and also increases the ability to withstand international threats – politically (by making use of systems of international laws and organisations), militarily and by transfer of socio-economic assistance and know-how.

In order to reduce international threat, increasingly more often there is a need to become involved in operations being implemented in crisis affected regions. As the need for international co-operation grows, and also because of limited resources, co-operation between the UN, EU, NATO and other governmental and non-governmental organisations is important. Participation in the prevention of international threats is a way of achieving, with comparatively limited resources, a more visible international role for Latvia, especially within the EU and NATO..

Membership in EU and NATO provides Latvia with additional opportunities to positively influence internal reform processes and co-operation with EU and NATO neighbour countries. The goal of this policy is to achieve the resolution of conflicts and an increase in stability and prosperity in countries geographically located next to the EU and NATO, therefore also to Latvia, ensuring future development of mutually beneficial economic contacts.

The fact that Latvia belongs to the developed European countries also means a high level of moral responsibility and involvement which is characteristic of the political culture of democratic countries.

Latvia's foreign policy is directed towards strengthening co-operation within NATO and the EU, as well as with North American and Asian democratic states. Latvia believes that the USA is a strategic partner and that co-operation among European countries in the processes of enhancing international security is irreplaceable.

Latvia's priorities:

- the promotion of further co-operation in the Baltic Sea state region;

- the stabilisation of the security of the international environment by socio-economic assistance and transfer of know-how;

- the strengthening of democratic statehood in neighbouring countries wishing to join the EU and NATO;

- enhancing and increasing the functionality of organisations in which Latvia is a member state.

2.2 Terrorism and critical infrastructure

The strategic goal of Latvia is to restrict terrorism and extremism in all its manifestations, to restrict political extremism and the most extreme forms of radicalism, to take measures which would significantly reduce opportunities to carry out or encourage acts of terrorism in Latvia or in other countries.

The level of threat of terrorism in the Republic of Latvia is relatively low, however, Latvia cannot be separated from the rest of the world, where there is a general tendency for the threat of terrorism to increase. As the international mobility of the population of Latvia increases, the threat to Latvia's residents outside the borders of Latvia also increases. Considering that a characteristic of terrorism is its lack of regard for nationality, it is very important to strengthen Latvia's international co-operation with state institutions and international organisations involved in the fight against terrorism.

To date operations of organisations which could be classified as terrorist have not been identified in our country, nor have organisations or persons been found in Latvia who engage in the direct radicalization of a particular social group or recruitment for terrorist activities.

The territory of Latvia could be used for illegal transit and money laundering for international terrorist organisations, and for the organisation of terrorist action in third countries. In order to prevent criminal and terrorist groups using the Latvian banking system or other means to achieve their goals, one of the priorities of our state is the security and transparency of our financial sector, and upgrading our legislation to correspond to international standards of combatting money laundering.

The least protected against terrorist attacks are places of mass concentration of the population and critical infrastructure sites. The potential threat to transportation (especially railway) infrastructure and objects important for national security must be emphasised. To reduce the possibility of terrorist threats, targetted and planned activities must be carried out to identify the objects most susceptible to possible acts of terrorism, subversive acts or sabotage, and the level of their security must be increased and security measures put in place.

In the near future electronic methods of attack will be used increasingly more often. With the help of new information and communication technologies it is possible to destroy public administration information systems and electronic communication networks, to neutralise a country's political, economic and military decision-making centres, to misinform the public, and cause man-made incidents. Under conditions where the state administration and economy depend on infrastructures made up of information and communications (for example, national registers, the electronic signature system, banking information systems, transport management information systems, means of electronic communications) and the services provided by these means, the illegal use, damage, paralysis or destruction of these systems may threaten a country's national security, public order or negatively affect its economic interests. To protect the state from such

threat it is necessary to improve co-operation among the responsible institutions to prevent cyber attacks and to overcome their consequences.

Latvia's priorities:

- to upgrade co-operation between state institutions and security services and to improve preparedness in preventing threats of terrorism;

- civil defence forces and the National Armed Forces must co-operate in dealing with the consequences of potential disasters;

- to improve the system for protection of critical infrastructure, including promoting the co-ordination of measures to prevent cyber crime, to ensure uninterrupted internet operation under emergency conditions and to educate the public in the field of information and communication technology.

2.3 Economic security

Latvia's economic security depends on stable economic growth, the balance between expenditure and income, export, import and a steady growth in investments. In this process Latvia's goal is to ensure a stable and long-term national economic sovereignty.

As a small open market economy state, the main economic risk factor for Latvia is its external sector. During recent years in Latvia's national economy there has been a rise in indicators which point to unbalanced economic development. An increased deficit in the current account, high inflation, and other indicators present the threat of an overheated economy.

The growth in productivity must be more rapid than the growth in salaries. Emigration of the labour force must be reduced, a more effective use of labour force reserves must be promoted in order to reach the Lisbon employment strategy goal of 70%.

Latvia has a relatively large number of jobseekers and economically inactive members of the population who are not seeking work, but would be prepared to work if provided with favourable working conditions.

Increased productivity will gradually reduce demand for labour. Increased salaries and improved working conditions related to productivity will gradually reduce the number of people leaving the country.

For the future strategic development of the Latvian economy, innovation as a factor affecting competitiveness in a knowledge-based economy,and orientation to goods and services with high added value are important, in addition to an increase in the production of competitive goods and their export, and stepping up the representation of national economic interests abroad. In order to ensure the prerequisites for the production of such

goods and the provision of services with high added value, priority must be given to education and training of the labour force.

The development of the national economy will be influenced by the ability to maintain and increase the existing throughput of freight transit. The main tasks in developing transit services is to ensure competitiveness of the service, the development of a common harmonised tranasport infrastructure for both dometic and foreign freight transit, and the development of Latvian port infrastructure.

Latvia's participation in expanding the Transeuropean transport and energy network is a priority. An important task is the development of a new interconnection in the supply of energy between Poland and Lithuania, and increased capacity of the "Finland-Estonia" interconnection which promotes competition among electricity suppliers in the market, and increases security of the energy supply. Latvia, as opposed to its neighours – Lithuania and Estonia – imports electric power. The basic guidelines for energy development for 2007 – 2016 determined that by 2012 Latvia must provide 80% of its electricity needs and by 2016 it must be at the level of 100%.

This may be achieved by diversifying the primary energy resources and their supply lines, supporting investment in the prodution of energy from renewable energy resources, and encouraging the production and wider use of bio-fuel. In using only renewable resources and the co-generation cycle in the production of electric power, the Latvian national economy may face a shortage of electric power. It is predicted that by 2015 the deficit in electricity supply will reach 400MW, and in 2020 – 800MW. To prevent such a situation, it is necessary to build new plants for the production of electric power – to start using a natural gas combined cycle power station and solid fuel power station. To successfully implement construction of new electric power stations and ensure Latvia's energy independence, it is necessary to amend the Law on Electricity Market, taking into account the specifics of the sector.

National economic development interests must be borne in mind when participating in the EU decision making process, with particular attention being paid to the discussion on allocation of greenhouse effect gas emission quotas and further development of the trading system of emission quotas (aviation, shipping), as well as similar trading schemes for the emission of other air polluting substances (nitric oxide, sulphur dioxide) and agricultural pollution.

The goal of Latvia's regional development is to encourage and ensure a balanced and sustainable national development, taking into account the whole territory of the country and the characteristics, comparative advantages and growth potential of its individual areas. The peculiarity of Latvia is its monocentric pattern of population distribution, with a strong main centre – Riga – along with a wide, relatively evenly distributed network of towns. The consolidation of this network of towns by developing functional links with surrounding territories promotes the development of a multicentric state, which fosters the conditions for a balanced development of the state. The insufficiently developed insfrastructure in Latvia's regions hinders the attraction of investment and thus – its

socio-economic development and an enhancement of the quality of the environment.. For the successful implementation of regional development, a varied range of support instruments, appropriate to the development potential of the various territories of the state, must be ensured.

Latvia's priorities:

- a reduction of the current account deficit and decreased inflation;

- the diversification of energy supply, stockpiling reserves of oil products, ensuring the provision of a basic capacity for production of electric power and development of electrical energy interconnections;

- encouraging the production of goods with a high added value;

- encouraging an even and sustainable development throughout the territory of the whole state;

- the development of insfrastructure;

- education and investment in the training of the labour force.

2.4 National military defence

At present there are no direct military threats to Latvia or the Baltic region as a whole. The security situation in the Baltic Sea states region may be described as secure and stable. Since joining NATO, the security and defence of Latvia has been based on membership in the NATO collective defence system. This ensures that any possible threat to Latvia is considered a threat to NATO, and defence of the country is no longer solely a national task. Therefore Latvia's primary interests in NATO are for the alliance to continue to maintain its capacity and its effectiveness. With its membership in NATO and the EU, Latvia's security is even more directly affected by international security processes and presentday security challenges. Since the security sitution in Latvia cannot be separated from security in the world, both Latvia's responsibility for interntional security and the need to participate in the strengthening of it has increased.

Latvia supports the development of EU military capability, which in turn would promote the contribution of European countries, Latvia among them, to the development of NATO military capabilities, so that in future the EU could even more extensively become involved in the prevention of international threats and crisis resolutions. A close military co-operation between the Baltic states is of utmost importance, encouraging stability and security in the Baltic region.

Thus the Latvian NAF are being prepared not only for the protection of the territory of Latvia and for the carrying out of national defence tasks, but also to strengthen the common military capability for the requirements of collective protection and participation

in international crisis recovery operations outside the territory of Latvia. Development of the armed forces is targeted towards preparing, supplying and maintaining the structures of the Latvian NAF in response to the new challenges.

Latvia's priorities

- an improvement in the combat power of the NAF;

- the strengthening of the military capability of NATO;

- participation in international operations;

- an active participation in the development of the EU common defence and security policy.

2.5 Social integration and the social environment

Latvia's rapid eonomic development, integration into the EU and openness to the outside world is encouraging to the development of a harmonised civic society. The active involvement of social movements, non-governmental organisations and individuals in public and state administration processes are important in further strengthening and ensuring openness in an open, democratic civic society, thus building up public trust in the authority of the state. It is necessary to continue to the work of encouraging the involvement of socially vulnerable risk groups of the population in the nation's social, political and economic life.

Social integration is one of the factors which stabilises the internal political situation in a country. Its goal is to reduce social rejection and to encourage understanding among ethnic groups. This may be achieved by improving the ties linking the government and the population. The consistent consolidation of the Latvian language in all areas of public life and encouraging its use among the population is an important factor in reducing isolation of information spaces. Education has a special role in teaching and explaining the Latvian language and history. An important part of the development of a civic society is to continue social integration, increaseheightening of tolerance through education and counteracting the bias to new phenomena of public life, as well as an improvement in the naturalisation process and encouragement of national loyalty among both citizens and non-citizens. An important factor in the development of a tolerant society is also consistent action in reducing the elements promoting intolerance in the information space.

Latvia's priorities:

- the strengthening of national awareness;

- the consolidation of public involvement in political processes;

- the improvement of the social and economic environment;

- encouragement of the naturalisation process;

- working to reduce the divisions in education and the information space;

- the reduction of extremism and intolerance.

*2.6 B**order control and migration***

In ensuring the independence of the state and the promotion of internal security, the ability to guard and control the country's borders is essential. In this area risks are related to illegal border crossing by persons, vehicles and freight, the illegal import into the country of smuggled goods, arms, narcotic and radioactive substances and their further passage to other EU member countries, as well as illegal migration, especially after Latvia's joining the Schengen Agreement and the removal of border controls on EU internal borders. In the prevention of the aforesasid risks it is important that the State Borderguard co-operates with the appropriate state institutions.

The Latvia's eastern border is also the external border of the EU, and therefore it is the goal of Latvia, together with other EU member countries, to reduce and prevent illegal migration by protecting the EU external border. It is the fight against illegal migration by third country citizens which has been central to the EU common migration policy since its very beginning. A dialogue with EU and co-operation with countries of origin and transit countries with regard to migration is crucial, and these processes are being stepped up. Along with co-operation, of which the current goal is to reduce and prevent illegal migration, there are measures to be taken to assist countries of origin to address the problems which give rise to and encourage illegal migration. Illegal migration is a multifaceted issue, and its related problems need to be addressed in all their dimensions. The prevention of the risk of epidemics, epizootics and epiphytics in the process of border control is also important.

The Hague Programme has set out the measures to increase prevention of all these types of illegal migration in various policy areas, namely border security, illegal employment, repatriation and the fight against terrorism and organised crime, and co-operation with third countries.

Latvia supports the enhancement of practical co-operation among EU member countries in migration control and its administration by defining common targets and priorities in this area, the development of a common visa policy and co-operation with third countries in the field of migration and asylum.

Latvia's priorities:

- to enhance border control in order to correspond to the requirements of the EU and the Schengen Agreement;

- to upgrade immigration services, improve infrastructure and provision of strutural units by increasing the number of staff and their level of education;

- to undertake compensatory measures on EU internal borders, to control migration processes within the country and to ensure the security of EU external borders;

- to consolidate practical co-operation among EU member countries, especially as regards the fight against crossborder organised crime;

- to develop closer co-operation with third countries in the field of migration and asylum.

2.7 Crime

The basic goals of Latvia in the prevention of crime are related to increased security of the individual, improvement of the common co-operation among EU member countries - whose goal is the prevention of international organised crime, harmonising EU and national legislation and threat prevention.

The security of the individual and the public is characterised by the general national crime indicators. In Latvia at present, organised crime is basically connected to economic crime, the distribution of narcotics, illegal migration as well as human trafficking. However in the context of crossborder organised crime, Latvia is considered mainly as a transit country.

A potentially dangerous factor is the integration of Latvia's organised crime groupings into the business environment and organisations, the expansion of international communications and the representation of foreign groupings in Latvia. In future, the threat caused to Latvia's security by organised crime may increase. The possibility that potential organisers of acts of terrorism may contact specific representatives of the criminal world in order to obtain resources necessary for the realisation of their intentions cannot be excluded.

As a result of the processes of globalisation and economic migration, the problem of human trafficking has increased manyfold over the recent decade. Human trafficking has wide international consequences, and action in this area should not be limited to national and EU measures only. Closer co-operation with corresponding international organisations, namely the UN, the Council of Europe, OSCE and others is therefore necessary. At present Latvia is not a target for human trafficking from other countries, the threat internally is mainly the recruitment of young women to be sent to other countries for the purpose of prostitution. The networks of international organised crime currently engaged in human trafficking may well broaden their operations and engage in human trafficking in order to trade in human organs for transplants, and to organise the immigration of citizens of third countries to be used in forced labour.

Organised crime is branching out, and its representatives carry out activities not only within the territory of one, but in several countries. Access to information among EU

member countries would ensure the implementation of antiterrorism policy, a process of migration control and the fight against international organised crime commensurate with the national interests of each country, as well as the common EU requirements.

There is a risk that Latvia may be used both as an intermediary stage for the illegal trade of strategically important goods, as well as an area for the illegal distribution and production of strategically important goods, because the activities of a number of criminal groupings are linked to the illegal import of goods and other valuables into Latvia and their distribution within the country.

The threat caused by the distribution of narcotic and psychotropic substances and the consequences of their use is on the rise. The link between organised criminal groupings and the illegal circulation of narcotic and psychotropic substances is growing. Latvia is more and more often used as a transit country for the transport of narcotic and psychotropic substances to neighbouring countries.

Over recent years there has been a growing trend indicating that economic crimes are of an international nature, linked to the establishment of transnational contacts among criminals. Considering the significant and complex threat caused to the national economy by financial crime, national law enforcement agencies are paying increased attention to cases of the legalisation of illegally gained funds, as well as the incidences of forged payment documents.

A separate issue to be addressed is the risk of corruption, which threatens national development, harms a country's international prestige and sovereignty, lowers the quality of life for the population and arouses mistrust of the government and the democratic system of administration. To avert these negative tendencies, co-operation is necessary among state institutions, the private sector and the public.

Latvia's priorities:

- to pay particular attention to fighting and preventing human trafficking, which most directly affects the security of Latvia's population;

- to counteract the developing trends of organised crime and the attempts to influence economic processes;

- to reduce the distribution of narcotic and psychotropic substances in Latvia;

- to reduce corruption by encouraging public understanding of the necessity to become involved in the elimination corruption.

2.8 Environmental risks, prevention of disasters and overcoming same

As a result of human economic activities, significant global and climate changes are taking place. Climate change in one location may affect change elsewhere in the world.

Climate change already causes destructive natural disasters, which significantly affect the security of countries and of whole regions. Climate change is caused by long-term human activities and it is possible to reduce its negative impact by carrying out deliberate, targeted long-term activiities. Global climate change has a negative influence on natural resources and on their future accessibility.

Climate change affects ever more seriously various natural eco-systems, biological diversity, human health and welfare.

Independently of global climate change, environmental risk exists also in the Baltic Sea region. In the Baltic Sea and the territorial waters of Latvia, the intensity of shipping traffic is increasing constantly, and linked to it, the number of shipping accidents. The Baltic Sea ecosystem is comparatively fragile, and serious shipping accidents near the coast of the Baltic Sea and in the Gulf of Riga may trigger natural disasters. To prevent such accidents, Latvia must achieve a higher standard of safety in shipping on an international level, especially under the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM), and must be prepared to bring under control and clean up sea pollution after any such shipping accidents.

Growing economic activity (for example, the planned construction of the Northern European gas pipeline) will create a need for added maritime envitonmental monitoring and additional security measures.

Considering the link between Latvian waterways (especially the Daugava, Lielupe and Venta) and crossborder pollution, and the risk of high volume pollution transfer from other countries where industrial disasters are potentially possible and could affect Latvia causing environmental pollution, it is necessary to develop a high level of security for the prevention of such disasters and for the protection of waterways.

Radiation accidents are to be considered the most serious, because, as a result of the use of radioactive material, large territories may be polluted or individual objects and the civil population may be subjected to radiation impact. It is not possible to eliminate widespread radioactive pollution over a short period of time, and the anticipated cost of such clean-up activities may exceed a country’s available resources. International co-operation and the exchange of experience in the prevention of the threat of radioactivity are of great significance.

Terrorist attacks on sources of ionized radiation of national importance cannot be totally excluded, nor can acts of terrorism using chemical, radioactive or microbiological agents, nuclear weapons, the poisoning of water reservoirs, the spraying of dangerous chemical substances, or the diffusion of poisonous substances in locations where large masses of people concentrate.

Environmental risk may also be caused by interruptions to the supply of electric power, as a result of which man-made disasters may occur in establishement at risk of industrial accident, and the operations of waste water purification plants may also be interrupted.

Potentially, there is a possibility of such technogenic or natural disasters whose consequences can be likened to the consequences of the means of mass destruction. Epidemics, epizootics and epiphytics also require a fast and effective reaction to events.

Improvement of the civil defence system is one of the guarantees for the successful implementation of national security and defence policy. Special attention must be paid to precisely determining the areas of responsibility and the operations of the relevant state institutions and local governments, in order to react to emergency situations, in their prevention, managements and relief of the consequences of emergency situations, and co-operation with the military defence system where the country may be under threat.

Latvia's priorities:

- to perfect legislation concerning environmental threat and the management of crisis situations;

- to optimise crisis management and civil defence systems;

- to improve civil and military co-operation, and to increase preparedness in counteracting crisis situations and environmental disasters;

- for the relevant institutions to pay particular attention to the forecasting of environmental disasters and in preparing a scenario for recovery thereof, by appointing an appropriate group of experts within the Ministry of Environment structure;

- to enter into the necessary inter-state co-operation agreements on information exchange in emergency situations;

- to introduce autonomous electricy supply systems in facilities where an interruption in the supply of electric power may cause the risk of accident;

- to encourage the establishment of Latvian national rapid reaction and medical support units for the provision of international aid.

Conclusion

The internal security environment of Latvia is characterised by stability, the permanence of which is dependent on the potential development of known threats.

Threats to the country's stability may be caused by an increase in the general crime situation, issues of safety of the individual, an unstable social protection system, threats to economic sovereignty, and environmental, regional policy and corruption problems.

The potential threat of international terrorism in the territory of Latvia, and the threat to residents, members of the NAF and institutions of Latvia abroad must not be overlooked.

There is no direct external threat to Latvia, and there is a comparatively low level of global threat; however, considering the rapid processes of globalisation, the influence of these threats on Latvia and its population within the country and beyond its borders could increase. It is therefore necessary to continue working on the promotion of international co-operation – consolidating the system of agreements and practical co-operation with other countries and international organisations.

The following should be considered Latvia's main priorities of national security:

- the encouragement of co-operation on foreign policy within the region and within international organisations, supporting the strengthening of democracy and the stabilisation of the security of the international environment;

- within its competence, the development of closer co-operation and a legal framework with the relevant institutions of the EU and other countries in order to achieve increased common national security;

- to enhance the capacity of state security institutions in the area of reconnaissance and counterintelligence, co-operation with counterpart services in partner countries;

- the modernisation of the NAF and development of military capability, also the strengthening of joint NATO military capability;

- support for international peacekeeping operations, improvement of the efficiency of available resources, and involvement in the development of an EU common defence and security policy;

- the reduction of inflation and the current account deficit; a balanced economic development;

- the preparation and implementation of a national energy policy, ensuring diversification of the energy supply by joining the European energy supply system and developing the electricity production sector;

- the consolidation of civic society by encouraging naturalisation, national loyalty and reducing social stratification; reduction of divisions in education and the information space;

- to upgrade and reorganize the protection and control of the national borders in conformance with the requirements of EU and Schengen Agreements, to develop the immigration service and control of migration processes within the country;

- to improve co-operation among state administration institutions, the public and the armed forces, to rationalise and upgrade the civil defence system. Conclude necessary mutual agreements and refine the relevant legislation and process of circulation of information for emergency situations;

- to improve critical infrastructure, including information and communication technology infrastructure, to improve the defence system and increase security of high risk objects, to introduce autonomous electric power supply systems;

- limit crossborder co-operation between organised crime groupings and attempts to influence economic processes. Reduce the distribution of narcotic and psychotropic substances in Latvia. Encourage public understanding of the need for every individual person to become involved in the prevention of these violations of the law.

The priorities and tasks presented in this Concept form the basis for the activities of state institutions and an encouragement for mutual co-operation among them in the formation of a common national security policy for the state and in the elaboration of plans and programmes for individual sectors.

The principles determined by the National Security Concept must be taken into account when drawing up new policy planning and programme documents. Based on the priorities as determined in this Concept, the Cabinet of Ministers shall prepare a National Security Plan, which will set out next year's priorities for the improvement of the situation as regards national security.

Prime Minister I. Godmanis

Riga, 2008.