



PUBLIC OPINION AND NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ordered by: Estonian Ministry of Defence

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SUMMARY

- In October 2015, on the order of the Estonian Ministry of Defence, the Social and Market Research Company Turu-uuringute AS conducted a public opinion survey on national defence during which 1,193 residents of Estonia from the age of 15+ were interviewed. This was already the thirty-eighth survey in monitoring public opinion, which was started in 2000.
- In Estonia as well as elsewhere in Europe, the political atmosphere of the survey period was dominated by the question of refugees. The Parliament of Estonia discussed migration; protests against the intake of refugees took place under the leadership of the Estonian Conservative People's Party (EKRE) and People's Unity Party (RÜE).
The topic of MPs' allowances for professional expenses provoked the public as well when it was revealed how some MPs use the allowances for car leases. The government presented the parliament with the Estonian-Russian Border Treaty for ratification. The City of Tallinn had to manage without a mayor and the Centre Party became the grounds of a power struggle when Kadri Simson decided to stand as a candidate for the party chairman.
- The assessments given to changes that have taken place in Estonian life show an increase in the number of the Estonian respondents who perceive no change in the situation, the proportion of respondents who perceived positive changes has decreased. In March, 40 per cent of Estonians felt that the situation is improving, whereas in October, the respective indicator was only 29 per cent; the number of people who think the situation has remained the same has grown from 38 per cent to 46 per cent. The assessments given to life in Estonia by Russian-speaking respondents have remained unchanged throughout the last three surveys.
- The survey measured people's pride over living in the Republic of Estonia and its membership in the European Union and NATO. 50% of all respondents, including 57% of Estonians and 36% of non-Estonians, feel proud and happy over living in Estonia very often or often enough.
The membership in the European Union and NATO, however, are not as important to people: 32% of the respondents are often proud to belong to the European Union and more than 35% are proud to belong to NATO.
Based on whether a respondent is an Estonian or Russian speaker, there are significant differences regarding their attitudes towards the membership in the European Union and NATO. 46% of the Estonian-speaking residents are proud and happy to belong to NATO, whereas only 11% of Russian-speaking residents feel the same. 37% of Estonian and 21% of Russian-speaking respondents feel constantly or often enough proud over the membership in the European Union.
- Of the ten institutions the reliability of which the respondents were asked to assess, the Rescue Services rank the highest in trustworthiness (95% trusts them completely or rather trusts them). This is followed by the Police (85%), the Defence Forces (78%), the Defence League (70%), NATO and the European Union (both 60%), the President (59%). The confidence in the state's political institutions has declined: the trustworthiness of the Parliament and the Government has decreased significantly, while still remaining positive, whereas the Prime Minister is trusted and mistrusted by an equal number of people.
Estonian-speaking and Russian-speaking respondents' trust in the state's political and national defence institutions differs considerably—at times, Russian-speaking respondents' indicators are almost half as low as those of Estonians. The greatest difference occurs in the confidence in NATO, which is trusted by 78 per cent of Estonians, but only by 24% of Russian-speaking respondents; the situation is similar with the confidence in the President (74% vs 28%).

- The number of people who believe that the world is going to become more unstable and the likelihood of military conflicts will grow remains high—this opinion is held by 71% of the respondents. Only 7 per cent believe that the world is going to become more secure in the coming decade and 16% think that the situation will remain unchanged.
- Respondents perceive the defence situation in Estonia to be somewhat more positive than that of the world in general, yet even this assessment has become more negative compared to spring. Only 23 per cent of respondents believe that in ten years, the residents of Estonia will be living in more secure conditions than they do now. The proportion of those who presume that the situation will remain unchanged and of those who predict an increase in insecurity is equally balanced at 31 per cent.
- For a long time, Russia's activities to restore its authority were perceived as the main threat to world security, whereas the current survey deems the activities of the Islamic State (64%) and international terrorist networks (59%) even more dangerous than Russia. Along with organised crime (40%) Russia's activities to restore its authority (39%) rank as low as the third and fourth place. It is possible that the influence of the Russian factor decreased because the survey had a special category for the armed conflict in Ukraine, which was considered a certain threat to world security by 37% of the respondents.

While Estonian and Russian-speaking respondents assess many global threats similarly, there is a fundamental difference in evaluating the activities of Russia. Estonians rank the threat of Russia as third (53%), whereas Russian-speaking respondents rank it as last (7%).

- Similarly to the preceding surveys, the most probable threats to Estonia are thought to be the following three, the realisation of which in the following years is considered probable or quite probable by more than half of the respondents: 69% of residents think that there may be an organised attack against the Estonian state information systems (a so-called cyber-attack), 61% believe that some foreign country may interfere in Estonian politics and economy in order to influence these in their own interests and 50% think Estonia may face an extensive marine pollution. The public has highlighted these three primary security threats for several years.

The number of those who believe that nationally or religiously motivated conflicts between population groups are likely to occur has increased considerably compared to the preceding surveys. In March, 34% of respondents held that opinion, whereas in the current survey, the rate is 45 per cent. This could be seen as the impact of the society's fear of refugees.

The percentage of people regarding an extensive or limited military attack probable has decreased compared to spring—this is deemed likely by 26 per cent of Estonians and by 14–15 per cent of Russian-speaking respondents.

- NATO membership continues to be considered the main security guarantee for Estonia (57% mention it as one of the three most important factors). Similarly to the preceding surveys, the development of Estonia's independent defence capability holds 2nd place (42%), followed by cooperation and good relations with Russia (29%), which are considered the primary security guarantee mainly by Russian-language speakers (60%; only 15% of Estonians).

For Estonian-speaking respondents, the most important security guarantee is clearly the membership in NATO (73%; 22% of Russian speakers), development of Estonia's independent defence capability is in 2nd place (45%; 34% of Russian speakers).

- The proportion of people who consider armed resistance necessary in case of a military attack has decreased by 4 per cent compared to spring, falling from 83 per cent to 79. Estonian-speaking respondents consider armed resistance more necessary than non-Estonians (82% and 71% respectively).
- 62% of Estonians and 42% of Russian-speaking respondents would be willing to participate in defence activities to the best of their abilities and skills. 72% of male citizens would be willing to participate in national defence. More than 80 per cent of male citizens under 35 years of age and three fourths of male citizens under 50 years of age are willing to participate in national defence.

- In a situation where Estonia is under attack, every fifth person would consider leaving Estonia. Women (25% certainly or probably) and younger people up to 39 years of age (more than a third) are the most likely to leave Estonia. 32 per cent of Russian-speaking respondents and 16 per cent of Estonians would probably leave.
- The population's awareness about behaving in an emergency situation is quite low: only 25% would know what they could do to defend Estonia if there is a threat of attack by a foreign enemy, whereas 69% do not regard that they are informed enough. People's awareness has not risen since spring 2014.
People would like to have more information on how to act in a conflict area as a civilian (40%), how the public would be informed in case of a threat (42%) and how evacuation would be organised (38%). Male respondents also show interest slightly greater than the average in questions related to mobilisation and their responsibilities regarding the participation in national defence.
- Assessments to Estonia's national defence ability have not changed considerably since the last survey: in the event of an attack by a foreign country, defending Estonia is considered certainly possible or probably possible by 53 per cent of the respondents (61% of Estonians).
- When assessing the volume of Estonian defence expenditures, 28 per cent of the respondents find that defence spending must be increased and 19% that it should be decreased. The predominant view is that defence expenditures should remain at the currently achieved level (44%). Estonians' attitude towards defence expenditures is inversely proportional to that of the Russian-speaking respondents: 33 per cent of Estonians are in favour of increasing defence expenditures whereas 45 per cent of Russian-speaking respondents support cuts.
- 35 per cent of Estonians and 13 per cent of Russian-speaking respondents would be certainly or probably willing to make a financial contribution to support Estonian national defence.
- 71% of the population provided a positive assessment to the state's activities regarding the development of Estonian national defence. Estonians have a more positive attitude towards the development of national defence than non-Estonians (80% and 51% respectively).
- While in last autumn, the assessments given to the protection of the Estonian national border were clearly negative, the number of positive and negative assessments is now equal. However, Estonian respondents still tend to be the most critical. In last autumn, as many as two thirds of Estonians gave a negative assessment to the protection of the Estonian external border; now, the proportion of critical assessments has decreased to 49%. Only every fourth Russian-speaking respondent perceives that there are problems with the defence of the eastern border.
- People in Estonia have very favouring attitudes towards conscript service: as many as 93% of respondents believe that young men need to undergo conscript service, with 59% finding it certainly necessary. The majority of the respondents think that young men with minor health disorders should undergo conscript service with an appropriate training load.
- The majority of the population disapprove of the evasion of conscript service—25% condemn such behaviour and 41% consider it negative. Younger age groups are more tolerant than average towards the evasion of conscript service—more than 40% of people under 30 years of age take an understanding stance.
- In 2013, women were given the opportunity to undergo conscript service voluntarily and this has been gaining increasingly more understanding in the society—more than half of the respondents believe it to be certainly necessary or rather necessary. Estonians and younger respondents have a more contemporary attitude towards the questions of gender equality than Russian-speaking and older respondents. 60% of Estonians think it is necessary for women to have the opportunity of undergoing conscript service, whereas only 33% of Russian-speaking respondents agree. More than half of the respondents over 50 years of age think that it is not necessary for women to have the opportunity of undergoing voluntary conscript service.

Even though half of those who consider conscript service for women necessary believe that this should be done based on a special programme, the proportion of people who believe that women must undergo conscript service under the same conditions as men is gradually increasing (42 per cent).

- 82% of the population prefer maintaining the current concept of national defence based on professional defence forces together with reserve forces consisting of those who have undergone conscript service. 11% support waiving compulsory military service and switching to a fully professional army only.
- 76 per cent of the respondents (84 per cent of Estonians) believe that such a wider concept of national defence, which states that national defence is not only the task of armed forces and the Defence League but a common activity for most state institutions and the entire society, is certainly suitable or probably suitable for Estonia.
- According to the population of Estonia, the main task of the Defence League is to develop national defence capability, which is marked as the most important task by 35% of respondents; 50% when the three most important tasks are summarised. Participating in rescue activities in the event of accidents and disasters is mentioned as first by 13% and among the three main tasks by 52%; the willingness to defend the country and raising defence readiness among the population is seen as the most important task by 13% of the respondents, whereas 42% see it as one of the three most important tasks.
- Five per cent of the respondents participate in the activities of the Defence League, 25% of the respondents are connected to the Defence League through a family member or friend. Russian-speaking respondents are not well-connected with the Defence League—only 8 per cent of the respondents have a friend or a family member with a connection to the Defence League. If respondents were to be presented with a proposal to join the Defence League or its associated organisations, 5% would certainly join and 18% would probably join. The readiness to join is the highest among younger respondents.
- Attitudes towards Estonia's membership in NATO have not changed compared to spring: 72% of the population are in favour of it. 91% of Estonians and only 31 per cent of Russian-speaking respondents support the membership in NATO.
- 45 per cent of the respondents (57% of Estonians and 19% of Russian-speaking respondents) believe that NATO will provide direct military aid if Estonia should face a military threat. 15% think that NATO would limit their help to political and diplomatic support. 19% believe that the membership in NATO would help to avoid a military conflict and 10% think that NATO would not help Estonia in any way.
- The feeling of security towards NATO's aid is supported by the steps that have already been taken to ensure Estonian security and which are supported by the general population: 69 per cent of the respondents (81% of Estonians) find that NATO has already done enough to ensure Estonia's security and 68% of the population (88% of Estonians, but only 24 per cent of the Russian-speaking respondents) favour the presence of NATO's allied forces in Estonia.
- 62% of the population believe that units of the Estonian Defence Forces should—in accordance with their capabilities—participate in international operations in different conflict areas of the world. Estonians favour the participation of the Estonian Defence Forces in military operations more than Russian-speaking respondents (72% and 39% respectively). Participation in international military operations is considered necessary primarily because it provides our soldiers with necessary real combat experience (mentioned by 63% as one of three reasons) and guarantees NATO's assistance to Estonia in the event of potential threats (54%).
- More than 60 per cent of the respondents support Estonia's involvement in operations conducted under the aegis of NATO, the European Union and UN. Russian-speaking respondents favour involvement in the UN missions the most, this is followed by participation in the European Union operations and, lastly, in missions as a part of NATO units.

- Attitudes towards professional servicemen were most recently explored in the survey conducted in March 2014. The population's attitudes have not changed since then: 68% of the respondents have a very positive or generally positive attitude towards active servicemen, this includes as many as three fourths of Estonian-speaking respondents.
- Interest in the military field and patriotism are considered to be the main motives for becoming a professional serviceman. Factors related to self-improvement are also important: it is seen as an opportunity to receive training and maintain a good physical form. Salary holds the fourth place in the ranking of importance. The lack of other jobs and long holidays are seen as less important.
- In the mind of the society, the word "veteran" is strongly associated with the image of World War II (53%), as many as 83 per cent of Russian-speaking respondents associate veterans with World War II. Still, the proportion of respondents who associate the word "veteran" with the operations of the Estonian Defence Forces is slowly growing—11 per cent in March has risen to 17 per cent today. The majority (71%) of the respondents consider celebrating Veterans' Day certainly necessary or rather necessary. The Russian-speaking respondents' awareness of the celebration is still limited, but it is rising: in March, 43 per cent of the respondents did not know anything about this day or could not say anything about it, whereas now the respective indicator is 32 per cent. For the first time, the proportion of Russian-speaking respondents who deemed the celebration necessary exceeded 50 per cent.
- 79 per cent of the respondents certainly or probably believe that all schools that offer secondary education should provide the possibility to have national defence instruction. This figure has fallen by eight per cent since March. National defence instruction is regarded more or less equally important by both Estonian and Russian-speaking respondents.
- The readership of the national defence themed supplement of the daily Postimees has not changed since March—18 per cent of the respondents had read the supplement Riigikaitse, 5 per cent of whom read it most of the time and 13 per cent had read it once or twice. Considering that the readership of printed newspapers is in decline, it is difficult to expect a great increase here—more effort should be put into distributing information on national defence online.

BACKGROUND OF THE SURVEY

This report has been prepared on the basis of the results of the Omnibus 1000 survey carried out by Turu-uuringute AS from 6 October till 27 October 2015 and similar earlier surveys. The report will be submitted to the **Estonian Ministry of Defence**.

The purpose of the survey was to investigate:

- General attitudes towards life in Estonia and pride in Estonia
- Confidence in institutions (incl. defence structures) among the population
- Residents' assessments in connection with potential security risks in Estonia and the world
- Attitudes in connection with Estonia's participation in international military operations
- Defence willingness among the population and estimated behaviour in the event of potential threats endangering Estonia
- Assessments on Estonia's defence capability
- Attitude towards NATO and its role in ensuring Estonian security
- Attitudes both towards compulsory conscript service for men and voluntary conscript service for women
- Attitudes towards the Defence League and understanding its tasks;
- Attitudes towards professional servicemen and opinions on the motives for becoming an active serviceman
- Attitudes towards initial national defence instruction in schools.

The first part of the report describes the methodology, the second part presents the results with figures and comments; the Annex provides the used questionnaire and distribution tables by important background characteristics.

1 Sample

The survey was carried out in the Omnibus 1000 environment. Omnibus 1000 is a regularly held survey (following a specific schedule), whose sample comprises of the citizens of the Republic of Estonia with the age above 15, which totals 1,107,791 people (Statistics Estonia, 01.01.2014).

The usual sample of the Omnibus 1000 is **1,000 respondents**. The sample is formed according to the **proportional model of the general sample**. This model is based on areas and settlement size (number of residents), which are used for selecting 100 source addresses (sample points). Within each area, the source address is selected **randomly** from the address list of the Population Register.

In addition to the main sample, this survey included an **additional sample of 200 respondents** to ensure the better **representation of the Russian-speaking population** in the sample. Although the linguistic composition of the population has been weighed according to the actual situation (*i.e.*, by increasing the effect of Estonian-speaking respondents and decreasing the effect of Russian-speaking respondents), this additional sample allows to analyse the attitudes and opinions of single Russian-speaking groups in detail.

The so-called **principle of the young man** was applied to the selection of respondents at the source address. This means that at the address of the sample, the interview will be performed with the household's youngest male member in the age above 15 who is present at home; if no men are at home, the interview will be performed with the youngest woman. Such a method grants additional possibility for participating in the sample to the categories of respondents who are at home less often (younger people, males) and adjusts the sample to correspond to the population's actual gender and age composition.

Use of the proportional model of the general sample ensures the representativeness of the sample, in other words, it allows making generalisations about the whole same-age population of Estonia. The maximum sampling error does not exceed $\pm 3.10\%$ in polling 1,000 persons, the error may be bigger for smaller subgroups.

The following Table 1 provides sample error limitations at 95% confidence level in assessing the proportion.

Table 1 Sampling error limitations

	Percentage of answers											
	50%	45%	40%	35%	30%	25%	20%	15%	10%	5%	3%	2%
10	30.99%	30.83%	30.36%	29.56%	28.40%	26.84%	24.79%	22.13%	18.59%	13.51%	10.57%	8.68%
20	21.91%	21.80%	21.47%	20.90%	20.08%	18.98%	17.53%	15.65%	13.15%	9.55%	7.48%	6.14%
30	17.89%	17.80%	17.53%	17.07%	16.40%	15.49%	14.31%	12.78%	10.74%	7.80%	6.10%	5.01%
40	15.49%	15.42%	15.18%	14.78%	14.20%	13.42%	12.40%	11.07%	9.30%	6.75%	5.29%	4.34%
50	13.86%	13.79%	13.58%	13.22%	12.70%	12.00%	11.09%	9.90%	8.32%	6.04%	4.73%	3.88%
60	12.65%	12.59%	12.40%	12.07%	11.60%	10.96%	10.12%	9.03%	7.59%	5.51%	4.32%	3.54%
70	11.71%	11.65%	11.48%	11.17%	10.73%	10.14%	9.37%	8.36%	7.03%	5.11%	4.00%	3.28%
80	10.96%	10.90%	10.73%	10.45%	10.04%	9.49%	8.77%	7.82%	6.57%	4.78%	3.74%	3.07%
90	10.33%	10.28%	10.12%	9.85%	9.47%	8.95%	8.26%	7.38%	6.20%	4.50%	3.52%	2.89%
100	9.80%	9.75%	9.60%	9.35%	8.98%	8.49%	7.84%	7.00%	5.88%	4.27%	3.34%	2.74%
110	9.34%	9.30%	9.15%	8.91%	8.56%	8.09%	7.47%	6.67%	5.61%	4.07%	3.19%	2.62%
120	8.95%	8.90%	8.76%	8.53%	8.20%	7.75%	7.16%	6.39%	5.37%	3.90%	3.05%	2.50%
130	8.59%	8.55%	8.42%	8.20%	7.88%	7.44%	6.88%	6.14%	5.16%	3.75%	2.93%	2.41%
150	8.00%	7.96%	7.84%	7.63%	7.33%	6.93%	6.40%	5.71%	4.80%	3.49%	2.73%	2.24%
200	6.93%	6.89%	6.79%	6.61%	6.35%	6.00%	5.54%	4.95%	4.16%	3.02%	2.36%	1.94%
300	5.66%	5.63%	5.54%	5.40%	5.18%	4.90%	4.53%	4.04%	3.39%	2.47%	1.93%	1.58%
500	4.38%	4.36%	4.29%	4.18%	4.02%	3.79%	3.51%	3.13%	2.63%	1.91%	1.49%	1.23%
750	3.58%	3.56%	3.50%	3.41%	3.28%	3.10%	2.86%	2.55%	2.15%	1.56%	1.22%	1.00%
1 000	3.10%	3.08%	3.03%	2.95%	2.84%	2.68%	2.48%	2.21%	1.86%	1.35%	1.06%	0.87%
1 500	2.53%	2.52%	2.48%	2.41%	2.32%	2.19%	2.02%	1.81%	1.52%	1.10%	0.86%	0.71%

2 Survey

The survey method was personal interview, conducted on tablet computers in either Estonian or Russian, depending on the respondent's preference. A total of **58** pollers who had been given special training by Turu-uuringute AS participated in carrying out the survey. A total of **1,193** interviews were performed. The social and demographic profile of the respondents has been provided in Figure 1.

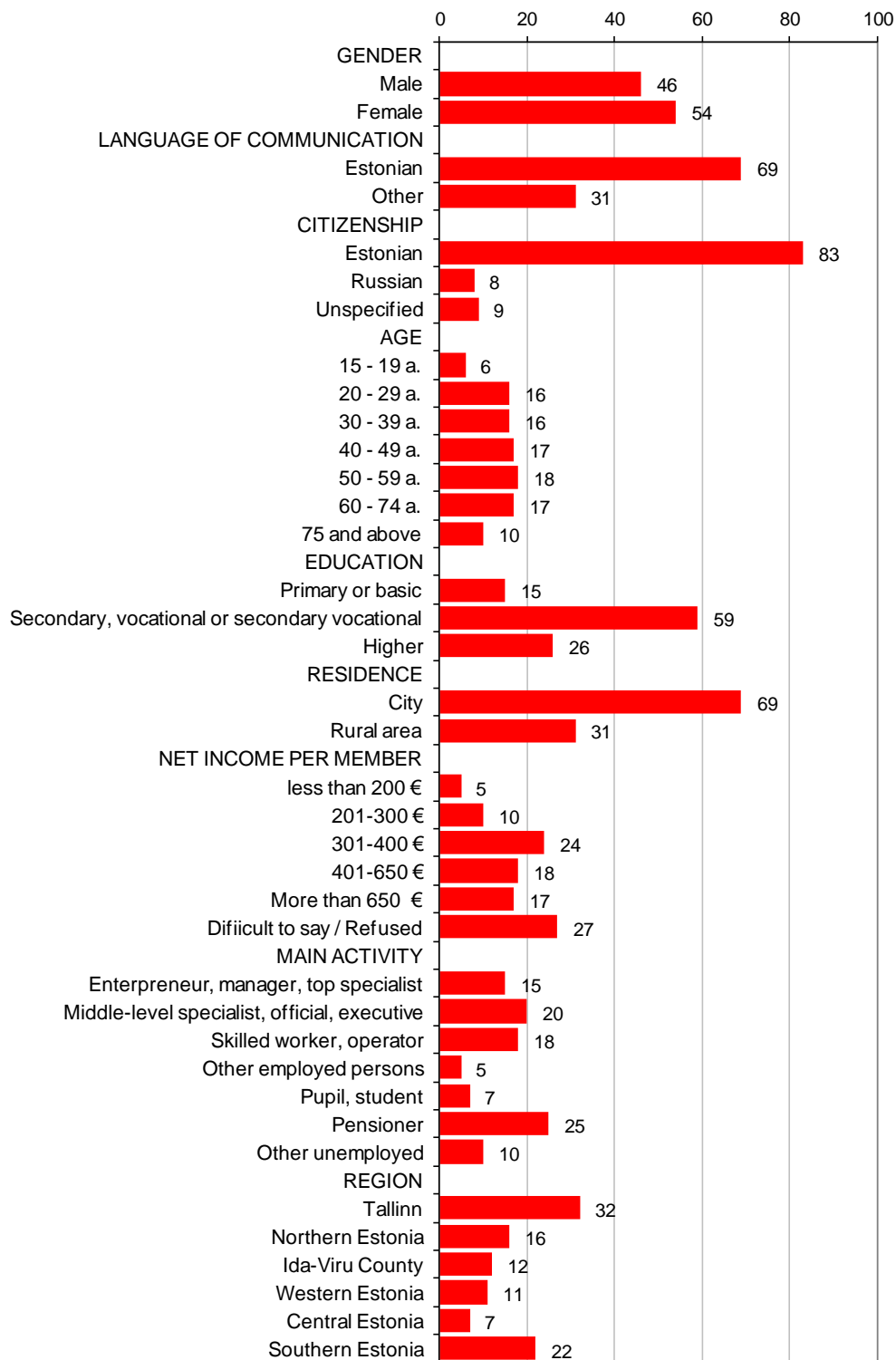
Summary of the results of the polling (number of addresses visited, reasons for not carrying out the interview) have been presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Results of the polling

Reasons for not carrying out the interview	Total
There are no target group persons in the family	527
Nobody is at home	2768
Target group person is not at home	84
Contact was denied	777
Target group person refused from giving the interview	637
Other reasons for not performing the interview	75
Not a dwelling or address inaccessible	242
Summary	
Total addresses	6303
Repeated visits	878
Correctly filled in questionnaires	1193

The statistical analysis software package SPSS for Windows 17.0 was used to process data.

Figure 1. Respondents' social and demographic profile, %, n=1,193



3 Performers

The persons responsible for various stages of the survey are:

Report, project management:	Juhan Kivirähk
Sample/coordination of interviewing work:	Kristel Merusk, Kaja Södor, Roman Vjazemski.
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RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

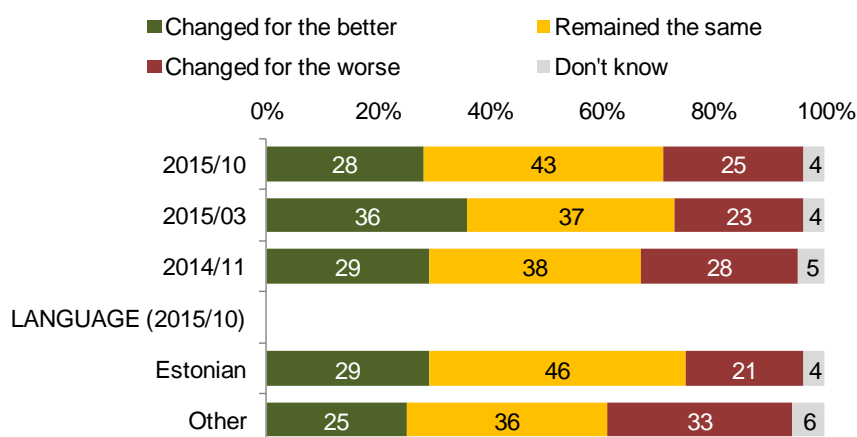
1 General attitudes towards life in Estonia and pride in Estonia

People's attitudes towards different social questions, including national defence, are considerably influenced by the positive or negative assessments given to life in Estonia in general.

In spring, people's assessments given to life in Estonia showed signs of improvement when compared to autumn 2014 (this was most likely influenced by the parliamentary elections, which tend to bring along more hopeful and positive attitudes towards the society), however, the current survey shows a decline. The number of people who think the situation has remained unchanged has grown and the proportion of respondents who perceive positive changes has decreased.

Estonians' attitudes have changed most severely: in March, 40 per cent of people perceived positive changes, whereas in October the respective figure was only 29 per cent; the proportion of people who think the situation has remained the same has grown (from 38 per cent to 46 per cent). Russian-speaking respondents' assessments have remained the same throughout the last three surveys.

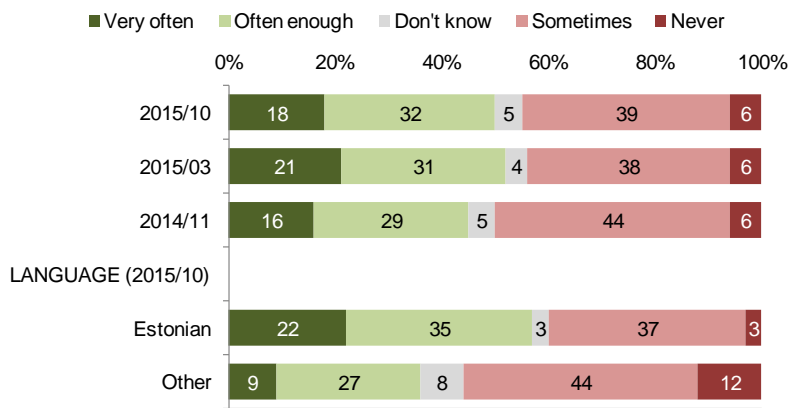
Figure 2. Attitudes towards the changes in life in Estonia (%; N = all respondents)



People under 30 years of age and respondents with higher education are more positive about Estonia's advancement, more than a third of them perceive positive changes. Assessments are naturally influenced by the respondent's economic situation—positive changes are felt to a more than average extent by people whose income starts from 650 euros per household member per month. More than half of the respondents whose monthly income per household member exceeds 1,000 euros per month perceive positive changes.

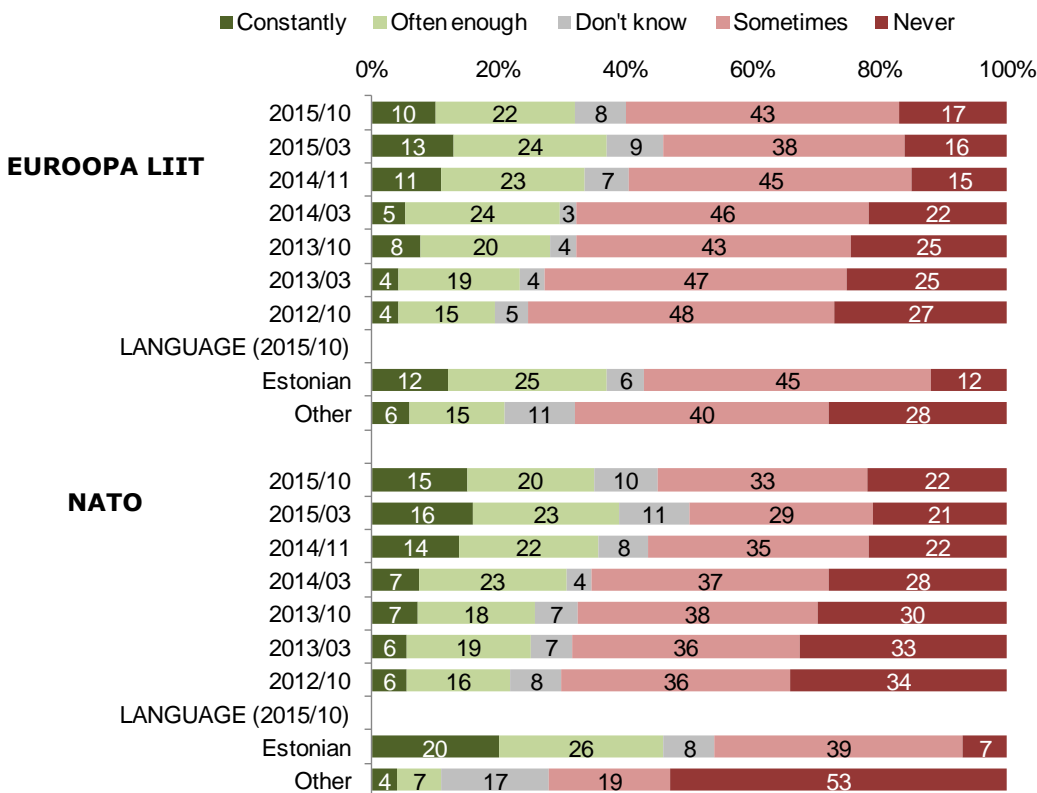
People's happiness and pride over living in Estonia also depends on how people perceive the changes in Estonian life.

In this question, the attitudes have remained the same compared to the previous survey: 50 per cent of respondents feel proud and happy about living in Estonia very often or often enough and 39 per cent sometimes feel it. The proportion of respondents who never feel proud or happy about living in Estonia has remained at 6% throughout the three surveys.

Figure 3. Pride and happiness over living in the Republic of Estonia (%; N = all respondents)

There is a clear difference in the attitudes of Estonians and people who speak other languages in this question as well. 57% of Estonian-speaking respondents feel proud and happy very often or often enough, while the indicator for people who speak other languages is 36%. 44% of Russian-speaking respondents experience positive emotions in connection to living in Estonia only sometimes and 12% do not feel positive about it at all. Respondents with undetermined citizenship (18% do not feel positive about living in Estonia at all) and citizens of Russia (12%) are the most critical about living in Estonia.

Proportions pertaining to happiness and pride over living in Estonia are considerably higher compared the sentiments on Estonia's membership in the European Union and NATO. Similarly to the assessments given to life in Estonia in general, Estonian residents' pride over belonging to the European Union and NATO have also fallen to the level it was in autumn 2014: **32% of the residents are constantly or often enough proud over Estonia's membership in the European Union and 35% over the membership in NATO** (Figure 4). 17% claim never having felt pride in the membership in the European Union and 22% in the membership in NATO.

Figure 4. Feeling proud of the Republic of Estonia's memberships (%; N = all respondents)

Based on the language of communication, there are significant differences regarding the attitudes towards the membership in the European Union and NATO. The differences are especially great for **the membership in NATO: 46% of Estonians feel proud and happy for it, while only 11% of the Russian-speaking respondents feel the same.** 53% of the speakers of other languages claim that they have never felt proud over Estonia's membership in NATO. Only 7% of Estonian-speaking respondents agree.

37% of Estonian and 21% of Russian-speaking respondents are constantly or often enough happy to belong to the European Union. The proportions of people who never feel happy about it are 12% and 28% respectively.

The following table shows how pride and happiness over living in Estonia and belonging to the European Union and NATO is connected to the assessments given to the development of Estonian life. Positive attitudes towards the general development of Estonia come with a greater feeling of pride and vice versa—there are significantly fewer people who feel proud and happy over living in Estonia and belonging to both the European Union and NATO among those who perceive Estonian development as negative.

Table 3 – Link between assessments given to life in Estonia and feelings of pride and happiness over Estonia

Do you feel proud and happy ...	Life in Estonia has		
	changed for the better	remained the same	changed for the worse
... over living in Estonia			
very often or often enough	65%	48%	39%
never	2%	5%	14%
... over Estonia's EU membership			
very often or often enough	48%	30%	18%
never	9%	15%	31%
... over Estonia's NATO membership			
very often or often enough	50%	34%	23%
never	14%	19%	35%

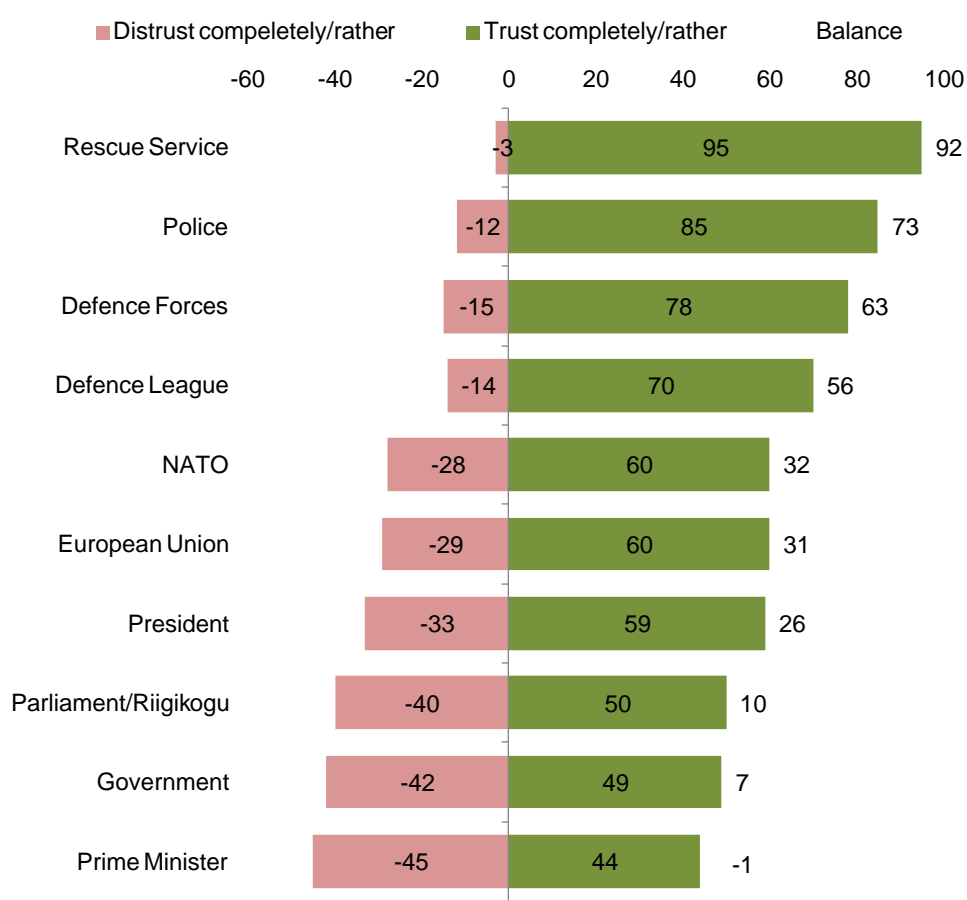
2 Confidence in institutions

The survey addresses the population's confidence in several state and international institutions. The selection of institutions is based on their important role in shaping, implementing or supporting the Estonian security policy.

2.1 General background

Respondents evaluated the trustworthiness of the institutions using a scale with four categories: completely trust, rather trust, rather do not trust, and do not trust at all. Of the ten institutions included in the survey, **people have the biggest confidence in the Rescue Services—as many as 95% of the Estonian population trusts them, they are followed by the Police, Defence Forces and Defence League** (Figure 5).

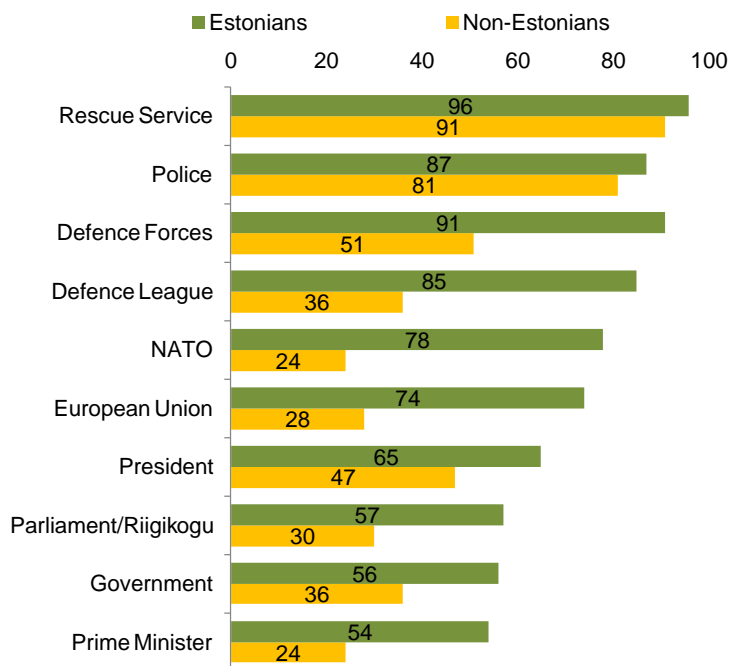
Figure 5. Confidence in institutions. (%; N = all respondents)



Since the spring survey was conducted immediately after the parliamentary elections, people's trust in political institutions was higher than usual. The trust in the Parliament and Government remains positive in the autumn but there has been a significant decrease, while the number of people who trust and mistrust the Prime Minister is equal. The changes in trusting other institutions have been minimal.

The level of confidence in all institutions is higher among the Estonian-speaking population compared to non-Estonians (Figure 6). Differences are great in case of all institutions, except the Rescue Services and Police. The greatest differences are revealed in the attitudes towards NATO (trusted completely or rather completely by 78% of the Estonian-speaking population and 24% of speakers of other languages), the Defence League (85% vs 36%), President (74% vs. 28%), Prime Minister (54% vs 24%) and Defence Forces (91% vs 51%).

Figure 6. Confidence in institutions in the eyes of the Estonian-speaking and foreign-speaking population (% of those who trust the institutions completely and rather trust them; N = all respondents)

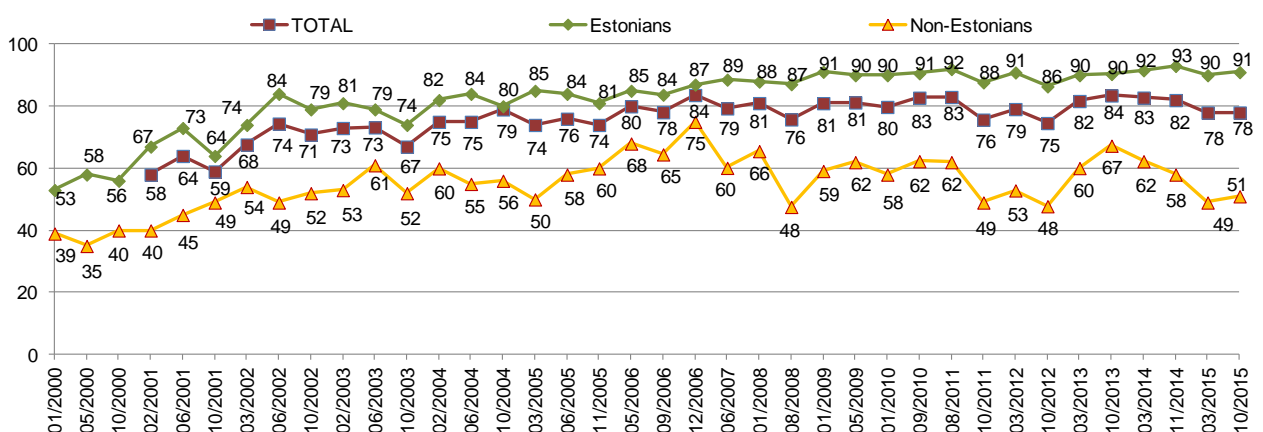


2.1 Defence structures

The Defence Forces, which holds 3rd place in the trustworthiness ranking after the Rescue Services, 2nd place in the trustworthiness ranking of Estonians, **was trusted by 78% of the population of Estonia as at October 2015** (Figure 7). This has not changed compared to spring.

While the trustworthiness of the Defence Forces has remained at a constantly high level for years (slightly under or over 90 per cent) according to the native speakers of Estonian, a tendency towards decline can be viewed on the basis of the answers of Russian-speaking respondents from last spring onwards. This is probably affected by the information from the Russian mass media (published due to the armed conflict between the Ukraine and Russia) which criticises NATO and undoubtedly has an effect on the attitude towards the Estonian Defence Forces.

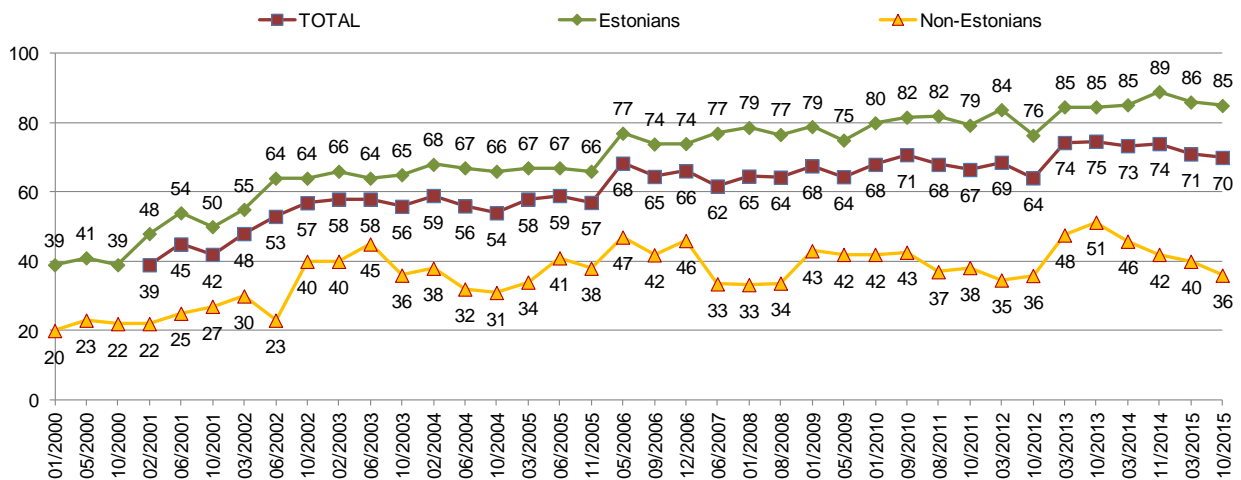
Figure 7. Confidence in the Defence Forces in 2000–2015; comparison of the assessments by the Estonian-speaking and foreign-speaking population (% of those who trust it completely or rather trust it; N = all respondents)



The Defence League is placed among the most trustworthy institutions right after the Defence Forces—as at March 2015, 71% of the Estonian population trusted the Defence League (Figure 8).

Even with the Defence League, the non-Estonians' trust pattern is similar to that of the Defence Forces—the Russian-speaking respondents' trust in the Defence League has been in clear decline since last spring. According to the current survey, the Defence League is trusted by 85% of Estonians and only 36 per cent of the Russian-speaking population.

Figure 8. Confidence in the Defence League in 2000–2015; a comparison of assessments by the Estonian-speaking and foreign-speaking population (% of those who trust it completely or rather trust it; N = all respondents)



3 Security and threats

The third chapter provides an overview of security issues: what kind of situation is expected to occur in the world and Estonia in the coming decade, which threats to Estonia are considered probable by the population in the coming years, and what would help to ensure the security of Estonia.

3.1 Security in the world

The question about world security was presented in the following wording:

What do you think, will the world become more secure and the risk of military conflicts reduce, or, conversely, will the instability increase in the world and the probability of military conflicts grow in the coming decade?

The number of people who believe that instability and the probability of military conflicts will grow in the world in the coming decade has remained as high as it was in spring (Figure 9). Only 7% believe that the world is becoming more secure in the coming decade while 16% think that the situation will remain unchanged. The long term trend has been presented on [Figure 10](#).

Figure 9. Situation in the world in the coming decade, 2011–2015 comparison (%; N = all respondents)

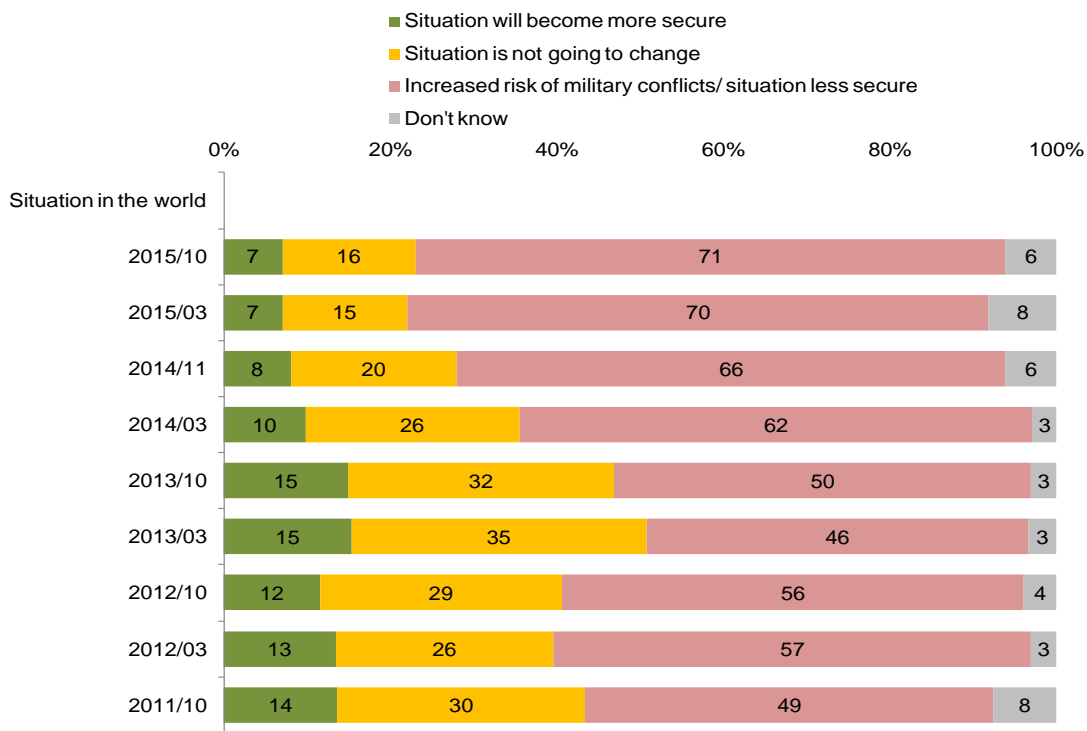
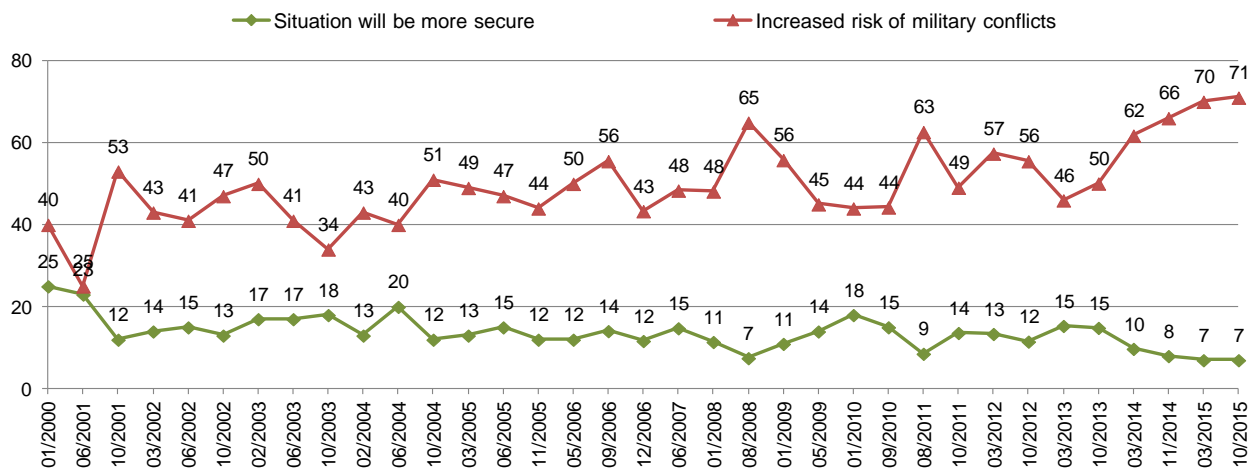


Figure 10. Situation in the world in the coming decade; 2000–2015 comparison (%) ; N = all respondents)

Estonians and non-Estonians assess the state of world security differently.

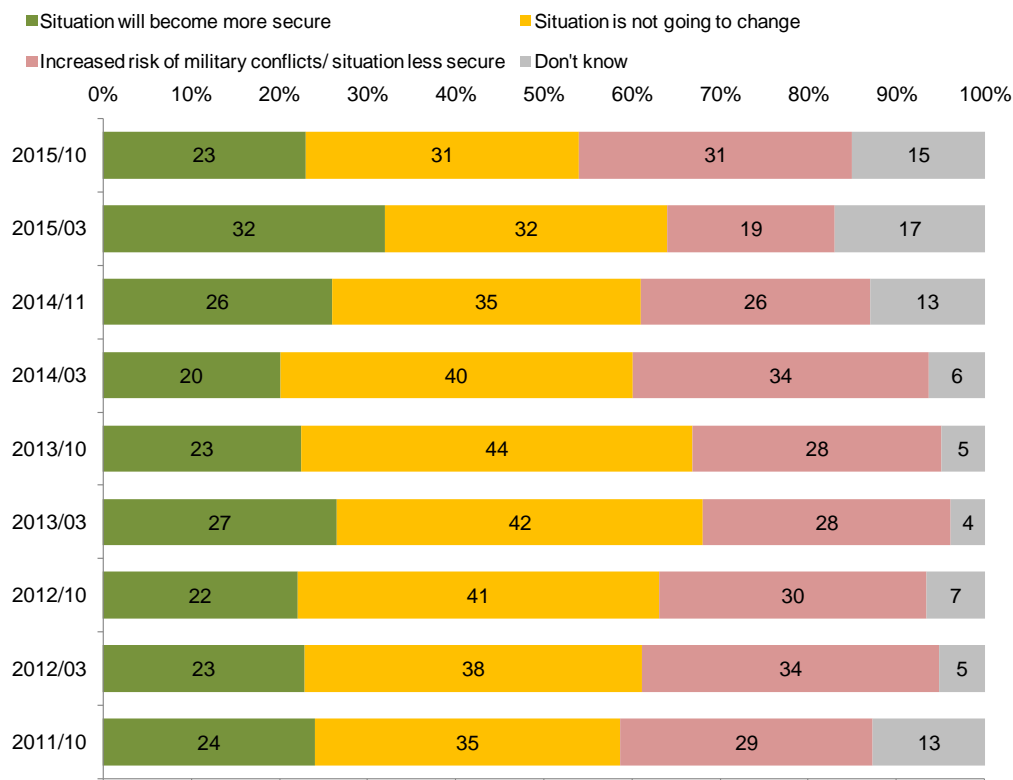
Estonians are more sensitive about the world's security risks—as many as 76% believe that the situation is worsening. 58% of Russian-speaking respondents share that view, yet compared to Estonians, there are more people who think the situation will remain unchanged (22% in comparison to 13% of Estonians). Only 5 per cent of Estonians and 13 per cent of the Russian-speaking respondents believe that the world could become more secure in the coming years.

3.2 Security in Estonia

The question about the security in Estonia was presented in the following wording:

What do you think, what will the situation in Estonia be? Will the population be living in more secure or insecure conditions in ten years from now?

The security situation in Estonia is perceived to be more positive compared to the situation in the world in general, yet this assessment has also become more negative compared to the spring survey: only 23 per cent believe that in ten years, Estonian citizens will be living in more secure conditions than now. The proportions of those who presume that the situation will remain unchanged and those who predict an increase in insecurity are both 31 per cent.

Figure 11. Situation in Estonia in the coming decade, 2011–2015 comparison (%) (N = all respondents)

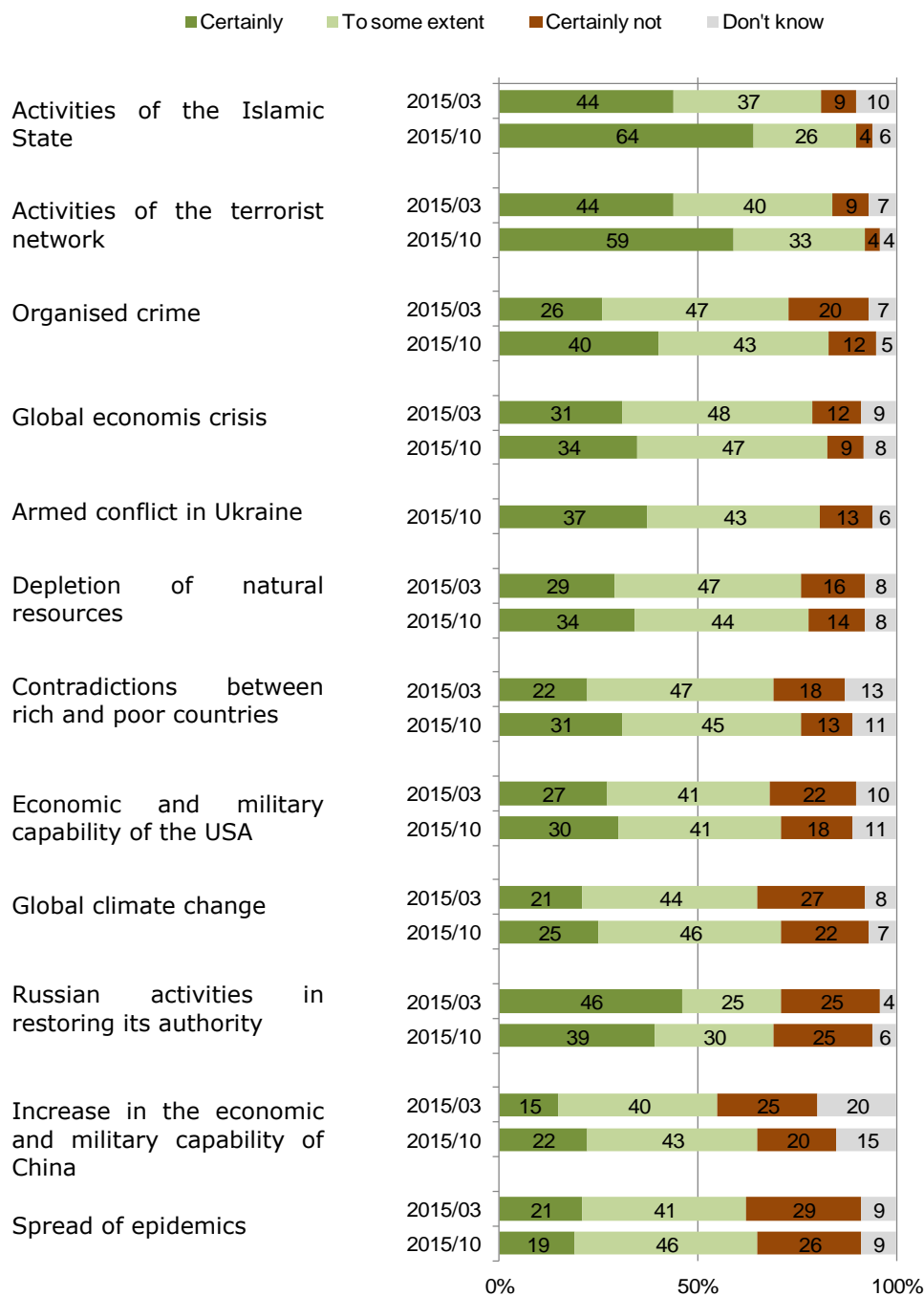
Compared to Russian-speaking respondents, Estonians also believe Estonia's future to be bleaker: 34 per cent of Estonians (24% of Russian-speaking respondents) predict the growth of insecurity. The proportions of those who believe the future to be more secure are equal (24% of Estonians and 22% of Russian-speaking respondents), compared to Estonians, more Russian-speaking respondents think the situation is most likely to remain unchanged (38 per cent vs 28 per cent of Estonians).

3.3 Threats to world security

The respondents were asked to assess the effect various factors have on peace and security in the world.

The most important threats pointed out by the respondents are the activities of the Islamic State (64%) and terrorist networks (59%). The answer "this certainly" was also widely used for organised crime (40%) and Russia's activities to restore its authority (39%). However, almost all of the threats listed in the question are pointed out together with the answer "to some extent". The respondents feel the least threatened by China's growing influence in the world, the spread of epidemics and global climate changes ([Figure 12](#)).

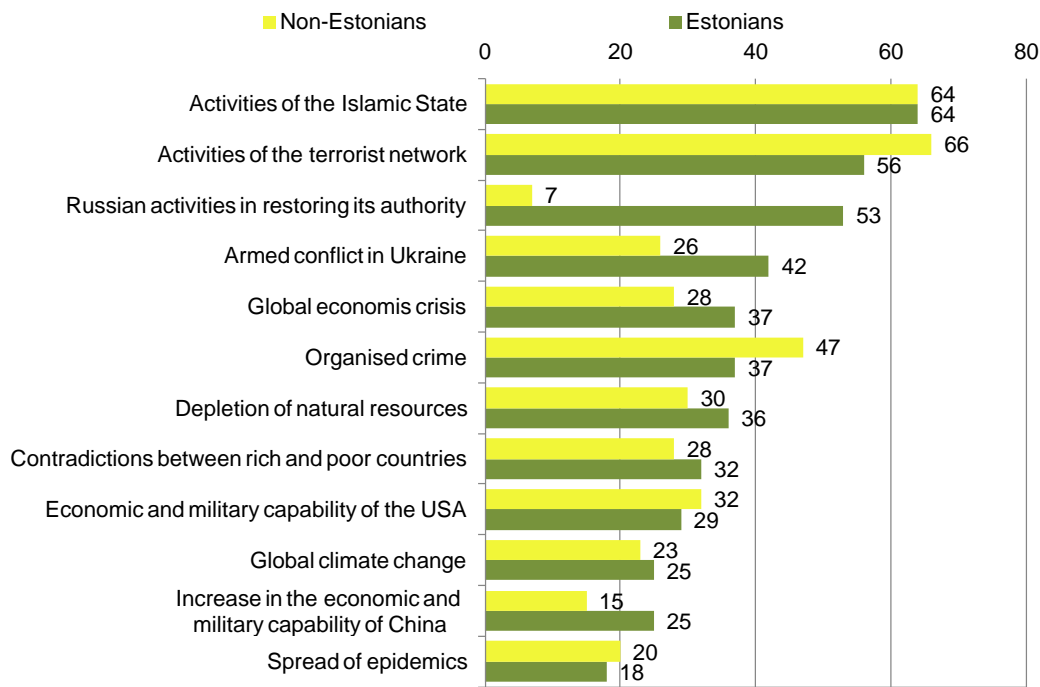
Figure 12. Dangers to peace and security in the world in 2015 (%; N = all respondents)



While Estonians and Russian-speaking respondents assess many global threats similarly, there is a fundamental difference in the **assessment of steps taken by Russia to restore its authority over the former Soviet territories**. For Estonians, it occupies the third place on the threat scale (53% of Estonians see it as a certain threat), yet Russian-speaking respondents place it last (7%). (Figure 13) 63% of the Russian-speaking respondents do not see Russia as a threat to world security.

The fear of Russia has decreased among Estonians as well—in spring, Russia’s activities were still clearly considered to be the number one threat among factors threatening world security (with 64 per cent), whereas now the position of the main threat to world peace is taken over by the Islamic State and people even see international terrorism as a greater threat compared to Russia.

Figure 13. Dangers to peace and security in the world in 2015, answers “this certainly” (%; comparison of Estonian-speaking and foreign-speaking respondents)



While Estonian respondents evaluate all threats as slightly more important than the average, Russian-speaking respondents only deem the activities of terrorist networks and organised crime more dangerous.

3.4 Threats to Estonia

The respondents were presented with 12 different potential threats and asked to assess the probability of their occurrence in the forthcoming years ([Figure 14](#)).

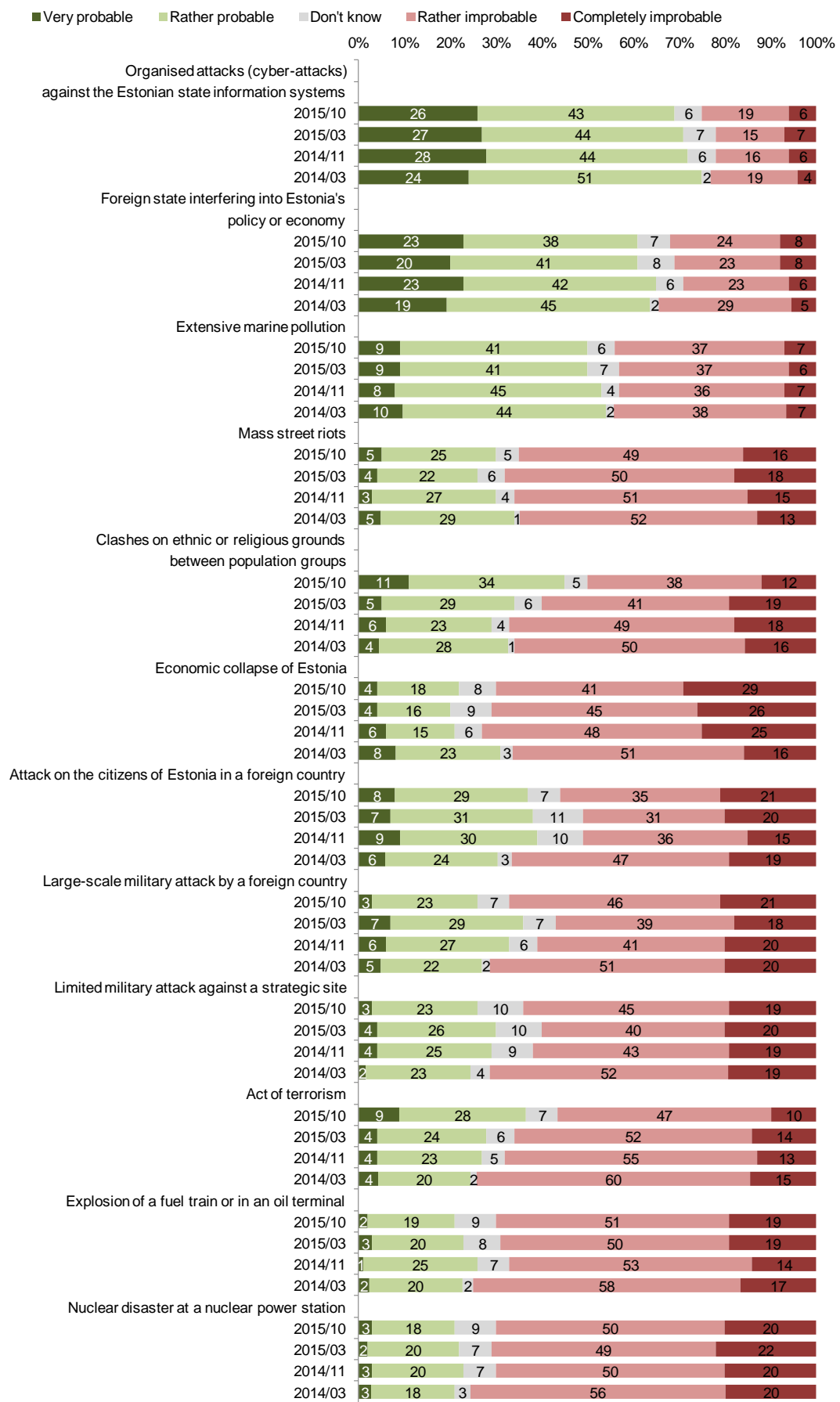
There are three main threats, the occurrence of which more than a half of the respondents considered very or rather probable in Estonia in the forthcoming years: 69% of people think there might be an organised attack (**a so-called cyber-attack**) against the Estonian state information systems, 61% believe that **a foreign state may interfere in Estonia's policy or economy in their own interests**, and 50% are of the opinion that the country may face **an extensive marine pollution**. The public has highlighted these three security threats for several years.

Compared to the previous surveys, the number of people who think clashes on ethnic or religious grounds and a large-scale military attack are probable has grown significantly. In March, 34% of respondents shared that view, whereas the respective indicator was 45 per cent in the current survey. Such a rise might be influenced by the expected arrival of refugees—many protests organised by national-conservative forces give reason to fear possible clashes. 50% of the respondents believe such conflicts to be improbable.

The proportion of respondents who consider an act of terror probable has also grown—from 28 per cent in March to 57 per cent in October. However, the number of respondents who think an act of terror is improbable is still greater—57 per cent of the respondents.

While in autumn 2013, 13 per cent of Estonians and 10 per cent of Russian-speaking respondents considered a limited or large-scale military attack against Estonia probable, then by spring 2015, the respective proportions had risen to 30 and 36 per cent respectively. Now, in October, the proportion of people who consider a military attack probable has fallen to 26 per cent, which is approximately at the same level as in spring 2014.

An attack on Estonian citizens in a foreign country is considered very or rather probable by 37%, large-scale street riots by 30%, economic collapse of the Republic of Estonia by 22% and an explosion of an oil train passing through Estonia or an explosion of an oil terminal and a nuclear disaster in a nuclear power plant close to Estonia by 21%.

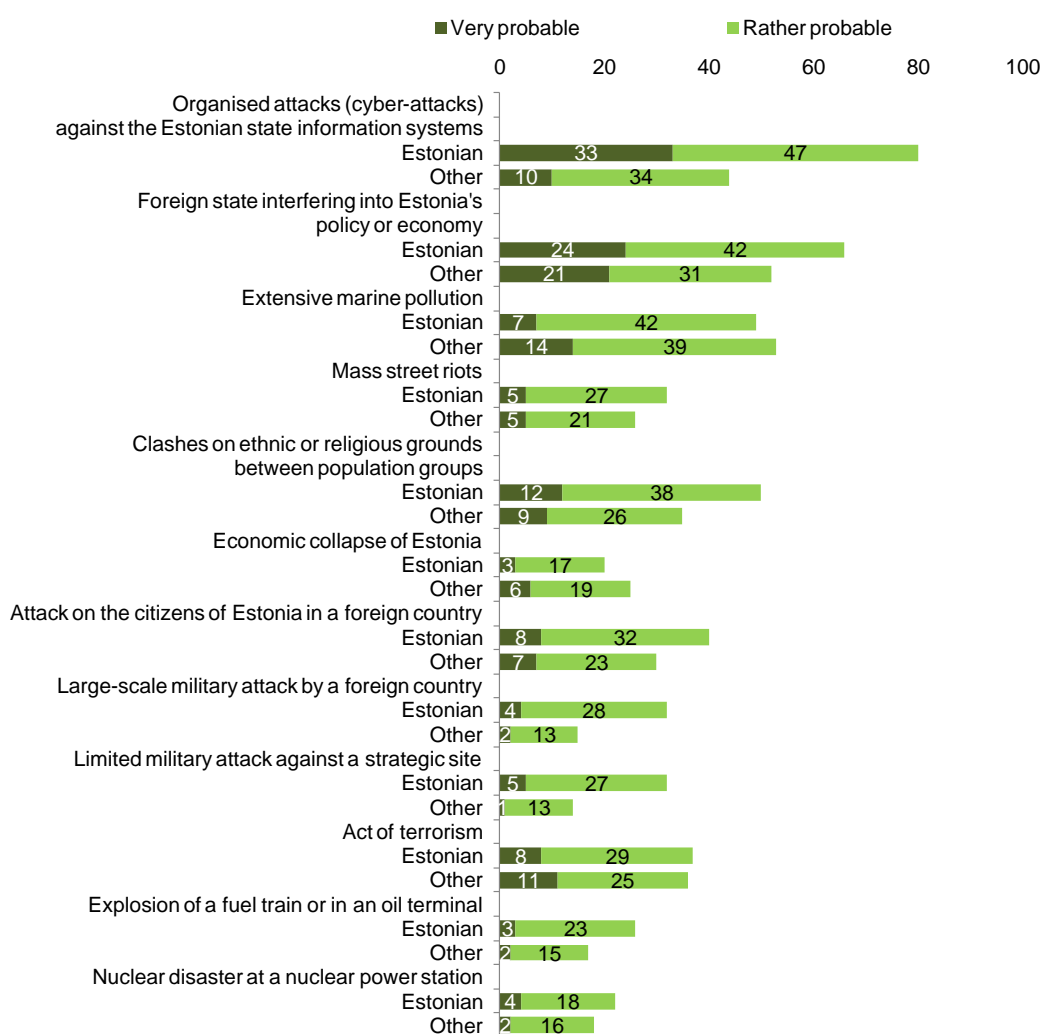
Figure 14. Probability of different threats endangering Estonia in the forthcoming years, 2014–2015 comparison (%; N = all respondent)

Even the assessment of Estonia's internal dangers reveals important differences in view of the respondents' main language of communication (Figure 15). **Estonians consider most of the dangers more probable than the Russian-speaking respondents.** The only exceptions are the economic collapse of the Republic of Estonia and an extensive marine pollution, which Russian-speaking respondents find more probable than Estonians. The possibility of an act of terrorism is considered equally probable.

The Estonian respondents find cyber-attacks (respectively 80% and 44%), a foreign state's interference to influence Estonia's policy or economy in their own interests (66% vs. 52%), a large-scale military attack (32% and 15%) or a limited military attack against a strategic site (32% and 14%) and attacks on the citizens of Estonia in a foreign country (40% and 30%) considerably more probable than Russian-speakers.

The proportion of people who consider clashes on ethnic grounds probable has grown among both Estonian and Russian-speaking respondents, from 37 to 50 per cent among Estonians and from 29 to 35 per cent among Russians.

Figure 15. Probability of different threats endangering Estonia in the forthcoming years; comparison of the assessments among the Estonian-speaking and Russian-speaking population (%) ; N = all respondents)



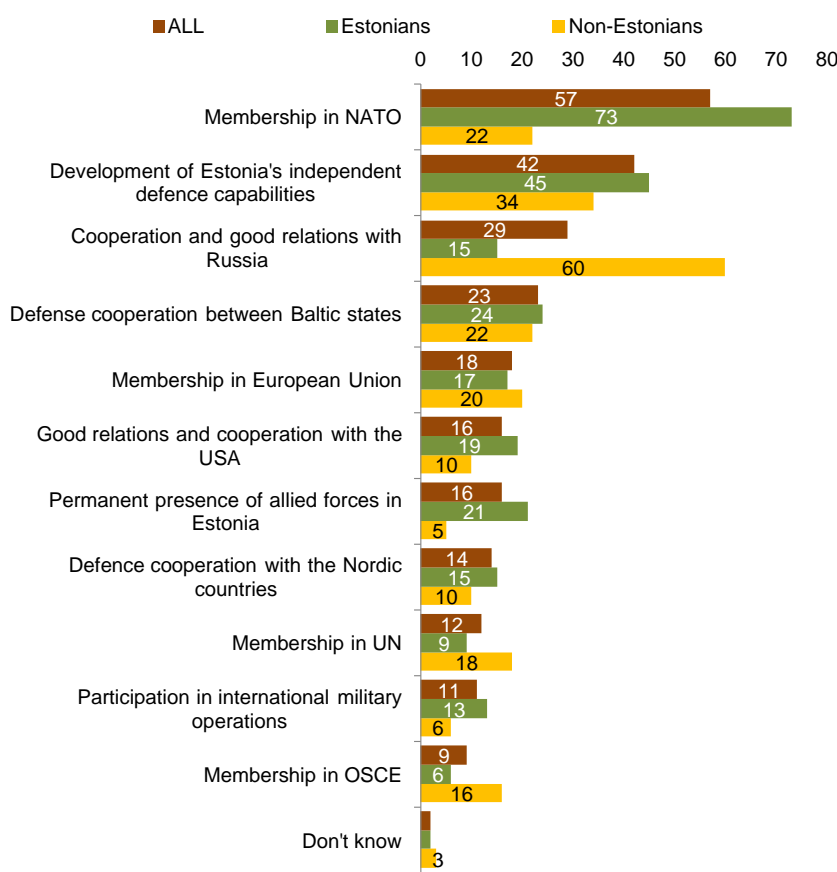
3.5 Security guarantees

Estonia's membership in NATO was the most important factor that would ensure maximum security to Estonia according to the respondents, similarly to previous surveys. This is mentioned as one of the important factors by 57% of the respondents and the result is mainly achieved with the help of Estonian respondents: while 73 per cent of Estonians consider NATO the main security guarantee, the respective indicator among the Russian-speaking respondents is 22 per cent (Figure 16).

It is followed by the development of **Estonia's own independent defence capability**, which is mentioned as one of the main security guarantees by 42% of Estonian residents. Even here there is a fundamental difference between the assessments given by Estonians and Russian-speaking respondents: the development of independent defence capability is considered among the three most important security guarantees by 45% and 34% of the respondents respectively.

Mostly due to the impact of respondents speaking other languages, these two factors are followed by cooperation and good-neighbourly relations with Russia, which are pointed out by 60 per cent of Russian-speaking respondents and only 15 per cent of Estonians. The support for the defence cooperation with the Baltic States (23%) and membership in the European Union (18%) is more or less equal among the two language groups.

Figure 16. Security guarantees for Estonia (up to 3 of the most important factors); comparison of the assessments among the Estonian-speaking and Russian-speaking population (%) ; N = all respondents)



Compared to the previous survey, the significance of most security guarantees has slightly declined. This could be the result of a new category being added to the list; it gained the support of 16 per cent of the respondents: permanent presence of allied forces in Estonia. This security guarantee is also more valued by Estonian respondents. Russian-speaking respondents, however, consider the role of UN and OSCE more important in ensuring security.

4 Defence willingness among the population of Estonia

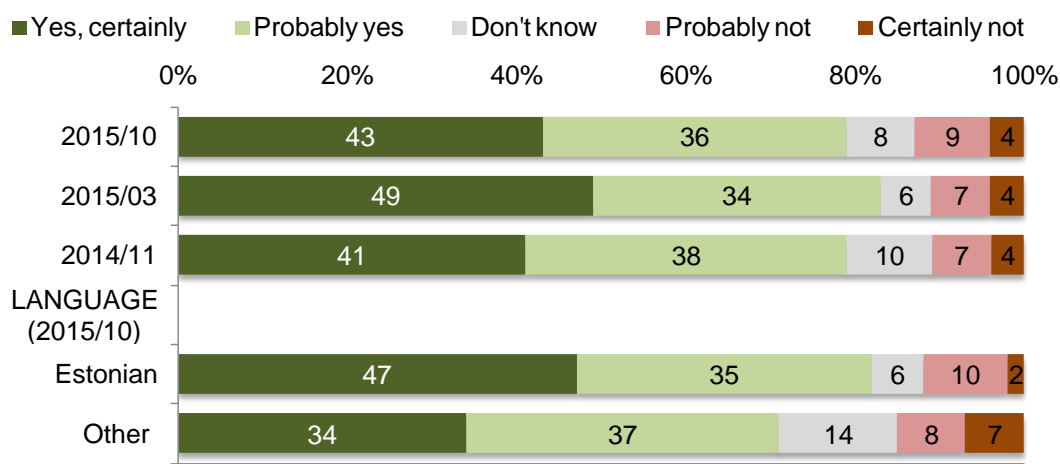
Defence willingness among the population of Estonia is measured with three questions. The so-called passive defence willingness is expressed through the opinion on whether Estonia should be defended in case a foreign enemy attacks ("If Estonia is attacked by any country, should we, in any case, provide armed resistance, regardless of the attacker?"), active defence willingness is expressed through the person's willingness to participate in national defence with his/her own skills and competence ("If Estonia is attacked, are you ready to participate in defence activities using your own competence and skills?"). The proportion of those expressing the will to leave Estonia in case of an attack is also mapped.

Defence willingness is also related to the topics of how much the people are informed about the ways in which one can protect Estonia in the event of a possible attack.

4.1 Attitude towards the necessity of resistance

In the event of a foreign attack, armed resistance is regarded certainly necessary by 43% and probably necessary by 36% of the population (Figure 17). Thus, **a total of 79% of the population is in favour of military resistance, while it is regarded as unnecessary by 13% of the population.** Estonian-speaking respondents tend to consider armed resistance slightly more necessary than non-Estonians (certainly necessary according to 47% of the Estonian-speaking and 34% of the Russian-speaking population, respectively), while only 15% of the latter believe that resistance is not necessary (the number of people who answered "cannot say" is the same).

Figure 17. Necessity for the provision of armed resistance, if Estonia is attacked by any country (%; N = all respondents)



The increase in the number of people who consider armed resistance necessary in March has again fallen to the level it was the year before. It is possible that the increase in March occurred due to national defence being more topical before the parliamentary elections, which undoubtedly mobilised public opinion.

The long term trend of considering armed resistance necessary has been presented on [Figure 18](#) (for the entire population) and [Figure 19](#) as a comparison of Estonians and Russian-speaking respondents.

Figure 18. Necessity of armed resistance if Estonia is attacked by any country; 2000–2015 comparison (%) ; N = all respondents)

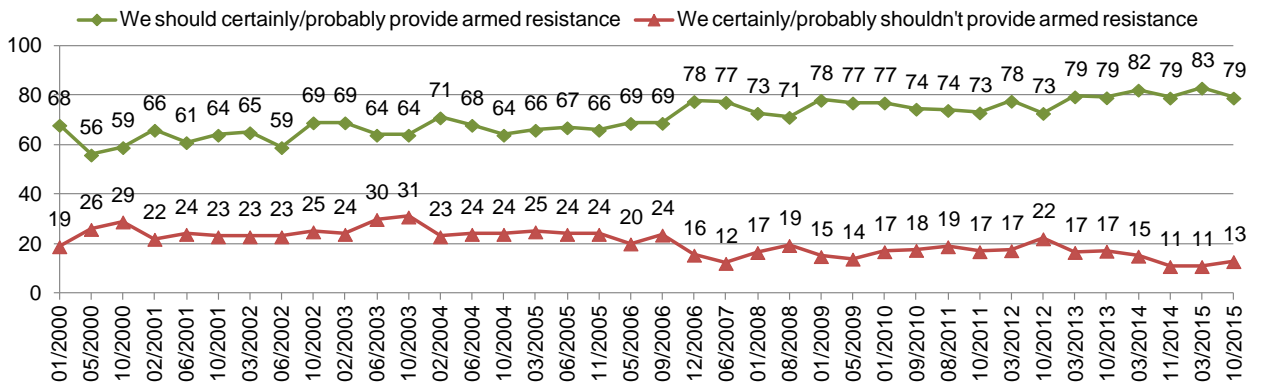
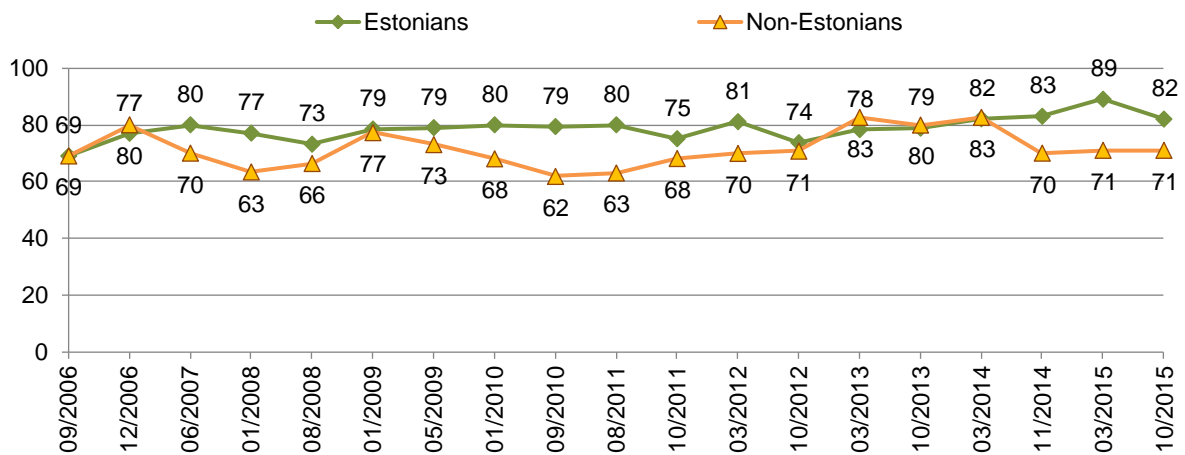


Figure 19. Proportion of the proponents of armed resistance in the event of an attack; comparison of the Estonian-speaking and foreign-speaking population 2006–2015 (% of those considering resistance certainly and probably necessary; N = all respondents)



4.2 Willingness to participate in defence activities

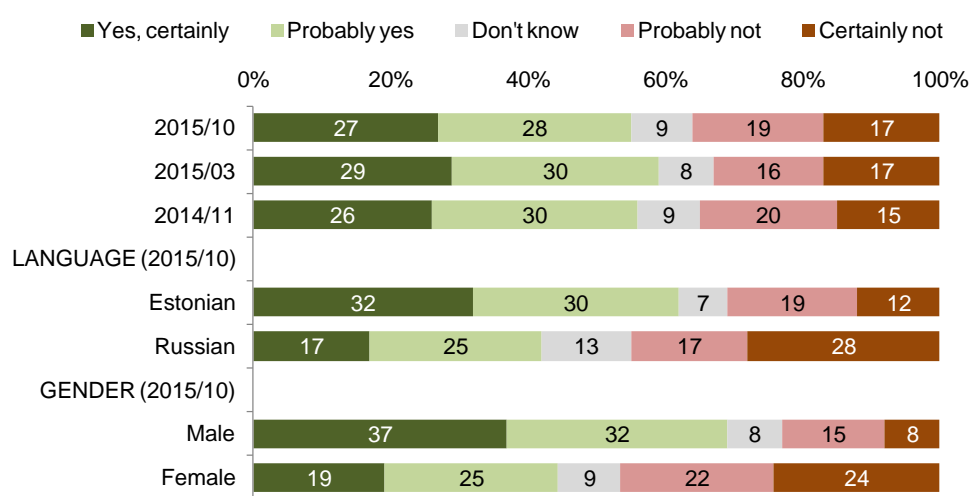
The number of those willing to participate personally in defence activities is lower than the proportion of those supporting armed resistance at the state level. While state-level armed resistance is considered necessary by 79%, **55% of the population would be willing to participate in defence activities to the extent of their own capabilities and skills** (Figure 20). 27% of the population of Estonia would be certainly willing and 28% probably willing to participate in defence activities. 17% would certainly not and 19% would probably not be willing to contribute to defence activities.

The difference between Estonians and people who speak other languages is even more significant in the question of active defence willingness compared to passive defence willingness. While **62% of Estonians would be willing to participate personally in defence activities, the respective indicator for non-Estonians is only 42%**.

When interpreting defence willingness, it should be considered that participation in national defence has been a traditionally male task, and, therefore, the readiness to contribute is inevitably lower among female and older respondents (for instance, only 37 per cent of respondents over 60 years of age would be willing to participate in defence activities while the respective proportion of respondents under 20 years of age is 74 per cent). Additionally, the percentage of Russian-speaking respondents remains lower than average because conscript service is not compulsory for non-citizens. The completion of conscript service, however, is a prerequisite for participating in armed resistance.

The awareness of personal contribution possibilities will be discussed in the fourth part of this chapter (4.4).

Figure 20. Willingness to participate in defence activities if Estonia is attacked
(%; N= all respondents)



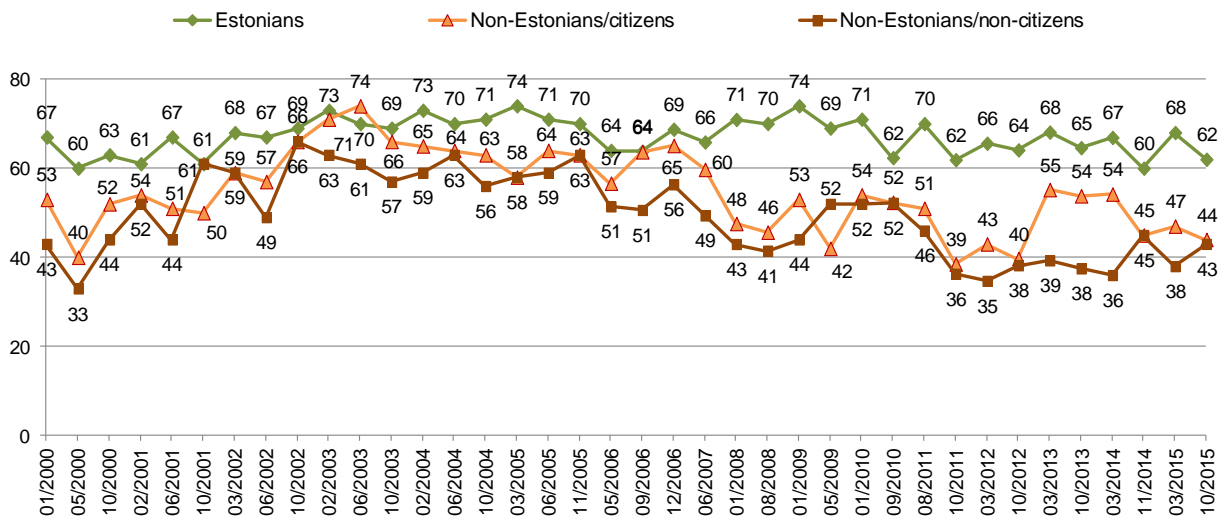
Defence willingness is seen in a more positive perspective when we only look at men's willingness to participate in defence activities. Even though defence willingness is lower among Russian-speaking male citizens compared to Estonian men, over 80 per cent of male citizens under 35 years of age and three fourths of those under 50 years of age would personally contribute to national defence.

Table 4 – Willingness to certainly or probably participate in defence activities among male citizens by age groups

LANGUAGE OF COMMUNICATION	15-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Estonian	84%	78%	74%	52%
Russian	75%	62%	41%	37%
ALL men / citizens	82%	74%	69%	51%

If we view the temporal change of participatory willingness by nationality and citizenship, it becomes evident that, in 2006, defence willingness among non-Estonians with Estonian citizenship was at a comparable level with that of Estonians. After the so-called Bronze Night events in 2007 this willingness dropped significantly both among non-Estonians with Estonian citizenship and those without citizenship (Figure 21). The years 2013–2014 saw an improvement in the defence willingness among non-Estonian citizens, but in the last three surveys this willingness has decreased again and reached a comparable level with that of non-citizens.

Figure 21. Proportion of the population willing to participate in defence activities in the event of an attack; comparison of the Estonian-speaking and foreign-speaking population 2000–2015 (% of those certainly and probably willing to participate; N = all respondents)

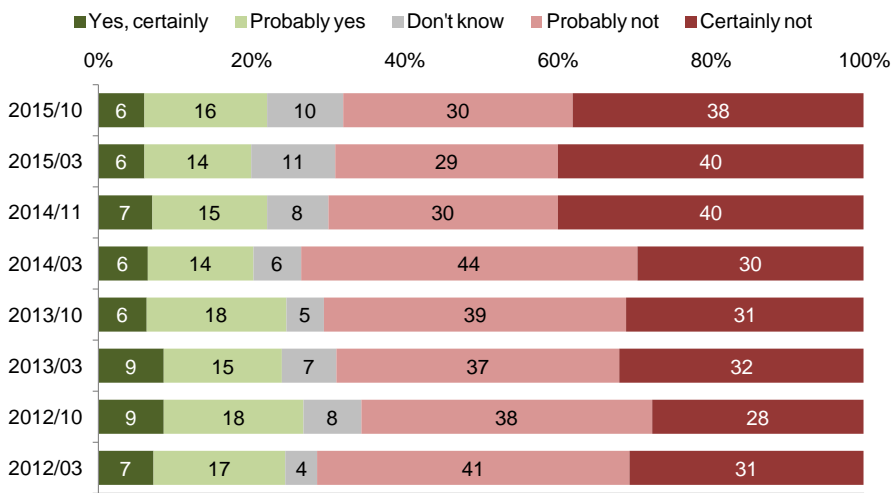


4.3 Desire to leave Estonia in the event of a military threat

In case Estonia is attacked, a fifth of Estonians (22%) would consider leaving Estonia: in such a situation, 6% would certainly endeavour to leave and 16% would probably do it (Figure 22). 68% of the population would certainly not or probably not endeavour to leave Estonia in the event of a threat. These proportions have remained quite stable in the past few years.

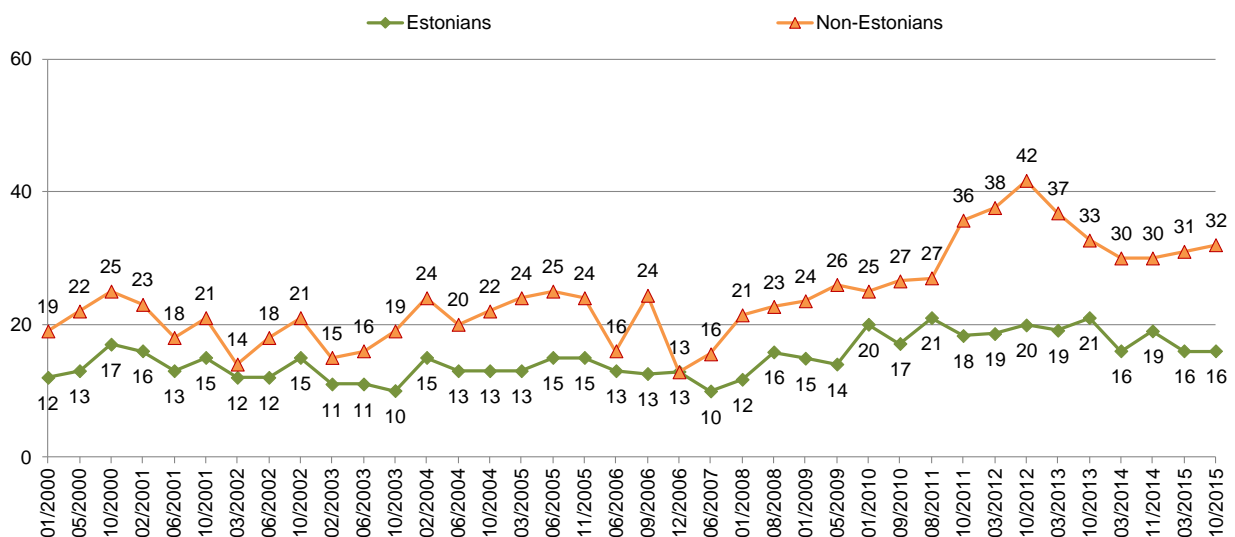
The people most prone to leave Estonia are women (certainly or probably 25%) and younger people up to 39 years of age (more than one third). 32% of Russian-speaking respondents and 16% of Estonians would probably leave Estonia.

Figure 22. Probability of leaving Estonia in case Estonia is attacked (%) ; N = all respondents)



When taking into account the whole data from the beginning of the survey series, it can be seen that the Russian-speaking respondents have expressed higher willingness to leave since the year 2007, the willingness rose to as high as 42 per cent in 2013 and has then remained at 30 per cent since 2014. Estonians' willingness to leave was also slightly higher during the recession years from 2010 to 2013, when one fifth of Estonians would have considered leaving (Figure 23).

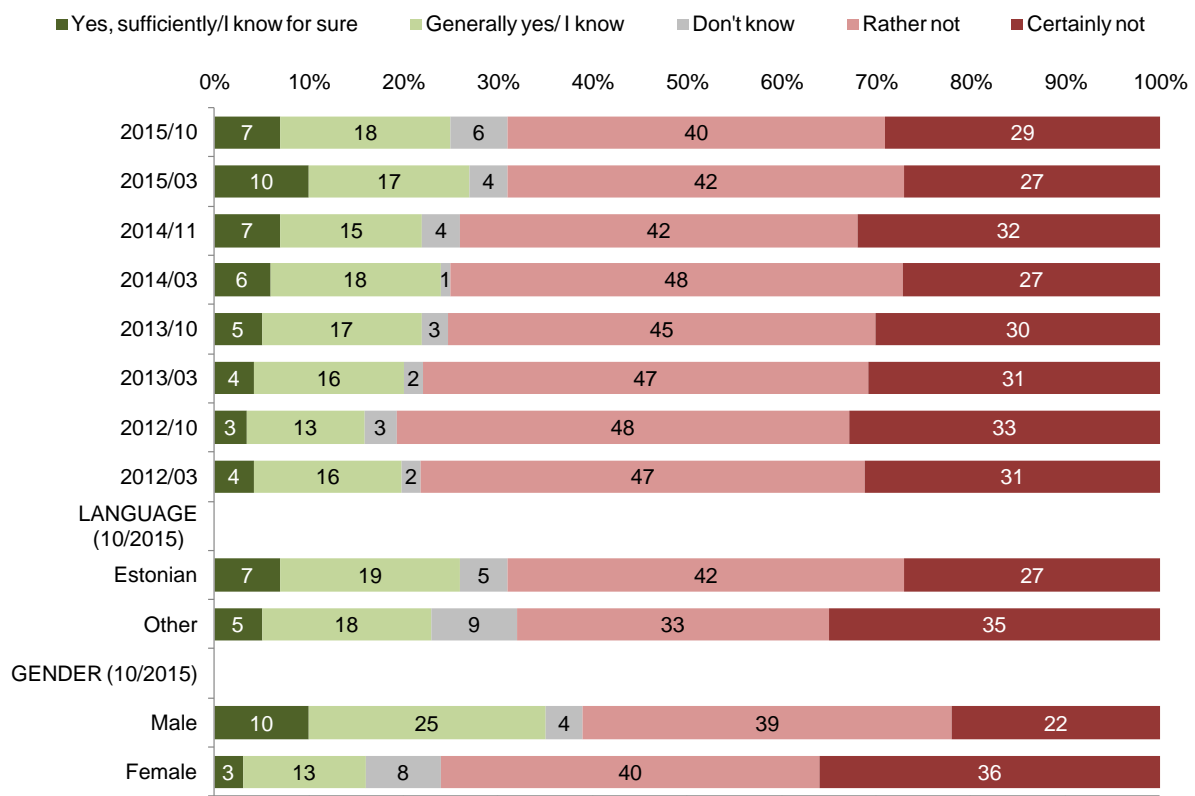
Figure 23. Proportion of those desiring to leave Estonia in the event of an attack; comparison of the Estonian-speaking and foreign-speaking population 2000–2015 (% of those desiring to leave certainly and those who would probably do it; N = all respondents)



4.4 Ability to act in the event of a potential attack

In order to obtain an overview of the population's awareness in terms of defence, the respondents were asked to tell whether they considered themselves to be adequately informed about what to do in the event of an impending foreign attack. The results show that, **people consider their ability to act in the event of a potential attack rather poor**: only one fourth would know what they could do for defending the state in such circumstances but 69% say that they are rather not informed or certainly not informed about this (Figure 24). Still, the level of awareness is slightly higher in 2015 than in the previous years.

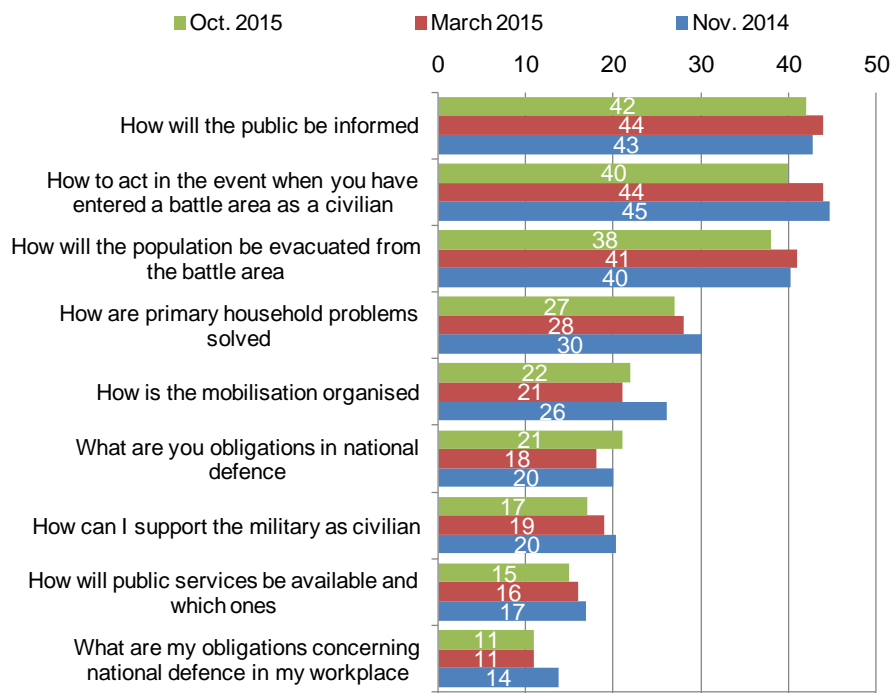
Figure 24. Being informed about the possibilities of what to do for defending Estonia in the event of an impending foreign attack (%; N = all respondents)



Men consider their awareness to be higher than women (35% vs 16%)—this could be explained by more contacts with national defence structures (conscription, the Defence League). The tendency of Estonians being somewhat better informed than Russian-speaking respondents is declining. While in spring, 30% of Estonians and 20% of Russian-speaking respondents were informed enough or generally informed, the difference was only 3 per cent this time (26% vs 23%).

4.5 On which topics do you require more information?

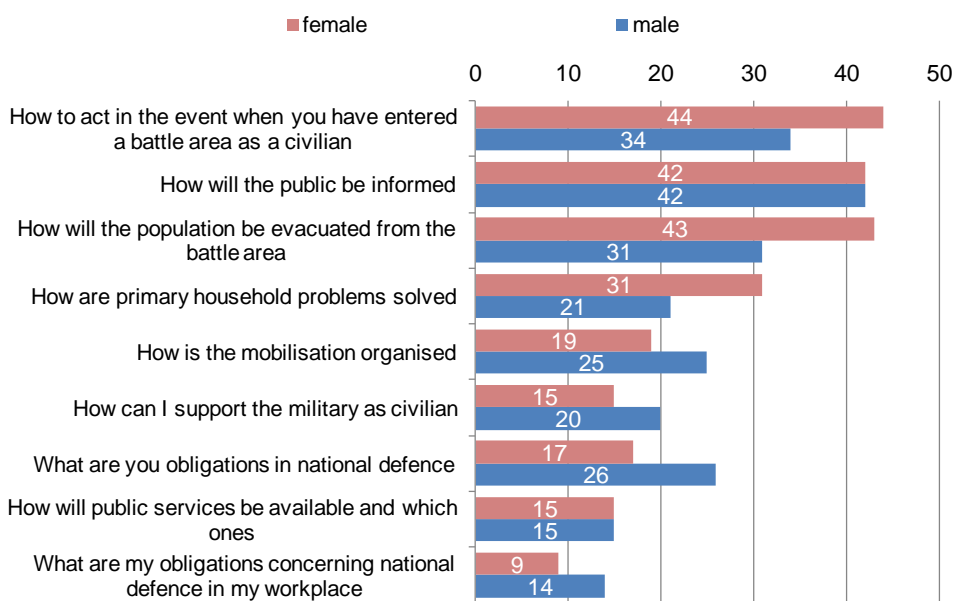
As throughout the surveys the population has assessed its level of being informed as very low in view of the topic of what to do in the event of a foreign attack, in November 2014 we included a question about the topics regarding the state's activities and organisation of personal life on which people require the most information in the event of a foreign attack (Figure 25). Respondents had to choose three topics most important to them out of nine given topics.

Figure 25. On which topics do you require more information? (%; N = all respondents)

The three most important topics which were highlighted in both surveys and on which further information is needed are related to the role of civilians in case of a conflict: **how the general public is informed, how to act when one has entered a combat zone as a civilian and how evacuation is organised.**

The information needs of male and female respondents differ to an extent.

Even though men are also concerned with the three topics listed as the most important in the general ranking, their focus is on how the mobilisation will be organised, how a civilian can contribute to supporting the military and what the respondent's obligations are in national defence (Figure 26).

Figure 25. On which topics do you require more information? Comparison of men and women (%; N = all respondents)

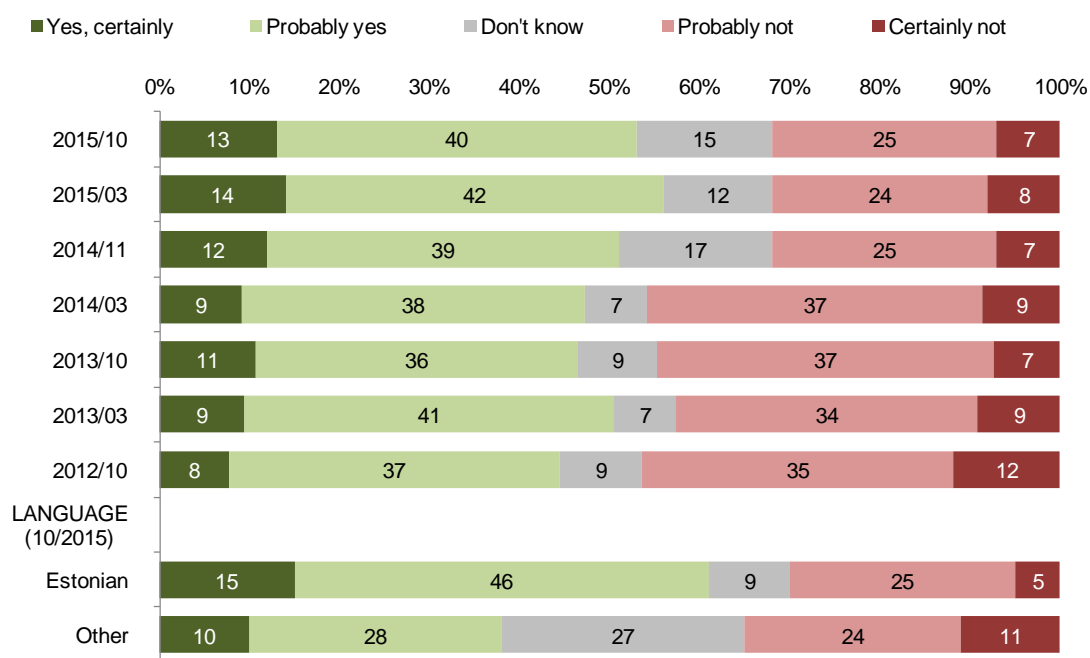
5 Defence capability of Estonia

The fifth chapter reflects attitudes within the population in relation to Estonia's defence capability, the volume of defence expenditures and the state's activities regarding the development of national defence.

5.1 Assessment of the defence capability of Estonia

Respondents were asked to say whether they think Estonia is defensible until help arrives from the allies in the event of an armed foreign attack. Since last autumn, the proportion of respondents who believe that **it would be possible to defend Estonia in the event of an armed foreign attack has reached over 50 per cent**. The proportion of those respondents who find that Estonia cannot be defended has fallen to one third of all the respondents—in March 2014, this indicator was still at 46% (Figure 27).

Figure 27. Assessment of the defence capability of Estonia in the event of an armed foreign attack (%; N = all respondents)

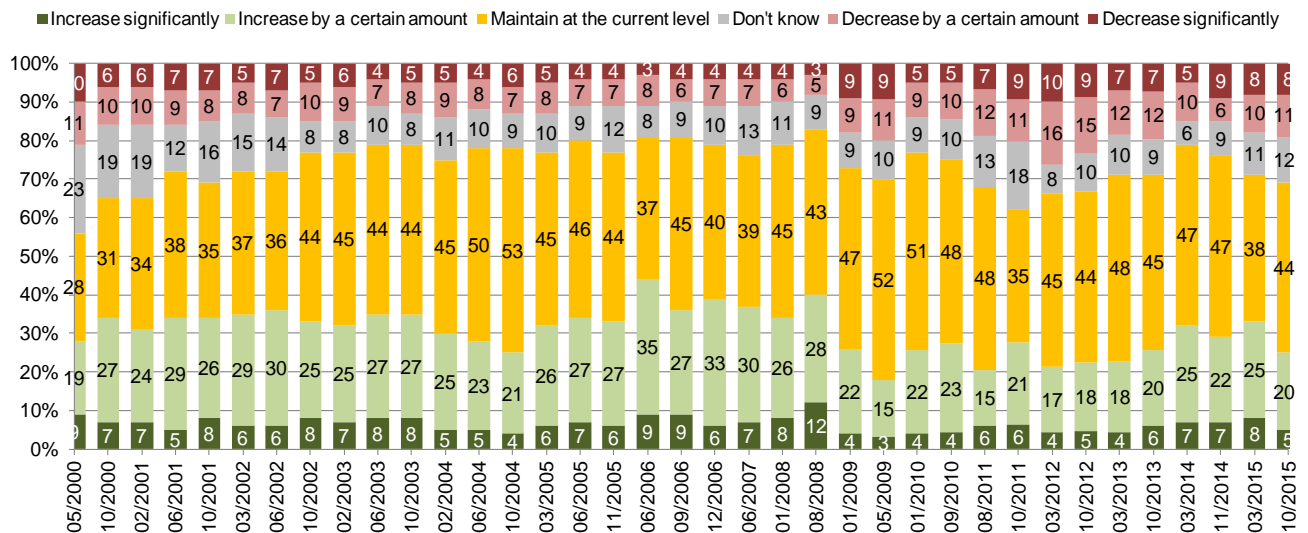


Estonians give a more positive assessment to Estonia's defence capability—more than 60 per cent regard Estonia defensible. Assessments given by Russian-speaking respondents are equally positive and sceptic, more than one fourth of Russian-speaking respondents say they do not have a view in this question.

5.2 Views on the volume of defence expenditures

Assessments given to the volume of Estonian defence expenditures reveal that a majority of the respondents think that defence expenditures should be kept at the current level (Figure 28). **An increase in defence expenditures is favoured by 28% and decrease by 19% of the population.**

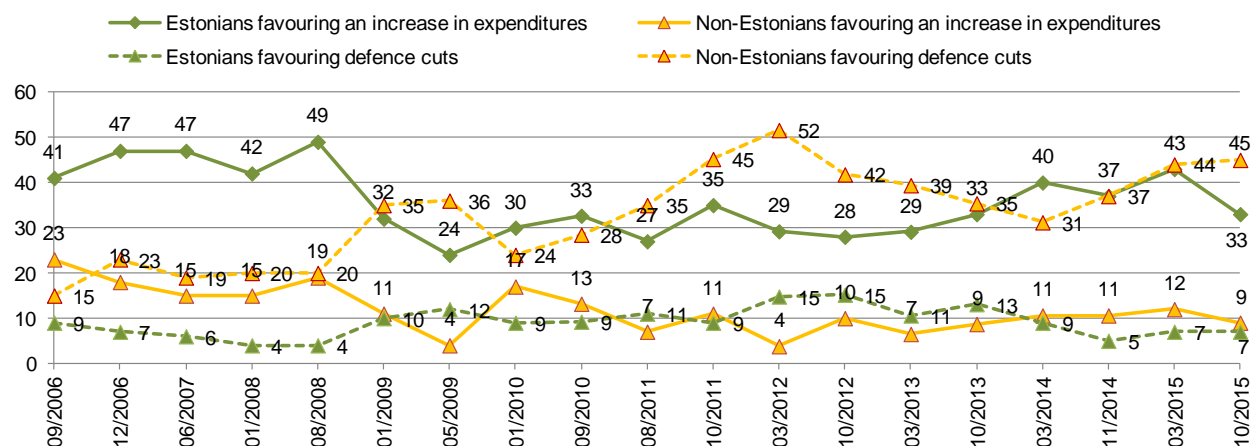
Figure 28. Views on the volume of defence expenditures; 2000–2015 comparison (%) (N = all respondents)



Estonians’ attitude towards defence expenditures is inversely proportional to that of the Russian-speaking respondents: there are fewer supporters of increasing the volume of defence expenditures among Estonians than there are of supporters of decreasing it among Russian-speaking residents. (Figure 29) The number of those in favour of increasing defence expenditures among Russian-speaking respondents is equal to Estonians wishing for a decrease.

In March 2015, 33% of Estonian-speaking residents and 9% of residents who speak other languages were of the opinion that the volume of defence expenditures should be increased; 7% of Estonian speakers and 45% of foreign language speakers were in favour of expenditure cuts.

Figure 29. Views on the volume of defence expenditures; comparison of the Estonian-speaking and non-Estonian-speaking population 2006–2015 (%) (N = all respondents)



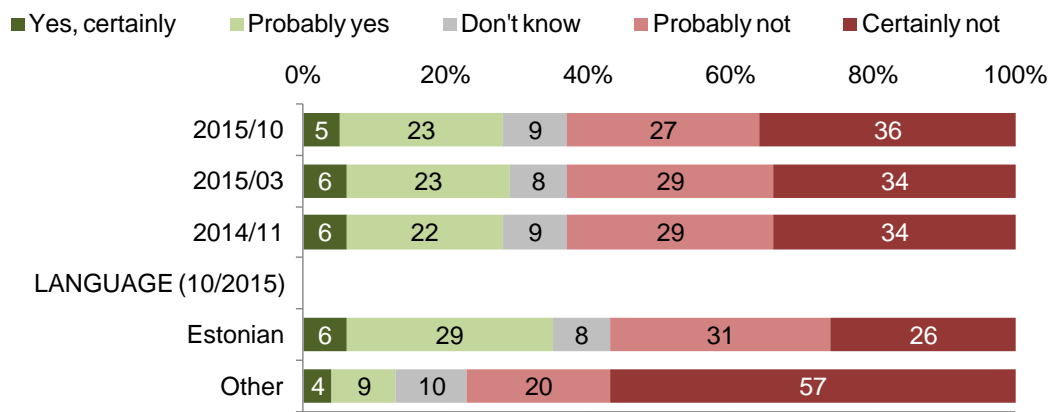
5.3 Preparedness for making a personal donation to national defence

Many people do not seem to realise that there is a direct connection between their own income and appropriations from the state budget—increasing or decreasing budgetary spending on national defence seems relatively abstract to them. The preparedness for making a personal donation to national defence is a much better indicator of people’s attitudes towards the need to strengthen national defence.

The survey reveals that **28 per cent of the respondents would be certainly or probably willing** to make a contribution. 63 per cent of the respondents would probably or certainly not make a donation to national defence. These proportions have remained unchanged throughout the last three surveys, which shows the stability of the willingness to donate (Figure 30).

35 per cent of Estonians would be willing to make a financial contribution to national defence, whereas only one seventh of the Russian-speaking respondents are willing to do so.

Figure 30. Preparedness for making a personal donation to Estonian national defence (%; N = all respondents)

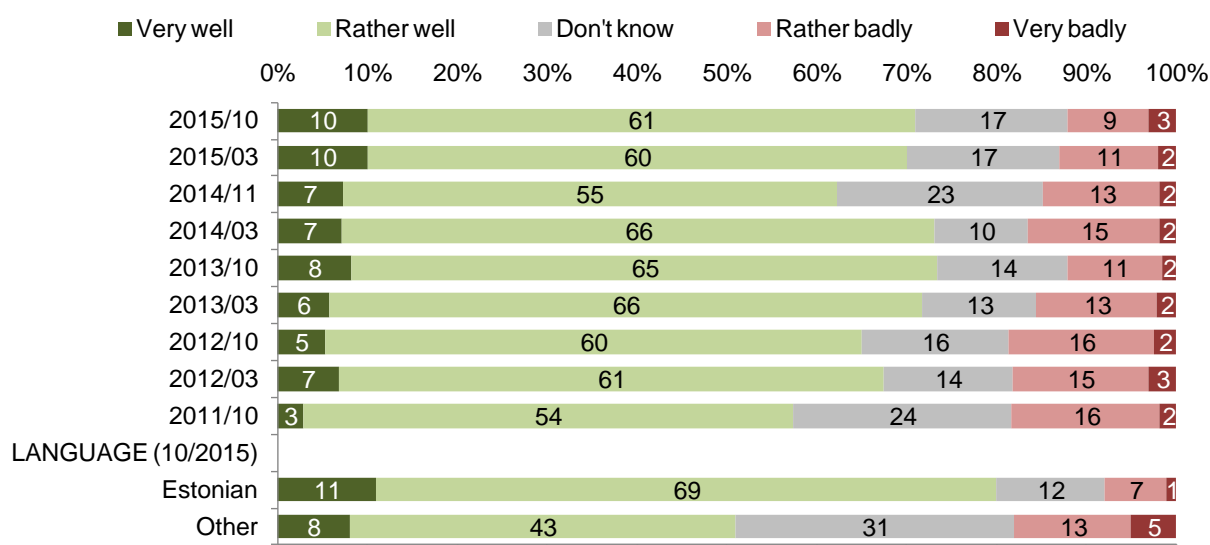


5.4 Assessment of state activities in view of the development of national defence

In spring 2014, 73% of the population provided a positive assessment to the state's activities in view of the development of national defence, yet the figure had dropped to 62% by November last year. In March 2015, the assessments given to the state's activities improved again (70%) and this indicator remains the same in October—71 per cent of the respondents find the state's activities very good or good enough. The proportion of negative assessments was only 12% (Figure 31).

Similar to other opinions and views on national defence, the Estonian-speaking population values activities related to national defence development higher than non-Estonians (80% and 52%, respectively, regard state activities in developing national defence as good). Still, the assessments given by Russian-speaking respondents have become more positive as well.

Figure 31. Assessments of state activities in recent years in view of the development of Estonia's national defence (%) ; N = all respondents)



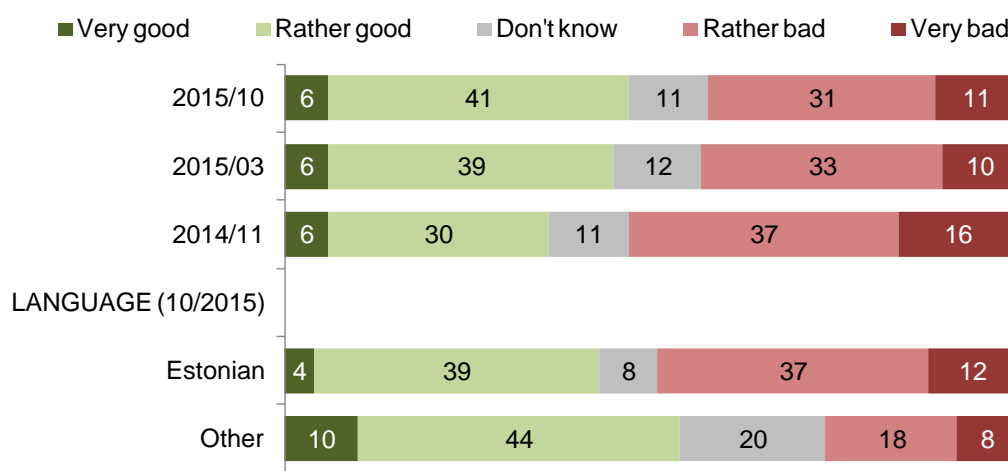
5.5 Assessments on the defence of the Estonian border

In 2014, the kidnapping of the Estonian Internal Security Service officer Eston Kohver by the Russian special services on the Estonian-Russian border resulted in the public discussion on how well the temporary border line between Estonia and Russia is guarded.

In autumn, after the incident on the border, the majority of the assessments given to this question were clearly negative, whereas by now, the proportions of **positive and negative opinions are more or less equal**. Estonian respondents continue being predominantly critical ([Figure 32](#)). Undoubtedly, the activities on the border have also influenced public opinion: as many as two thirds of Estonians provided a negative assessment about the defence of the Estonian external border in autumn; the proportion of critical assessments has fallen to 49% by now.

Only one fourth of the Russian-speaking respondents share the critical view about the Estonian border, while more than half of the Russian-speaking respondents think that the Estonian external border is well protected.

Figure 32. Assessment on the defence of the Estonian border (%; N = all respondents)



6 Organisation of Estonian national defence

The sixth chapter discusses various aspects of national defence organisation in Estonia: what are the attitudes towards conscript service (including its necessity for young men, evasion of conscript service, alternative service, women undergoing conscript service), whether is it more appropriate for Estonia to maintain its current defence concept or transfer to a fully professional army, what are the opinions about comprehensive national defence, and what are the main tasks of the Defence League.

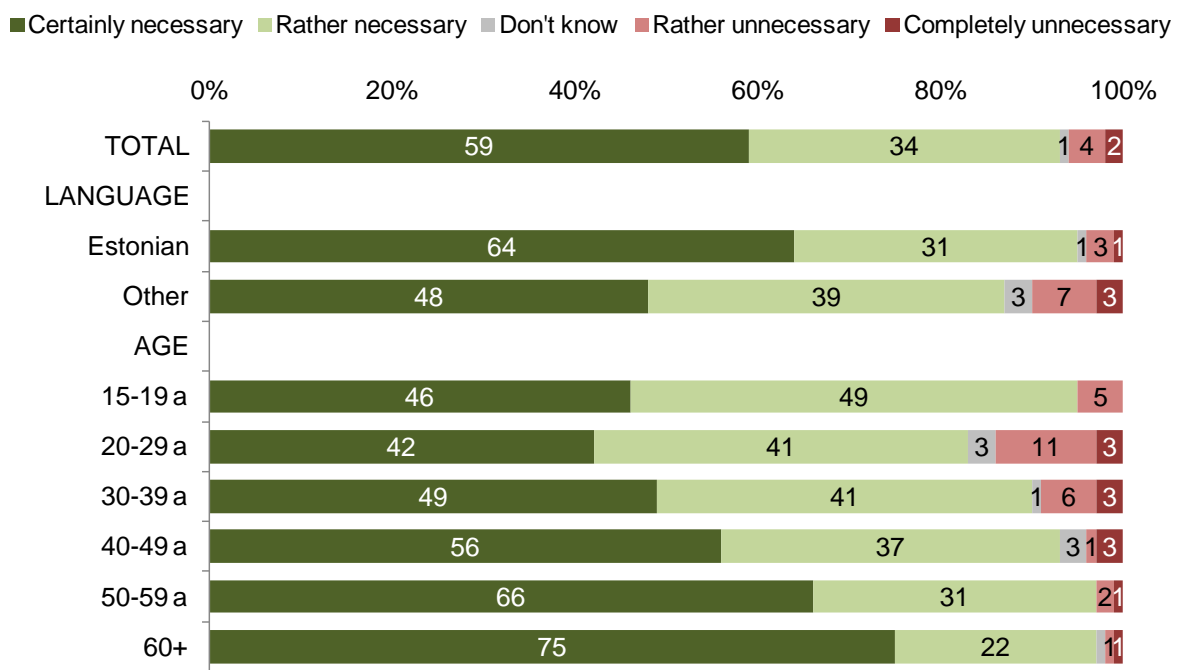
6.1 Attitude towards conscript service

6.1.1. Necessity of conscript service for young men

Estonian population continues to have a very favourable attitude towards conscript service: **93% of all respondents believe that young men need to undergo conscript service**. The proportion of those who believe that conscript service is certainly necessary has somewhat decreased (67% in March vs 59% now). However, only 6% of the population believe that conscript service is rather or totally unnecessary. Undergoing conscript service is considered certainly necessary by 64% of the Estonian-speaking respondents and 48% of the respondents who speak other languages (Figure 33).

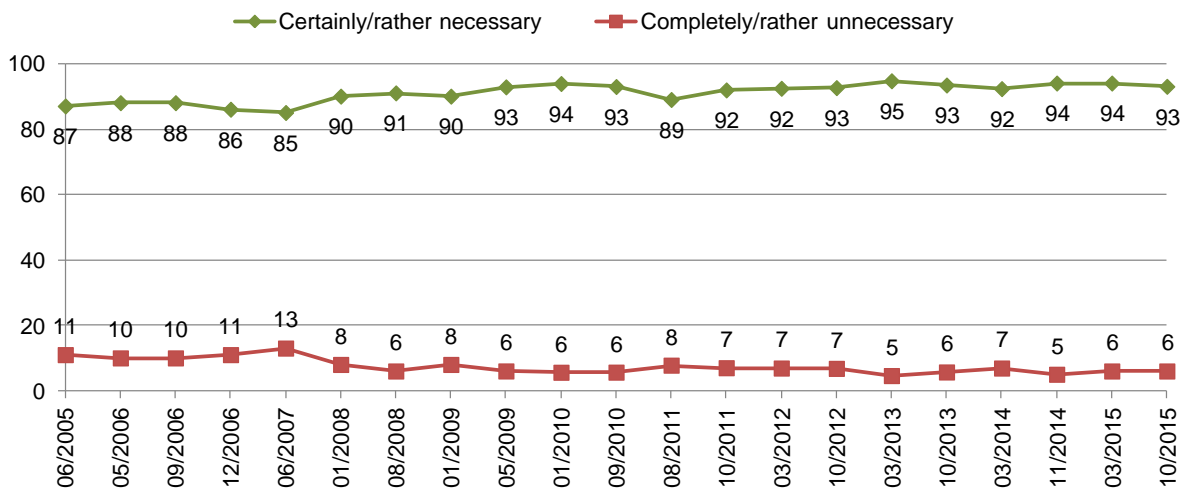
The most dedicated supporters of conscript service are people over 60 years of age, but the number of supporters is nearly 40 per cent even among people under 30, who are influenced by the conscript service the most, and only one tenth consider it unnecessary.

Figure 33. Attitude towards the necessity of conscript service (%; N = all respondents)



The proportion of the population who consider undergoing conscript service for young men necessary or rather necessary has remained at a very high level over the years (since 2005, in the range of 85–95%) (Figure 34).

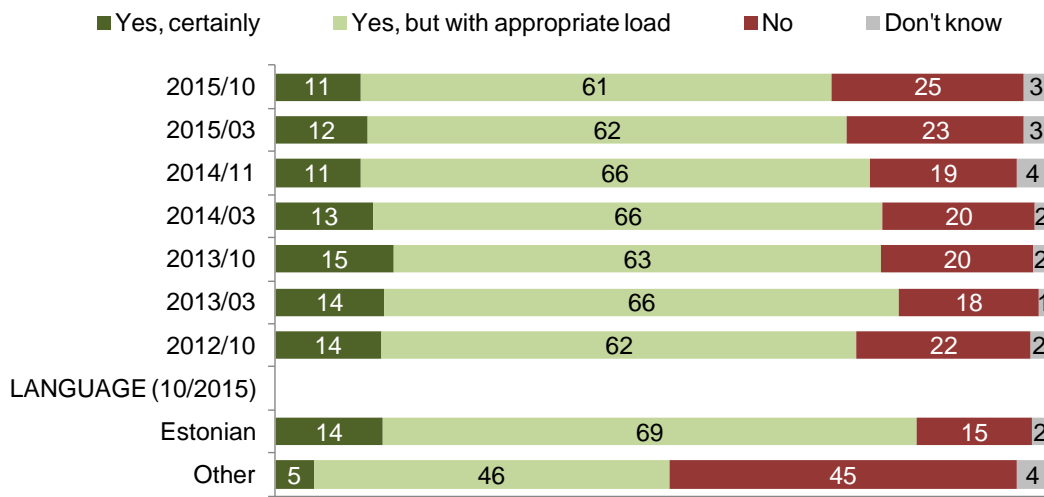
Figure 34. Attitude towards the necessity of conscript service; 2005–2015 comparison (%; N = all respondents)



Since 2012, the respondents have been additionally asked to assess whether young men who have minor health disorders should be subject to conscript service. 11% of the respondents believe that such young men should certainly undergo conscript service; however, **61% of the respondents think that young men with minor health disorders should undergo conscript service with an appropriate training load** (Figure 35).

The most significant differences occur in view of the language of communication. As for Russian-speaking respondents, 45% hold the opinion that young men with minor health disorders should not undergo conscript service, while only 15% of Estonian speakers share the same opinion.

Figure 35. Attitudes towards undergoing conscript service regarding young men with minor health disorders (%; N = all respondents)

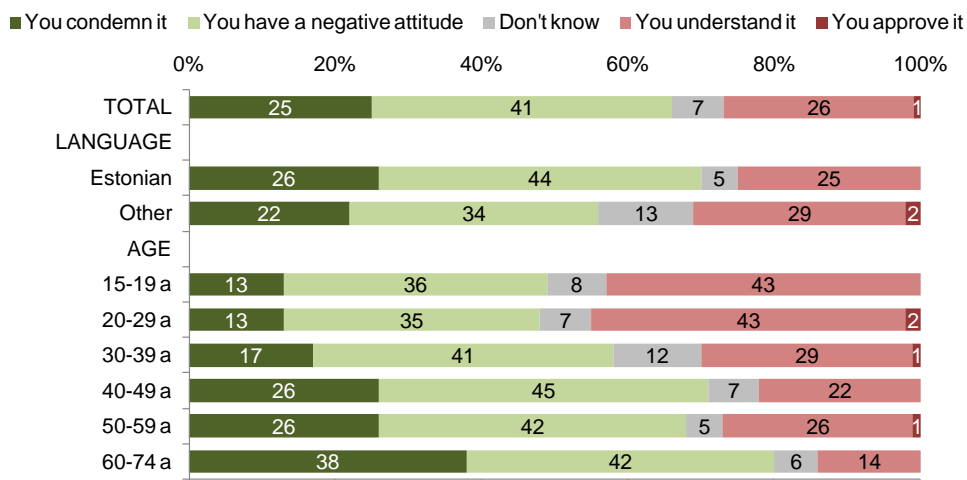


6.1.2 Evasion of conscript service

Bearing in mind the favouring attitudes of the population towards conscript service described above, it is fully anticipated that **the majority of the population in Estonia disapproved of the evasion of conscript service**—25% condemn such behaviour and 41% consider it negative (Figure 36). 26% of respondents have an understanding attitude towards the evasion of conscript service, however, less than 1% of the respondents approve of this.

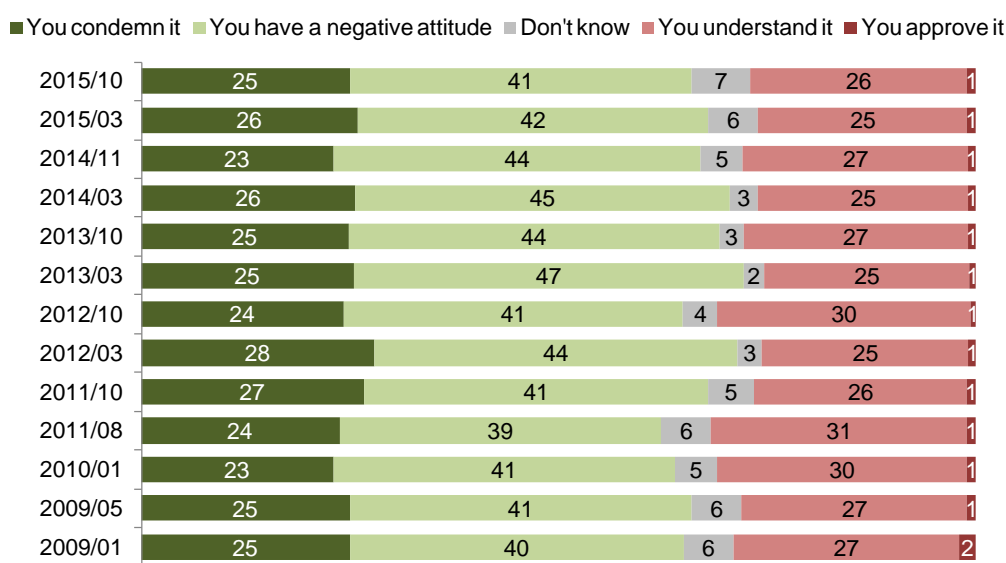
The evasion of conscript service finds disapproval with 70% of the Estonian-speaking respondents and with 56% of the respondents who are speakers of other languages. Compared to younger respondents, the evasion of conscript service is condemned more by senior respondents—more than 40% of people under the age of 30 express understanding in this matter.

Figure 36. Attitude towards the evasion of conscript service (%) ; N = all respondents)



Similarly to expressing the necessity of conscript service, there have been no major changes in the assessments of the question regarding the evasion of conscript service over the years (Figure 37).

Figure 37. Attitude towards evading conscript service; 2009–2015 comparison (%) ; N = all respondents)

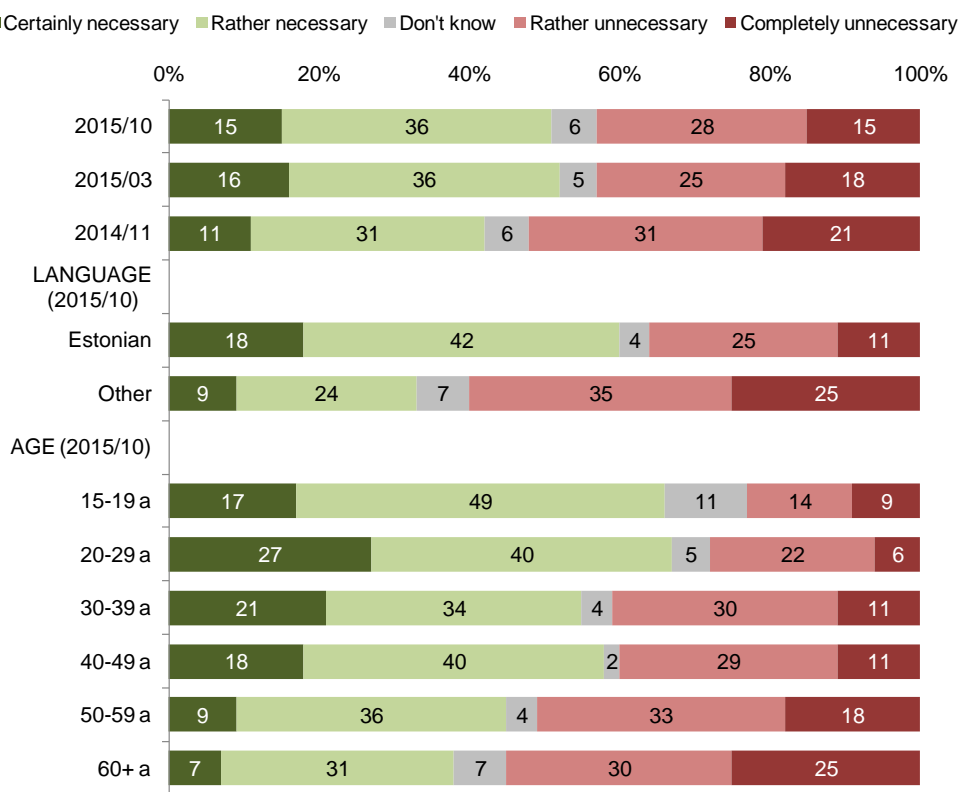


6.1.3. Conscript service for women

The opportunity for women to undergo conscript service voluntarily has been gaining increasingly more understanding in the society—in March as well as in October, **more than a half of the respondents thought it certainly necessary or rather necessary.**

Estonians and younger respondents have a more contemporary attitude towards the questions of gender equality compared to the Russian-speaking and older respondents. 60% of Estonians think it is necessary for women to have the opportunity of undergoing conscript service, whereas only 33% of the Russian-speaking respondents agree. More than a half of the respondents who are more than 50 years of age do not see it is necessary for women to undergo voluntary conscript service (Figure 38).

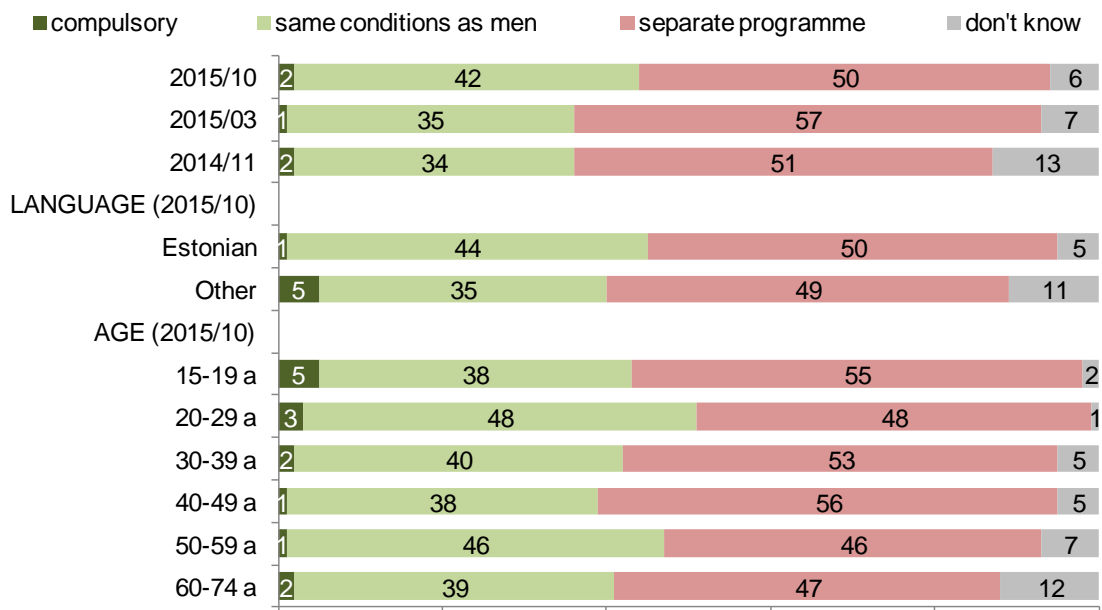
Figure 38. Attitude towards the necessity of conscript service for women (%; N = all respondents)



The respondents who considered conscript service for women certainly or rather necessary were asked about in which form the conscript service should take place. The respondents had to choose from the three options assessed in previous surveys by all respondents: compulsory conscript service, conscript service under the same conditions as applied to young men and conscript service through a separate programme. **The majority of the respondents think that women should undergo conscript service through a separate programme** (Figure 39).

Figure 39. Which form should conscript service for women take?

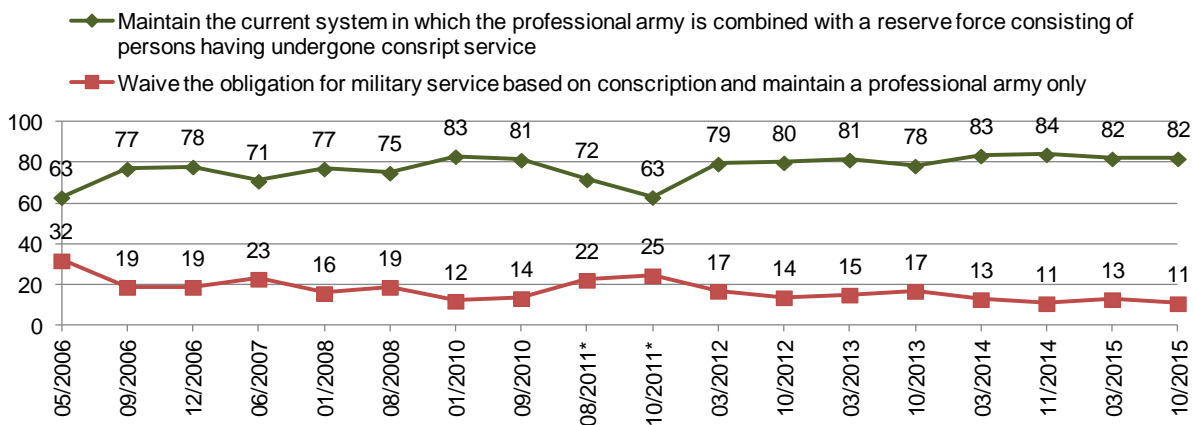
(%; N = all respondents who considered conscript service for women necessary)



6.1 Attitudes towards the professional defence forces

Despite the fact that more than 90% of respondents find conscript service necessary, the topic of making the transition to a professional army is sometimes raised in political debates. Respondents were asked to tell whether they think Estonia should waive compulsory conscription service and maintain a professional army only, or maintain the current system in which the professional army is combined with a reserve force consisting of persons having undergone conscript service. It became evident that **82% of the population would prefer maintaining the current system, with the reserve forces included** (Figure 40). Switching to a fully professional army and waiving compulsory conscript service is favoured by 11% of the population. This viewpoint has been quite stable over the years.

Figure 40. Options preferred for the development of Estonia's defence concept; 2006–2015 comparison (%) (N = all respondents)

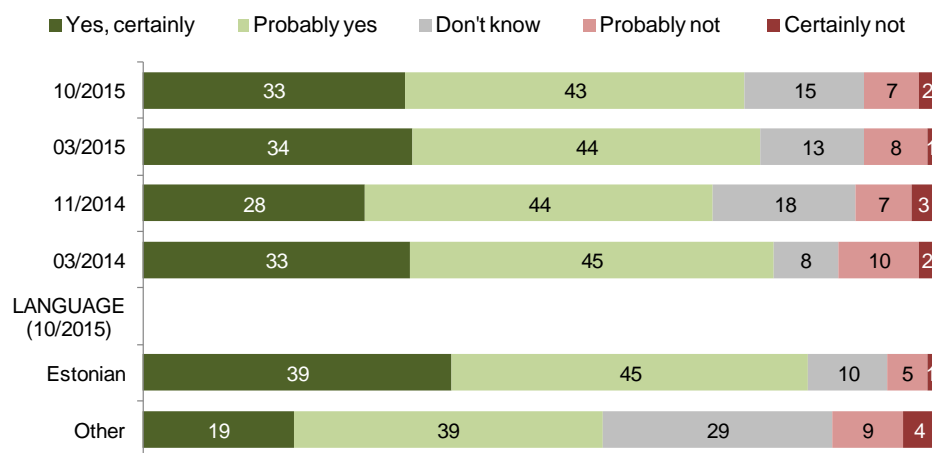


* In surveys conducted in 2011, another wording of the question was used, with the reply options: "Estonia should maintain the general obligation for military service based on conscription" and "Estonia should switch to a professional army".

6.2 Attitude towards the comprehensive approach to national defence

Starting from spring 2014, the survey includes a question about the strategy of Estonian national defence according to which national defence is no longer only the task of the Defence Forces and Defence League but the joint task of most state authorities and the entire society. **76% of respondents** (84% of Estonians) are of the opinion that **the comprehensive approach is certainly or probably suitable for Estonia** (Figure 41). The contrary opinion was shared by less than one tenth of the respondents.

Figure 41. National defence is not only the task of the Defence Forces but the task of most state authorities and the whole society. Is such a comprehensive approach to national defence suitable for Estonia? (%; N = all respondents)



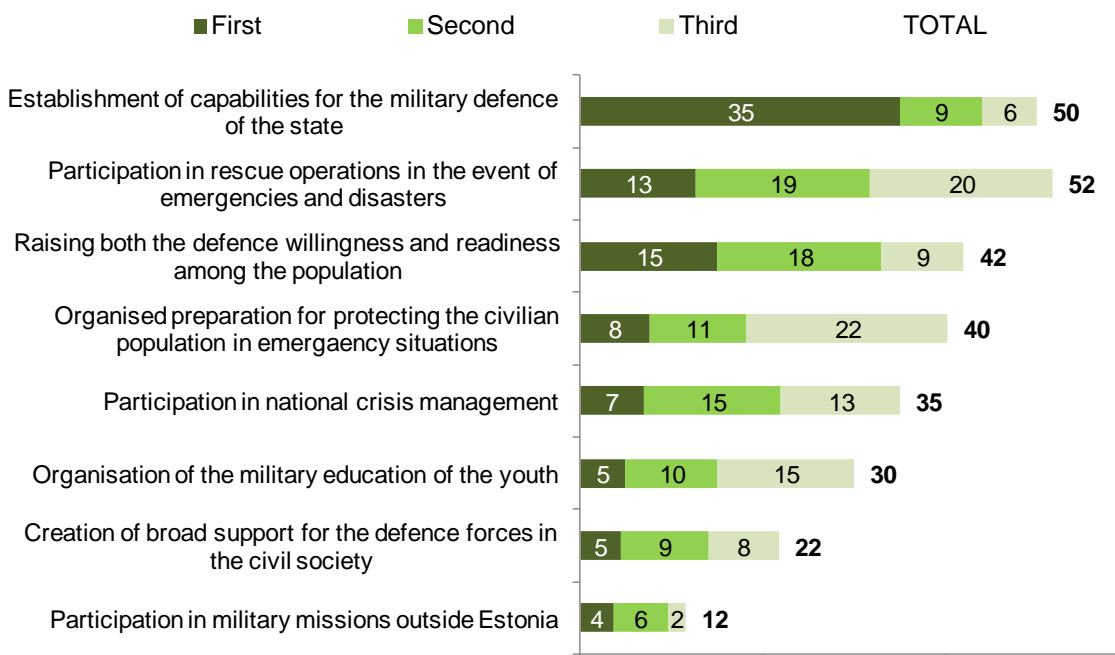
6.3 Tasks of the Defence League

The Defence League has a very important role in the national defence strategy. The respondents were asked to pick the **three most important tasks of the Defence League** from a list provided to them. The results were fixed in sequence, i.e., the most important reason first, followed by the second and the third.

The Defence League's most important task is considered to be **creating capabilities for the military defence of the state—this task is listed as first by 35% of the respondents**. However, **participation in rescue operations in the event of emergencies and disasters** holds the first place in the overall summary of the three tasks (52%). **Raising both defence willingness and readiness among the population (17%)** is the second most popular first choice, and it occupies the third position in the overall summary of the three tasks with 42% (Figure 42).

The other important tasks besides the three abovementioned ones are preparing for civil defence in emergency situations (40%), participating in national security crisis management (35%) and organising the military education of the youth (30%).

Figure 42. Main tasks of the Defence League (%; N = all respondents)



There are several differences between the opinions of the Estonian-speaking and Russian-speaking population. According to the Estonian-speaking population, the main tasks of the Defence League are creating capabilities for the military defence of the state (43% place it first; non-Estonians 17%) and raising the defence willingness and readiness of the population (17% name it first; 49% place it among the three most important tasks—among Russian-speaking respondents, the respective numbers are 9% and 24%). However, the opinion that the main task of the Defence League is participation in rescue operations in the event of emergencies and disasters (25% name it first and 66% of the Russian-speaking respondents place it among the three most important tasks; the respective figures for Estonian respondents are 7% and 44%) along with the organised protection of civilians in emergency situations (10% of Russian-speaking respondents name it first and 50% consider it to be among the three most important tasks; the respective indicators for Estonians are 8% and 38%) (Figure 43) strongly dominates among the Russian-speaking population.

Figure 43. The three main tasks of the Defence League by language of communication
 (%; N = all respondents)



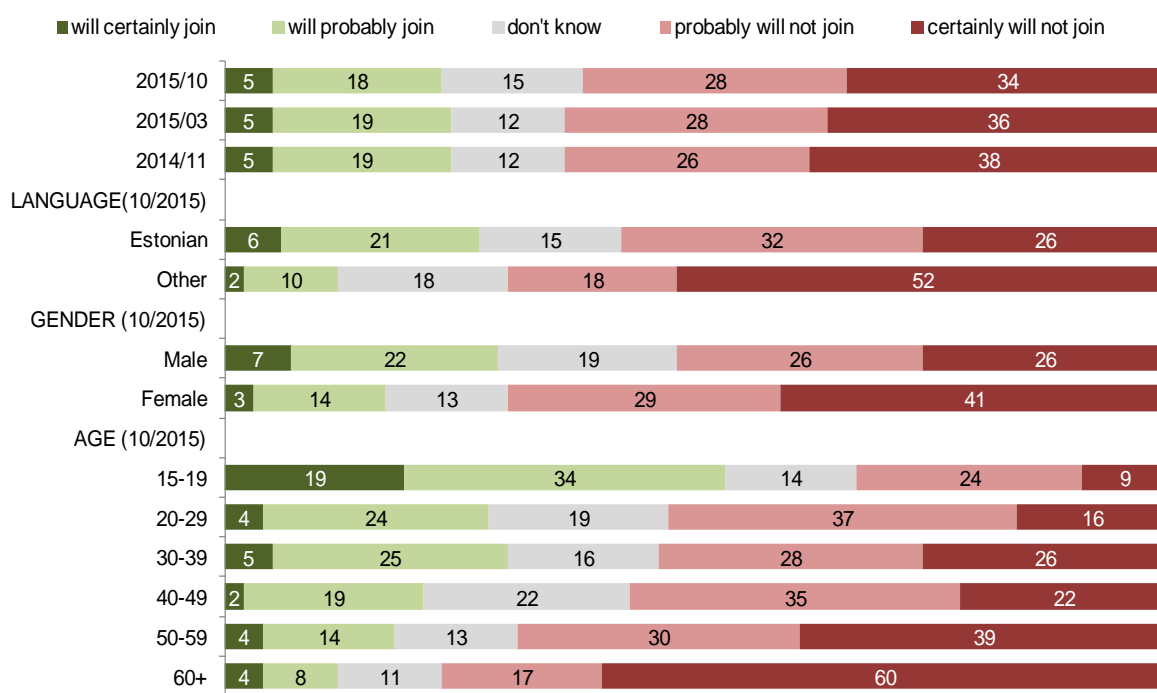
6.4 Opinions on joining the Defence League

5% of the respondents (7 per cent of Estonians) participate in the activities of the Defence League themselves, 25% (33 per cent of Estonians) are connected to the Defence League through a family member or friend. The number of Russian-speaking respondents connected to the Defence League is marginal—only 8% have a friend or family member who is connected to the Defence League.

The respondents who were not the members of the Defence League or related organisations were asked for their opinion on joining the Defence League.

5% of the respondents would certainly join the Defence League or Naiskodukaitse (Women's Voluntary Defence Organisation), and 18% would probably join (Figure 44). The Defence League should certainly rejoice in the fact that the willingness to join is higher among the younger respondents.

Figure 44. Willingness to join the Defence league or Naiskodukaitse (%; N = those who are not yet members of the Defence League or related organisations)



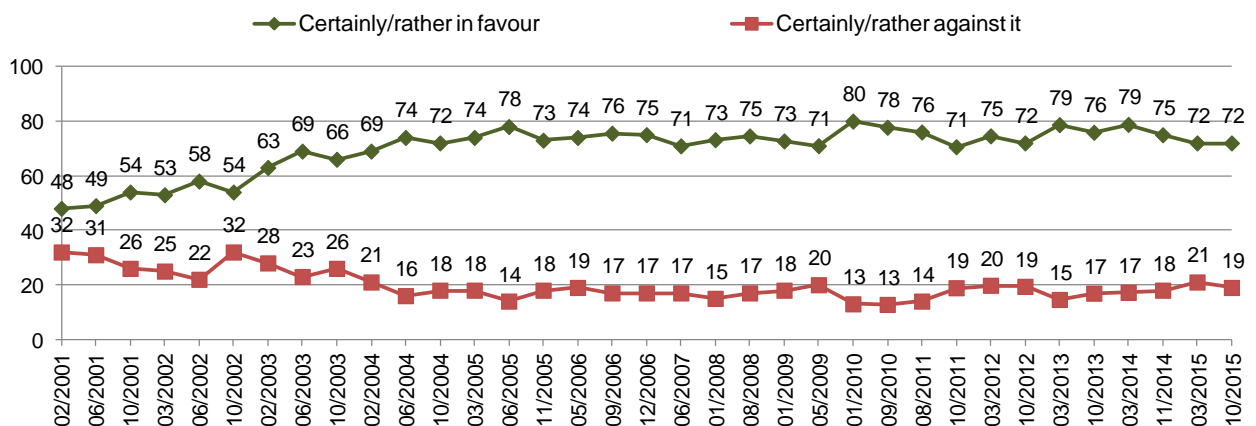
7 NATO

The seventh, NATO-related chapter provides an overview of the population's attitude towards Estonia's membership in NATO, their views on the role of NATO in providing security to Estonia and the ways in which the steps NATO has taken to ensure Estonian security in the world's new security situation are assessed.

7.1 Attitude towards membership in NATO

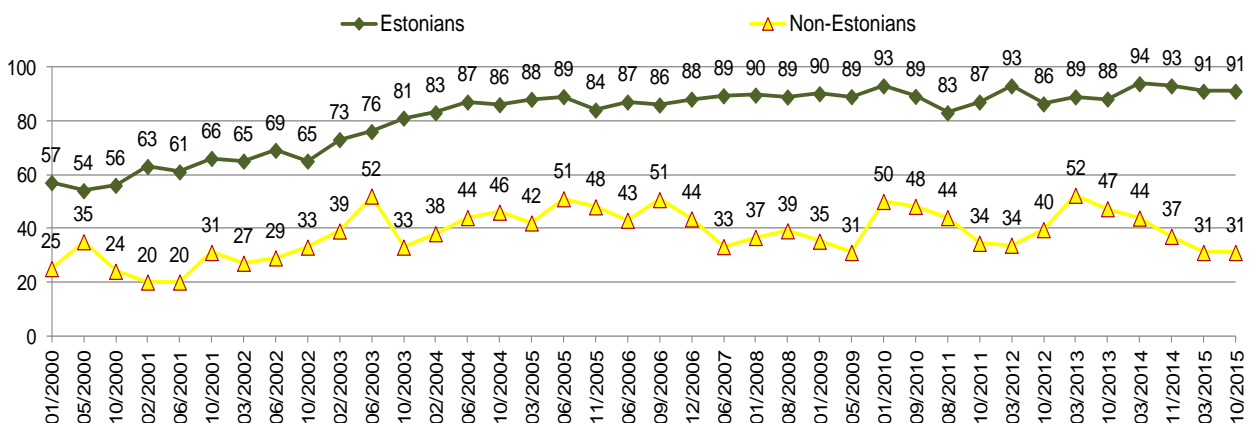
In October 2015, the Estonian membership in NATO was favoured by 72% of the population, with 40% being certainly in favour of the membership and 32% being rather in favour. 19% of Estonian residents are against NATO membership; 9% of the population have no view in this matter (Figure 45).

Figure 45. Attitudes towards joining NATO / membership in NATO, comparison of 2001–2015; (%; N = all respondents)



While 91% of the Estonian-speaking respondents are in favour of NATO membership, it is favoured only by 31% of the Russian-speaking population, which is three times less. Thus, the attitudes towards NATO have not changed compared to the spring survey. The Russian-speaking respondents' support of the membership in NATO was on the same level already in October 2001. Back then, the proportion of Estonians in favour of NATO was 66 per cent. While the number of Estonians in favour of NATO has grown 50 per cent, it must be admitted that during this time, the society has failed to make NATO more acceptable for Russian-speaking Estonians. 48% of the Russian-speaking respondents are against Estonia belonging to NATO, 20% do not have a specific opinion in this matter or do not wish to disclose it (Figure 46).

Figure 46. Proportion of the proponents of joining NATO / membership in NATO; comparison of the Estonian-speaking and foreign-speaking population 2000–2015 (% of those certainly and rather in favour of the aforementioned; N = all respondents)



7.1 NATO's assistance in the event of a potential threat

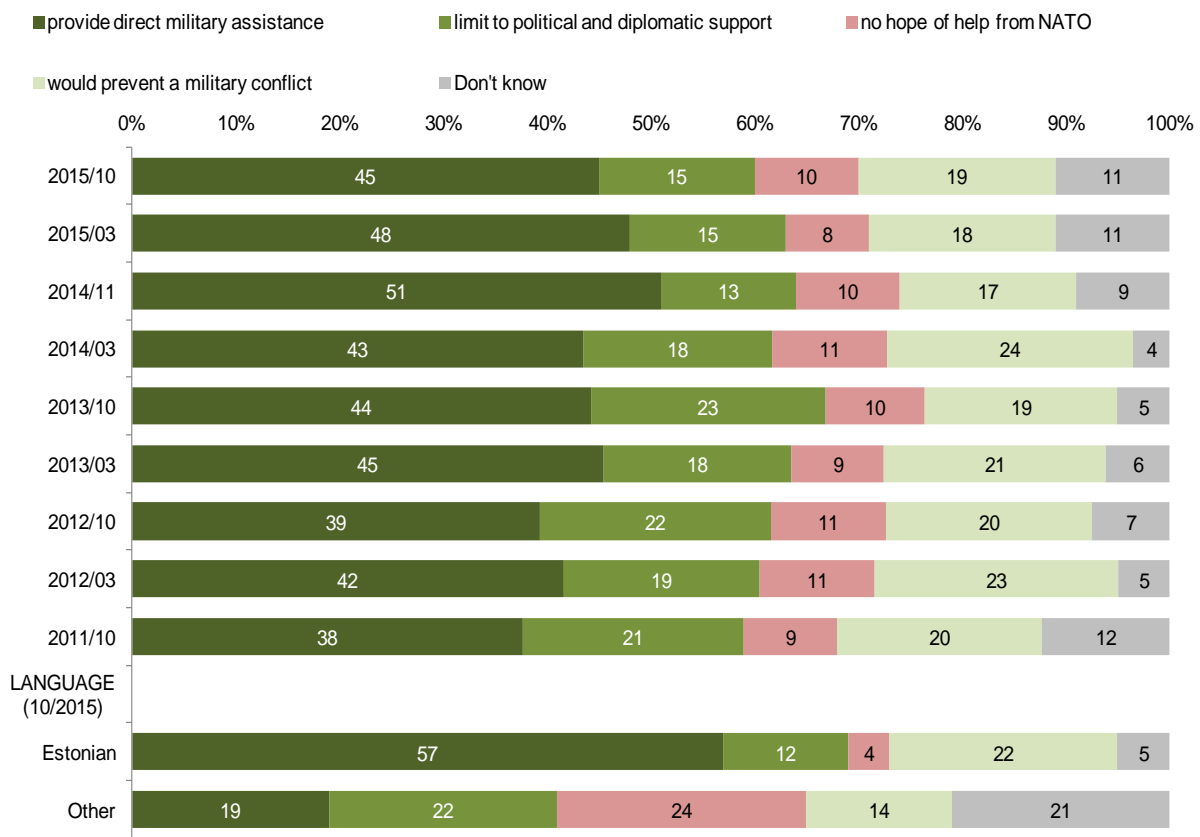
The majority of the population considers NATO Estonia's main security guarantee. Nevertheless, in the past years, the general public has for several times brought up the question of whether NATO's Article 5 really is going to be invoked in case of a real military threat. Over the years, people have become increasingly more certain that NATO will interfere in the event of Estonia facing a military threat. An increase in the actual presence of allied forces in Estonia has definitely contributed to people's belief in NATO.

45 per cent of the respondents find that NATO would provide direct military assistance in the event of an impending threat to Estonia, 15% believe that NATO would limit its aid only to political and diplomatic support. 19% think that membership in NATO would be able to prevent a military conflict completely and only 10% believe that there is no hope for help from NATO. (Figure 47)

The Estonian-speaking respondents' trust in NATO's support is considerably higher than that of the speakers of other languages, which very likely originates from the attitude towards the membership in the alliance. While 57% of Estonians believe in NATO's military support, the same belief is shared by only 19% of the Russian-speaking population. As much as 24 per cent of Russian-speaking respondents find that Estonia has no hope for help from NATO.

The fact that people have less faith in NATO's military support compared to the last two surveys indicates that the presence of NATO allies has not been as strongly visible for the general public as it was when the allies had just arrived.

Figure 47. Role of NATO in ensuring Estonia's security if Estonia is exposed to military threat (%; N = all respondents)

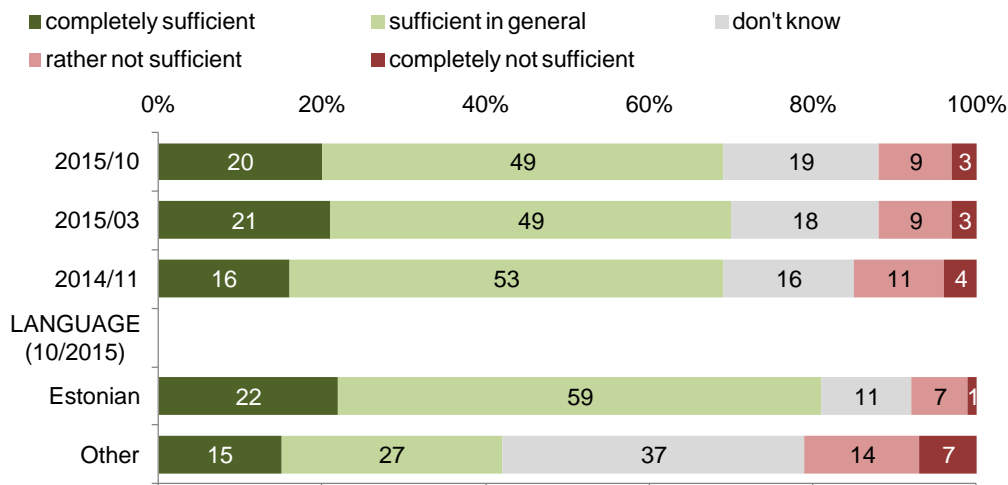


7.2 Assessments on the actions of NATO

Since November 2014 we have also studied the attitude of the Estonian population towards actions already taken by NATO to ensure better security for Estonia.

The respondents were asked whether NATO has taken sufficient measures in today's security situation ([Figure 48](#)) and how the presence of NATO allied forces in Estonia is perceived ([Figure 49](#)).

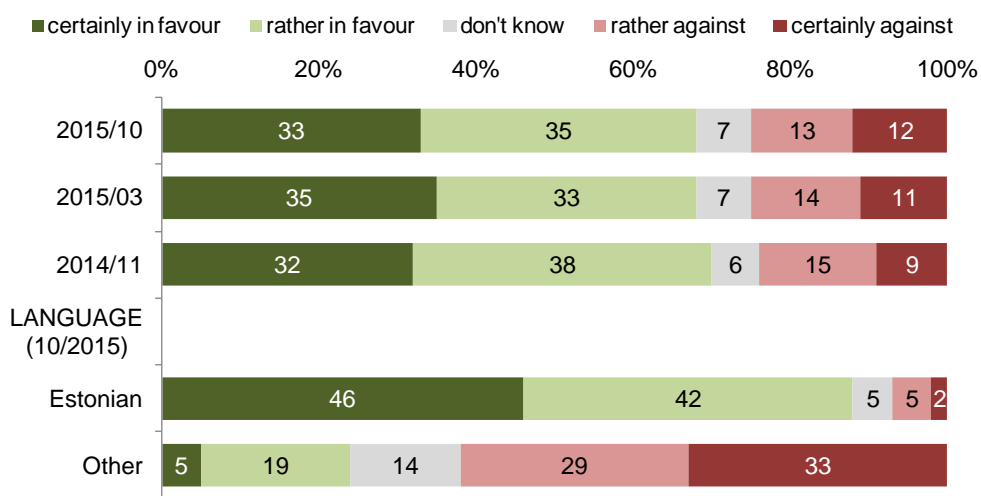
Figure 48. Has NATO taken sufficient measures to ensure the security of Estonia? (%; N = all respondents)



The assessments given to steps taken by NATO for ensuring security in Estonia are predominantly positive, **69% of the surveyed**, including 81% of Estonians, **consider these completely sufficient or generally sufficient**. NATO's activities are seen as sufficient by 42% of the Russian-speaking respondents.

However, **Russian-speaking respondents are predominantly negative about the presence of NATO allied forces in Estonia, whereas 90% of Estonians are in favour of it.**

Figure 49. What is your attitude towards the presence of NATO allied forces in Estonia? (%; N = all respondents)



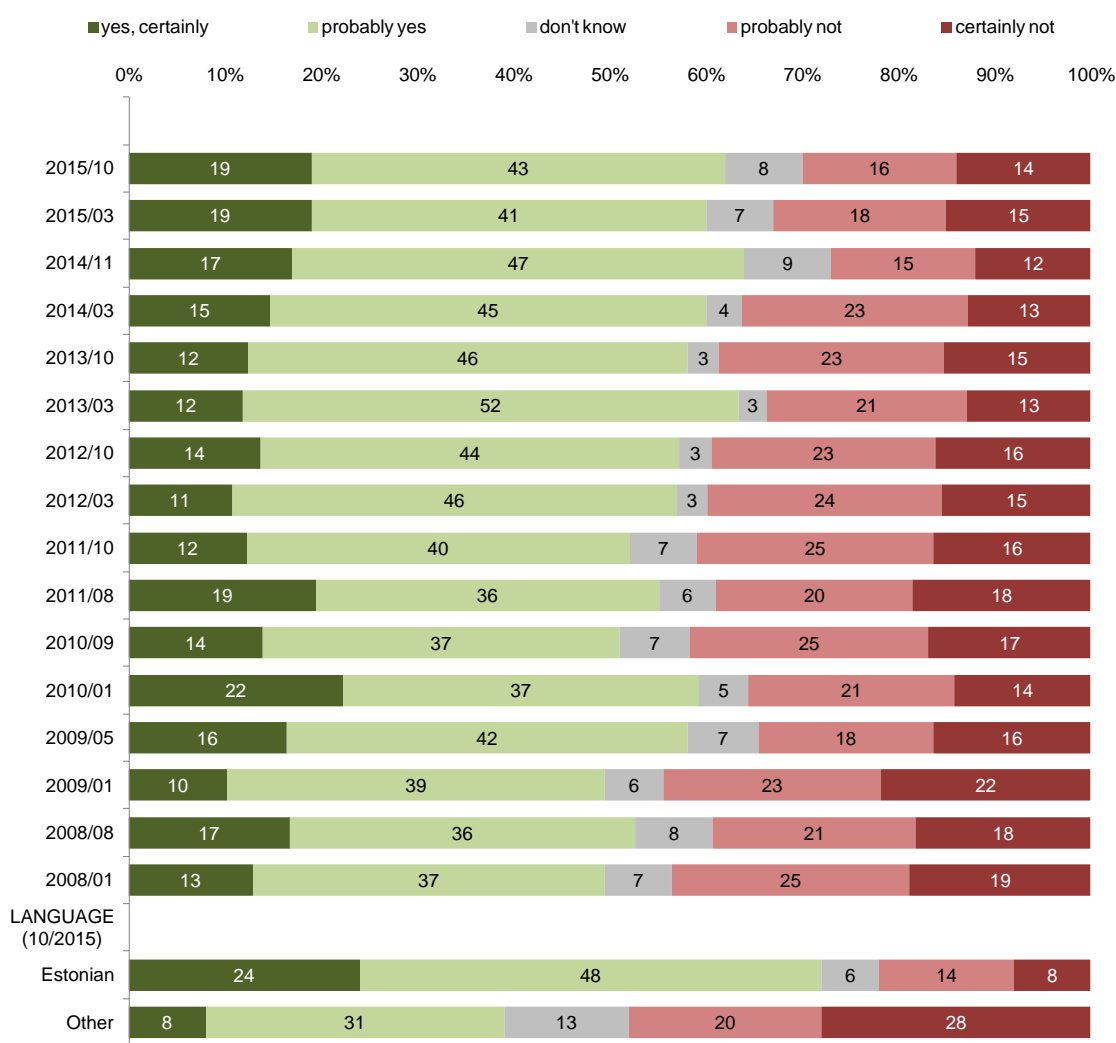
8 International military operations

The eighth chapter deals with the attitudes towards participation in international military operations: how necessary Estonia's participation is in such operations according to the population, what the reasons for Estonia to participate are and what the respondents' attitudes towards the Estonian Defence Forces' operations as part of NATO, European Union and UN units are.

8.1 Attitude towards participation in international operations

62% of the population of Estonia believe that the Estonian Defence Forces units should—in accordance with their capabilities—participate in international military operations; 19% of respondents feel that it should be certainly done (Figure 50). 30% of the Estonian population see no need for participation in international operations.

Figure 50. Should Estonian units participate in international military operations? (%; N = all respondents)



There is a significant difference between the Estonian and Russian-speaking respondents' attitudes towards international military operations. Estonians' support towards participation in missions has remained at the same level it was in March (72 per cent), the Russian-speaking respondents' support has risen from 32 per cent to 39, which is still less than a year ago (in November 2014 their support was at 43 per cent). 48% of Russian-speaking respondents are against participation in international military operations.

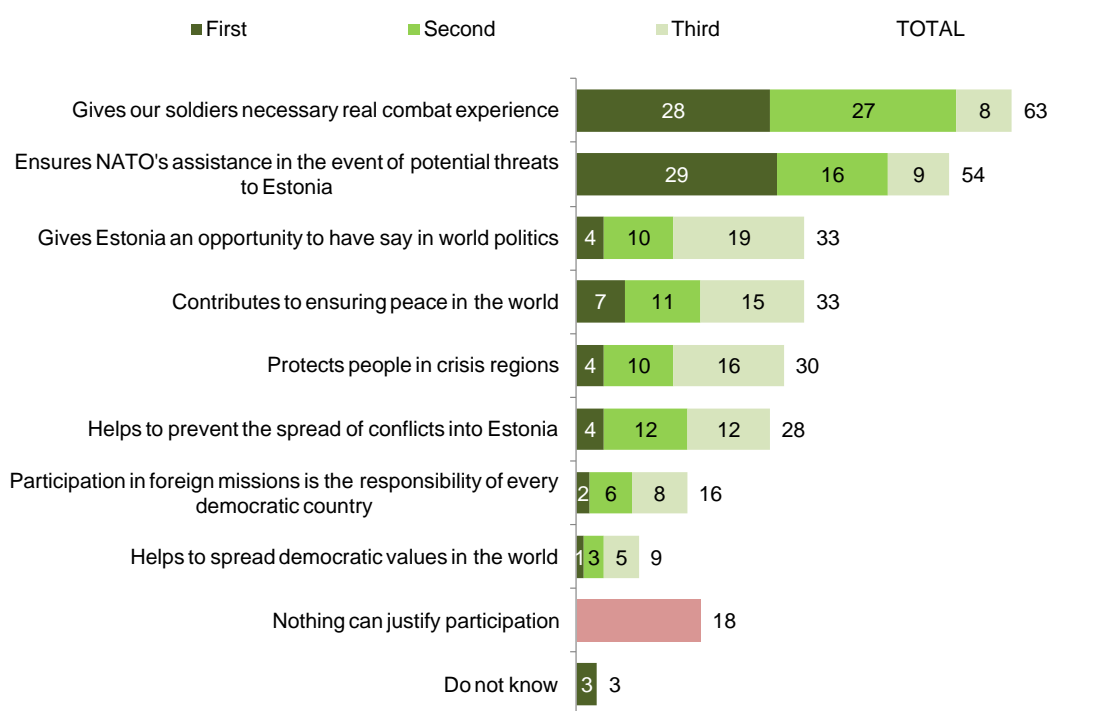
8.2 Arguments for participation in international operations

Respondents were asked to select the three most important reasons why Estonia should participate in international military operations from a list provided to them. The results were fixed in sequence, i.e., the most important reason first, followed by the second and the third.

Two of the most important reasons were almost equally highlighted: **29 per cent** of the respondents consider participation in international operations the most important because it ensures **NATO's assistance in the event of a potential threat to Estonia**; **28 per cent** think it is important because **it gives our soldiers necessary real combat experience**. Of all the three most important reasons, our soldiers receiving combat experience remains the most significant argument if the three most important reasons are summarised (Figure 51).

Other arguments for participating in international operations highlighted by the respondents include contributing to world peace (one of the three most important reasons according to 33%) and taking the opportunity of having one's say in world politics (33%), protecting people in crisis areas (30%) and preventing the spread of conflicts into Estonia (28%).

Figure 51. The most important reasons why Estonia should participate in international military operations (%; N = all respondents)



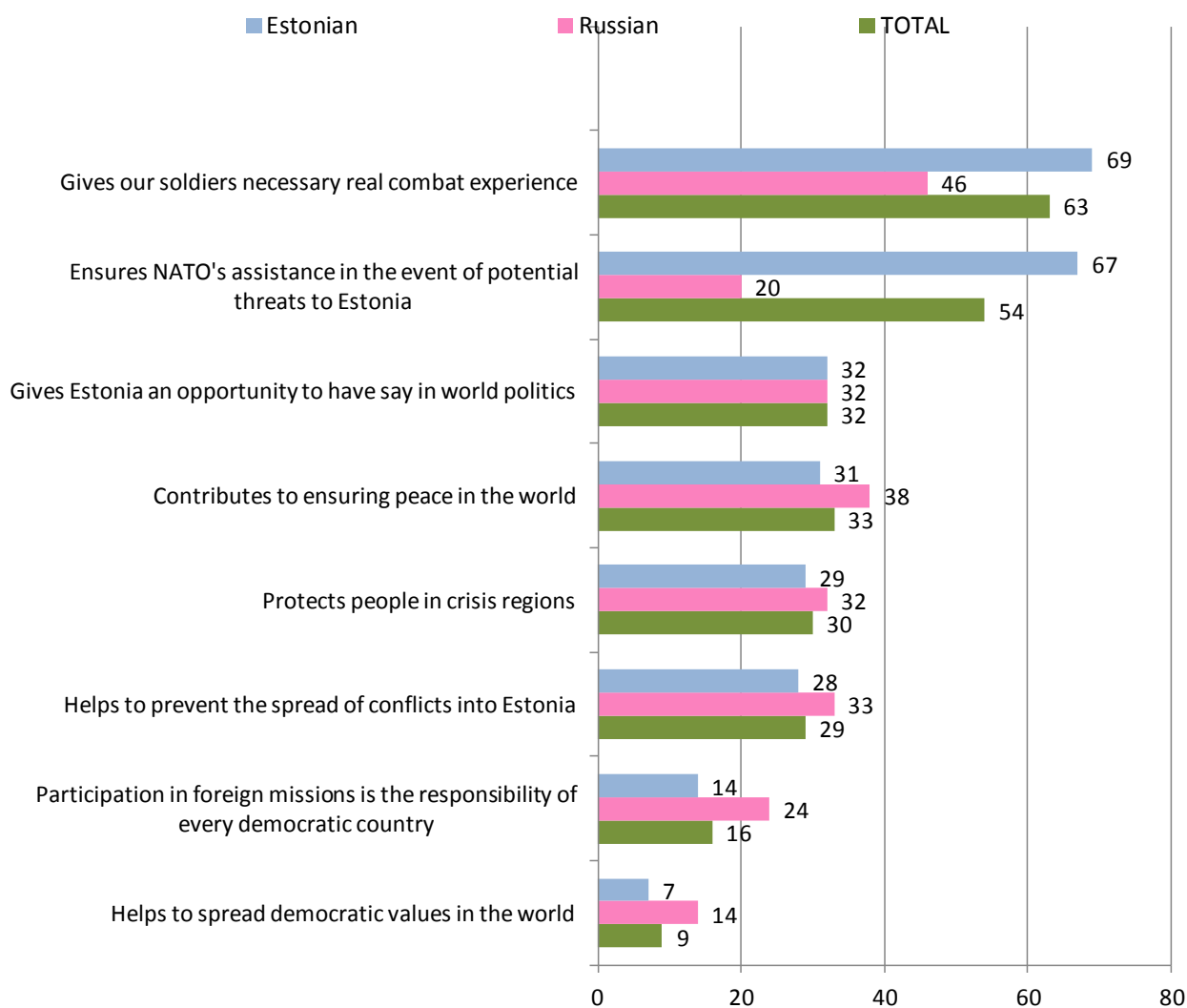
Similarly to the significant differences in the attitudes of Estonians and Russian-speaking respondents towards the membership in NATO, the argument that participation in military operations ensures NATO's assistance in case of a military conflict remains irrelevant for the Russian-speaking respondents. While 38% of Estonians name it as the first reason with 67% considering it among the three most important arguments, the respective indicators for Russian-speaking respondents are only 10% and 20%.

30% of Estonians name combat experience as the first reason and 69% place it among the three most important reasons, whereas, respectively, only 18% and 46% of Russian-speaking respondents feel the same.

However, compared to Estonians, Russian-speaking respondents place more value on so-called humanitarian arguments: contributing to world peace, protecting people in crisis areas, spreading democratic values. Russian-speaking respondents also support the view that participation in military operations is part of a democratic state's duties to a greater extent than Estonians do (Figure 52).

33% of Russian-speaking respondents believe that none of the named arguments justify participation in foreign military operations.

Figure 52. The most important reasons why Estonia should participate in international military operations (%) (N = all respondents)

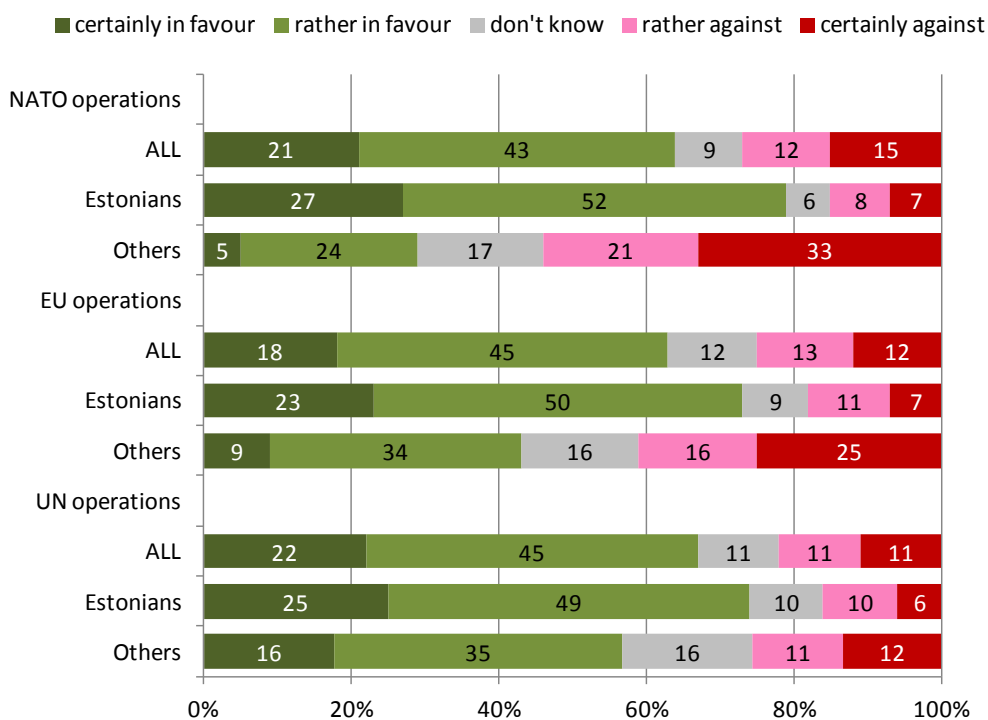


8.3 Attitudes towards participation in NATO, EU and UN operations

Since Estonian servicemen have participated in military operations as part of NATO, EU and UN units, we were curious of whether there is a difference in the public's attitudes towards operations conducted under the auspices of different organisations.

There are no great differences in general assessments, yet Russian-speaking respondents clearly favour participation in UN operations the most, this is followed by European Union operations with NATO placed last (Figure 53).

Figure 53. Attitudes towards the units of Estonian Defence Forces participating in international operations (%; N = all respondents)

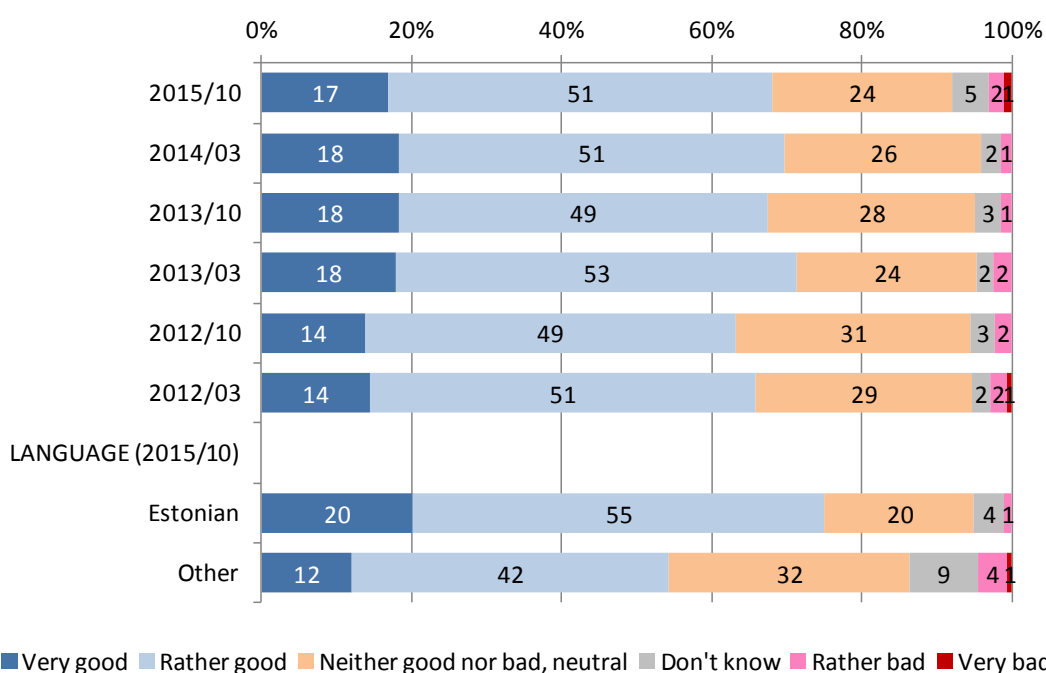


9 Attitudes towards professional servicemen

Attitudes towards professional servicemen were last studied in the survey conducted in March 2014 and in the four surveys before that. This topic does not need to be explored in every survey because, as the current results show, the population's attitudes are continuously positive.

68% of the respondents, including as many as three fourths of Estonians, have a very positive or generally positive attitude towards active servicemen (Figure 54).

Figure 54. Attitudes towards professional servicemen (%) (N = all respondents)



Once again, we asked the public's opinion about the reasons of becoming a professional serviceman.

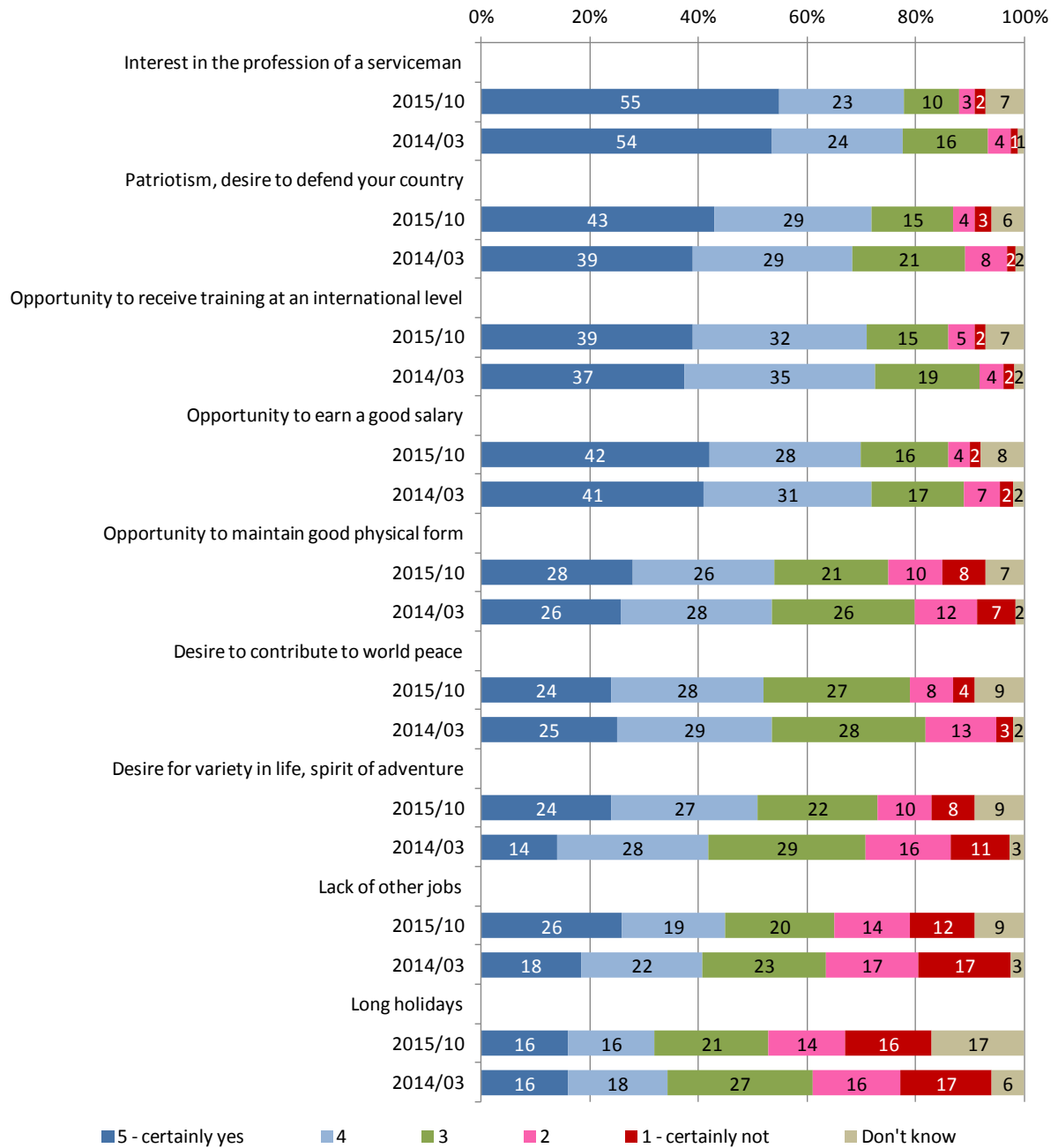
Interest in the profession of a serviceman and patriotism are considered to be the main motives for becoming a professional serviceman. Factors related to self-improvement are also considered important, e.g.: becoming a serviceman is seen as an **opportunity to receive training and maintain good physical form**. **Good salary** holds the fourth place in the ranking of importance. The lack of other jobs and long holidays are regarded less important (Figure 55).

The average ratings of importance given on a scale of 1 to 5 are presented in table 5.

Table 5 – Motives for becoming a serviceman
(average ratings on a scale of 1 to 5)

	March 2014	October 2015
Interest in the profession of a serviceman	4.26	4.35
Opportunity to earn a good salary	4.03	4.12
Patriotism, desire to defend your country	3.98	4.12
Opportunity to receive training at an international level	4.04	4.07
Desire to contribute to world peace	3.60	3.66
Opportunity to maintain good physical form	3.55	3.61
Desire for variety in life, spirit of adventure	3.19	3.55
Lack of other jobs	3.09	3.35
Long holidays	3.00	3.01

Figure 55. Motives for becoming a professional serviceman (%; N = all respondents)



10 Veteran policy

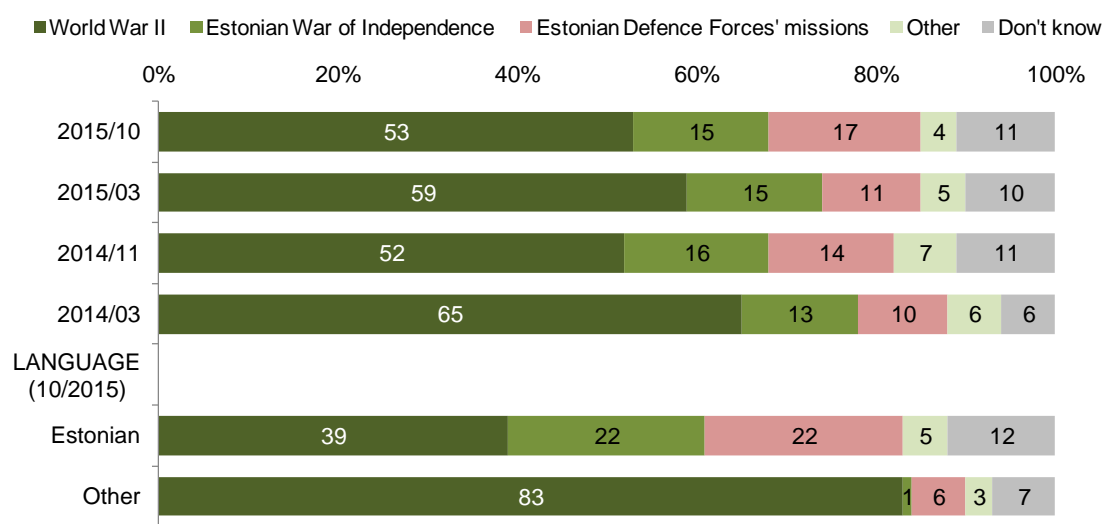
In the last four surveys, respondents were also asked whether they associate the word “veteran” primarily with World War II, the Estonian War of Independence, or the Estonian Defence Forces’ operations in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq.

The responses show that more than a half of the population associates **the word “veteran” primarily with World War II** (Figure 56). As many as 83 per cent of the Russian-speaking respondents associate veterans with World War II (39% of Estonians).

22% of Estonians associate the word “veteran” with the Estonian War of Independence (even though none of those veterans are alive now) and the **proportion of those who associate the word “veteran” with servicemen who have participated in the Estonian Defence Forces’ operations shows a slight increase** (from 16 per cent in March to 22 per cent in October). Only six per cent of the Russian-speaking respondents consider the servicemen who have participated in those operations veterans.

Those 4% of respondents who claimed that the word “veteran” is associated with some other option most often noted that the word “veteran” should refer to the participants of all wars.

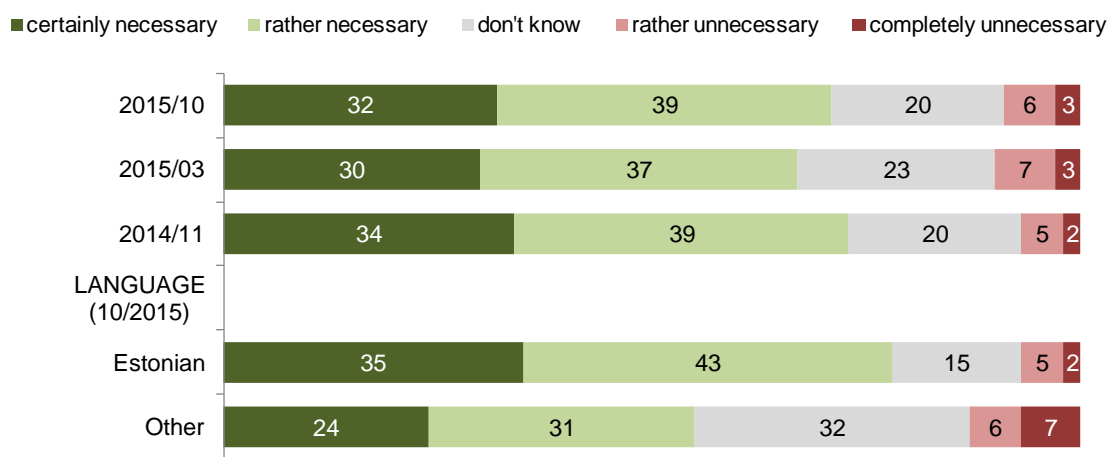
Figure 56. What are the primary associations with the word “veteran”, 2014–2015 comparison (%; N = all respondents)



The Veterans’ Day held on 23 April (St. George’s Day) each year **is considered certainly necessary or rather necessary by the majority of the respondents (71 per cent)**—no matter what they consider the meaning of the word “veteran” to be (Figure 57).

The Russian-speaking population is not very aware of such a day, yet the number of those aware of it is growing: in March, as many as 43 per cent did not know anything about the day or could not say anything about it, whereas now the proportion of these respondents was 32 per cent. For the first time, the proportion of Russian-speaking respondents who considered the celebration of this day necessary reached over 50 per cent.

Figure 57. Attitude towards the celebration of Veterans' Day (%; N = all respondents)



11 Information related to national defence

The final chapter includes the results of two national defence information related questions: the need for national defence instruction in schools and the reading of the supplement Riigikaitse of the daily Postimees.

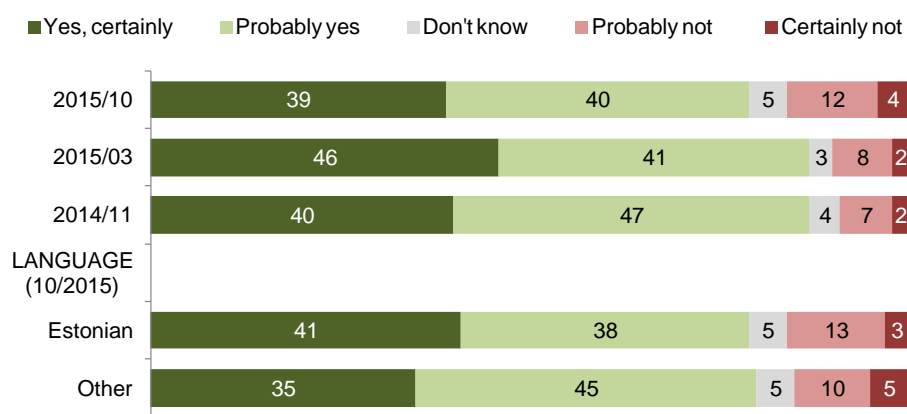
11.1 National defence instruction in schools

The attitude towards national defence instruction in schools has been consistently positive among the Estonian population—about four fifths of the respondents have found it certainly necessary or probably necessary starting from the year 2008.

Last autumn we made slight changes to the wording of the question which is now as follows: **“Should it be possible to get national defence instruction in all educational institutions providing secondary education?”**

The majority of the respondents support national defence instruction in schools, even though the number of supporters is slightly smaller than in spring and a year ago. In autumn 2014 and March 2015, 87 per cent of the respondents considered it certainly necessary or probably necessary, whereas this time the percentage was 79 (Figure 58). Estonians and Russian-speaking respondents equally support national defence instruction.

Figure 58. Attitude towards the necessity of national defence instruction in all educational institutions providing secondary education (%) (N = all respondents)



11.2 Supplement Riigikaitse of the daily Postimees

In addition to the general mapping of media consumption, the questionnaire included a direct question regarding an information source related to national defence. While up to March 2014, the survey studied the readership of the supplement Riigikaitse.EE of the weekly Eesti Ekspress, starting from November 2014, the question is aimed towards the readership of the supplement Riigikaitse of the daily Postimees.

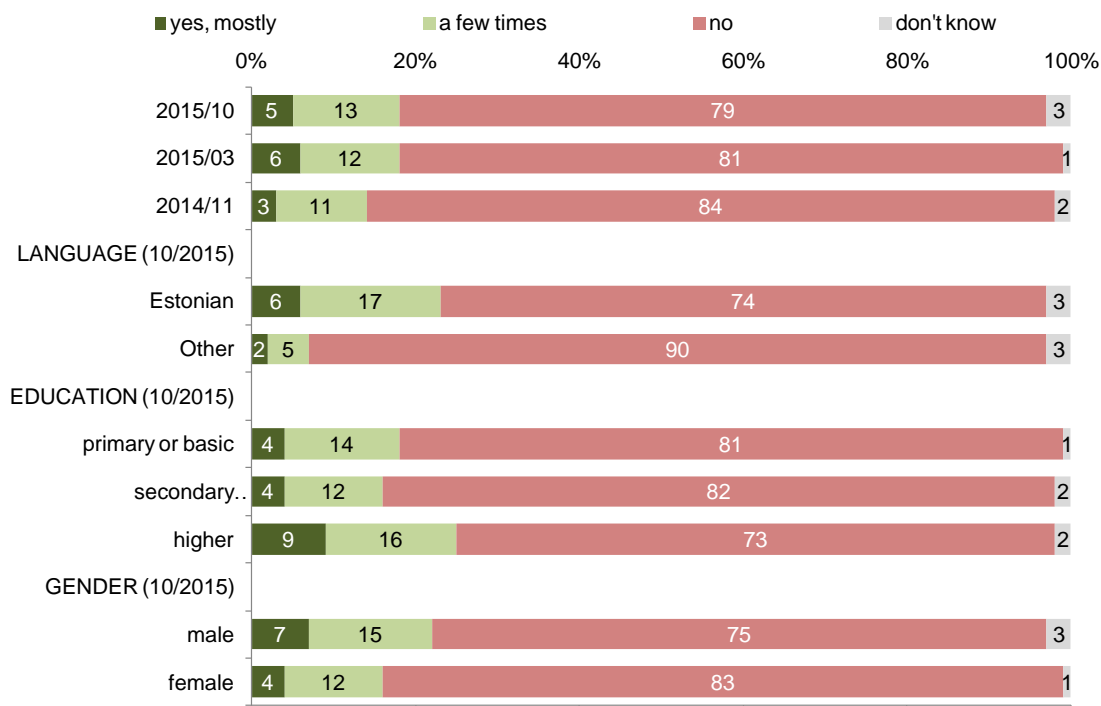
On the basis of the survey results, it can be claimed that the people interested in Riigikaitse.EE have also found the supplement Riigikaitse of the daily Postimees.

While in 2012–2013 the supplement Riigikaitse.EE of the weekly Eesti Ekspress (published quarterly) was read by 10–14% of the population (2–3% read it in most cases and 8–11% at times), then by October 2015, **18 per cent of the respondents had read the supplement Riigikaitse of the daily Postimees, 5 per cent of whom read it in most cases and 13 per cent read it once or a couple of times.**

There has not been an increase in the readership of Riigikaitse compared to the March survey.

As it is an Estonian-language edition, it was rather expected that there were more readers among the Estonian respondents compared to the non-Estonians (23% and 7% respectively). Furthermore, there are more readers among people with higher education (25%) and men (22%).

Figure 59. Reading the supplement Riigikaitse of the daily Postimees (%; N = all respondents)



12 Media consumption

The questionnaire included a large section on media consumption with the main purpose of observing the relationship between the population's attitude on national defence and their contact with different media channels. This task requires secondary data analysis, which is not the objective of the current report.

The following presents the survey results describing the respondents' engagement with different television channels and radio stations as well as visits to internet portals in the form of simple frequency distributions.

Figure 60. Visits to news portals and online newspapers (%; N = all respondents)

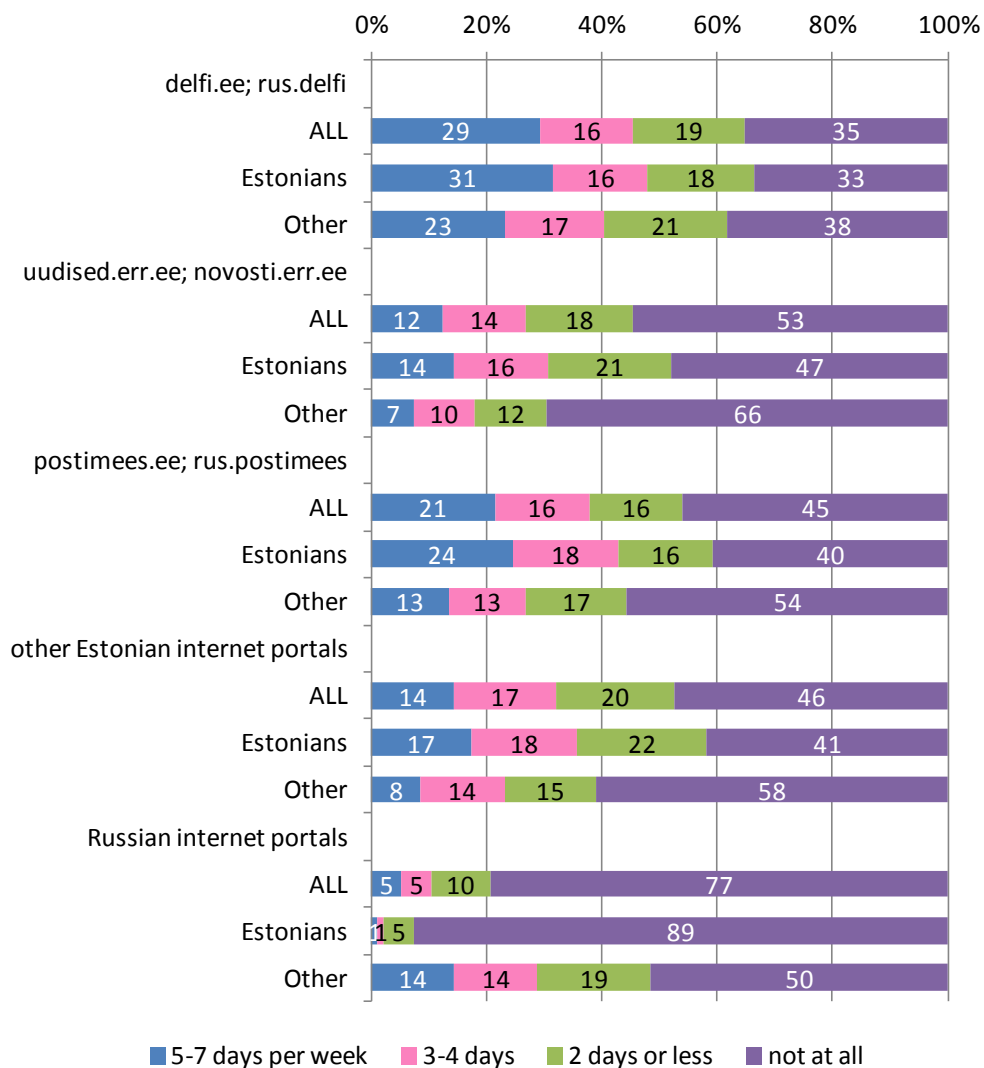
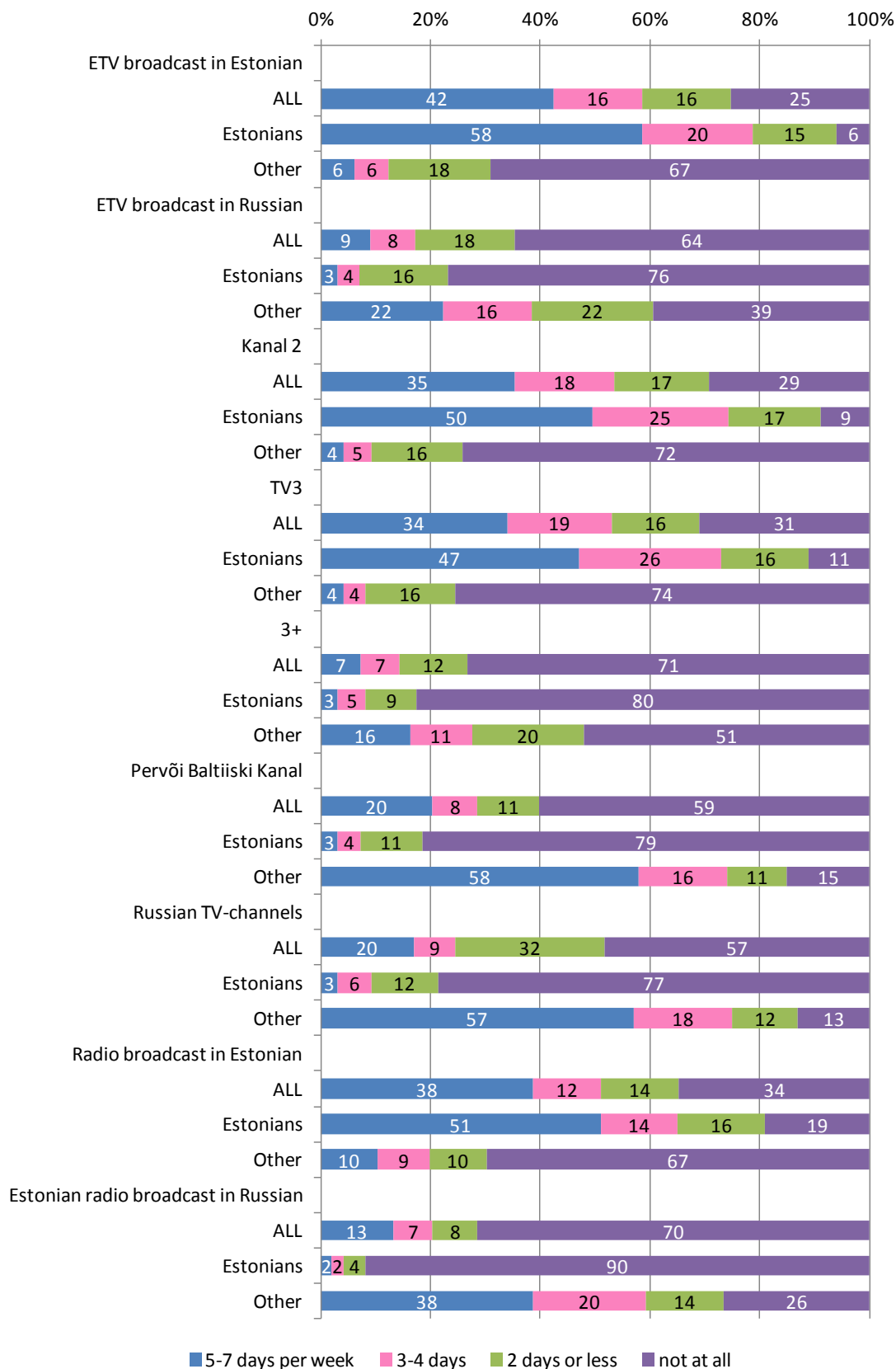


Figure 61. Engagement with television channels and radio stations (%; N = all respondents)



ANNEXES

1 Questionnaire

2 Summary tables on responses

3 Frequency tables with the responses of Estonians

4 Frequency tables with the responses of non-Estonians