

## MULTIDIMENSIONAL AND MULTIFUNCTIONAL CONTENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE TRAINING IN LATVIAN SCHOOLS

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### Introduction

The geopolitical situation in the world is changing and these changes affect Latvia both directly and indirectly. On September 24, 2020, the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia approved *the National Defence Concept* (Valsts aizsardzības koncepcija, 2020), which envisages comprehensive public involvement in the defence of the country in crisis situations. This means that *the goal of Comprehensive national defence* will be achievable if the Latvian society is ready to defend their country in every way. Compulsory military service in Latvia was abolished in 2006 because there was a position in Europe that it was not necessary. Now a much more modern way would be not to restore compulsory service, but to provide knowledge in a more modern way, involving the public in formal, non-formal military and civic education, with a special focus on patriotic upbringing (Valsts aizsardzības koncepcija, 2020; Valsts aizsardzības mācība skolās ..., 2021).

### Objectives

The aim of the research is to analyse the content of the curriculum of the subject *National Defence Training* from the point of view of curricular didactics, civic education and patriotic upbringing.

### Materials and methods

In order to justify the introduction of *National Defence Training* in Latvian schools as a topicality of modern education, theoretical research method was applied:

- study
- analysis
- evaluation of scientific literature and normative documents.

### Results

Based on the results of studies conducted in several countries (Finland, Israel, Singapore, Switzerland), four basic dimensions of the concept of comprehensive national defence have been defined: **military, informational, psychological** and **civilian**. All these dimensions have been included in the content of *National Defence Training*.

<p>National defense training, which includes the content of military education, for example, such topics as: 1) military topography and orientation; 2) field combat skills; 3) Forming skills; 4) Safe handling and shooting of weapons with pneumatics and others.</p>	<p>In the 21st century, there is a widespread understanding of the growing importance of information and psychological operations as elements of war. The list of hybrid tools substantiated by scientists that can be used by enemies in hybrid warfare is relatively extensive: propaganda; fake news; strategic leaks; funding organizations; political parties; organized protest movements; cyber tools (espionage, attacks and manipulation); economic leverage; proxies and unacknowledged war; and paramilitary organizations</p>	<p>The population of the country, incl. youth, psychological preparedness for an emergency. Development of young people's critical thinking in the conditions of hybrid war, with special emphasis on the ability to navigate the enemy's false information space. Competences of young people in the latest information technologies, highlighting cyber security issues</p>	<p>The scientific publications of various authors emphasize the importance of civic education and the development of a corresponding methodology, with special reference to the content of civic education. International research has revealed the importance of civic education in the pedagogical process of schools. There are significant differences in the assessment of young people's civic competences in schools. Pupils' knowledge of: 1) public participation in politics, national defense, 2) participation and involvement in public activities, incl. school activities have a positive effect on the formation of civic consciousness. Researchers from other countries have come to the conclusion in their research that in order to promote the involvement of young people in national defense, it is necessary to be aware of the importance of civic education and offer its well-thought-out content.</p>
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The research shows that a number of thematic directions can be identified in the content of citizenship education: 1) citizenship education based on the transfer of knowledge to students about the history, geography and policy of the state; 2) citizenship education, which encourages and motivates practical participation in school and public activities; 3) unified citizenship education, which contains the two previous directions, with the aim of providing all opportunities for students to develop their competencies, to form attitudes based on values, by actively fulfilling the duties of an individual and citizen both while studying at school and in the future as an adult. It has been ascertained in the research that this third guideline or direction would be desirable for the implementation of citizenship education in the broadest sense of the concept.

### Conclusions

1. The participation of young people in national defense should be promoted by introducing a new subject National Defense Studies in schools, as well as work with the Youth Guard should be continued, which could be a new shift for the National Guard and professional soldiers in the National Armed Forces of the Republic of Latvia.

2. The formal content of education for *National Defence Training* has already been developed and is currently being experimentally tested in several Latvian schools. This subject will be implemented in all Latvian schools starting from the academic year 2024/2025. The acquisition of this curriculum will be compulsory in Grades 10 and 11 of secondary education, as well as in the 2nd and 3rd year of vocational secondary education institutions. The new curriculum includes the following areas of study: *Health, Safety and Physical Activity, and Social and Civic Learning*.

3. The content of *National Defence Training* is distinctly multidimensional and important in the context of comprehensive national defence, promotion of the comprehensive development of young people and supporting their career development.

4. The content of military education, civic education and career education has a scientific basis, formed by the results of theoretical and empirical research obtained from the research activities of both Latvian and foreign scientists.

5. The process of mastering the content of *National Defence Training* will have a distinctly educational function, as one of the tasks of mastering the new subject is to provide patriotic education.

6. The concept of comprehensive national defence has four dimensions: military, informational, psychological and civilian. All four of these basic dimensions have been taken into consideration when developing the content of *National Defence Training*.

7. The implementation of *National Defence Training* shall also be based on an ecological approach when providing an appropriate educational environment, by paying attention to the contexts of indoor and outdoor environments.