



Questionnaire for EBCO Report 2025

For: *Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Finland*

A. Status of conscription

1. Is conscription into obligatory military service currently applied?

Yes. General conscription applies under Section 127 of the Constitution and the Conscription Act (1438/2007).

B. (Skip if not applicable) Countries with conscription

2. If so, what are the legislative provisions that govern the procedures? Please give full details.

Governing legislation (core): Constitution of Finland §127; Conscription Act (1438/2007); Non-Military (Civilian) Service Act (1446/2007); Act on Voluntary Military Service for Women (194/1995).

3. What is the minimum age for conscription?

18 years.

4. What is the duration of military service?

165, 255 or 347 days (role-dependent).

5. What provision is there for the exemption of conscientious objectors?

– Unarmed military service: 255 or 347 days.

– Non-military (civilian) service: 347 days under the Non-Military Service Act.

6. What proportion of conscripts sign up for subsequent voluntary service?

Under 2 % from the yearly conscription total (30 000).

7. What reservist obligations apply, what is the call up procedure for reserve service?

From 1 Jan 2026, liability in the reserve extends to the end of the year one turns 65 (previously 60/50 by rank); Non-Military Service Act adjusted accordingly.

Refresher training orders are compulsory, normally notified ≥ 3 months in advance; maximum cumulative days: officers/NCOs 200, demanding rank-and-file 150, other rank-and-file 80.

In specific border-security disturbances, shorter-notice call-ups are possible by law (amendment to Conscription Act §§32, 48).

8. How many persons were prosecuted in recent years for evasion/refusal of military service? How many of these had declared conscientious objections? What were the outcomes, and what sentences were imposed?

In recent years, there have been on average 20–40 total objectors annually, in 2024 and 2025 there were 16 total objectors respectively. Total objection leads to a criminal report and a legal process, meaning these individuals are prosecuted. All total objectors are conscientious objectors, as total objection specifically refers to refusal to perform both military and non-military service on grounds of conviction. Total objection always results in a conviction (no acquittals are documented). The sentence equals half of the remaining personal service time. Since non-military service lasts 347 days, the maximum sentence is 173 days.

The sentence is imposed as imprisonment or, nowadays, most commonly as home arrest or supervised community sanction. The sentence is always unconditional. A conviction for total objection does not result in a criminal record entry, but it is recorded in the justice administration's information systems.

C. (Skip if not applicable) Countries without conscription

9. Has any legislation regarding obligatory military service (conscription) been abolished, or has it merely been suspended, meaning that it could be reimposed at any time?
10. Is there an ongoing registration procedure for those liable for military service? Is it possible for a conscientious objector to refuse to be registered? From what age is registration required?
11. If suspended, are there specific provisions regarding the circumstances in which it could be reinstated and the process to be followed?
12. Would reinstatement mean that previous legislation regarding conscientious objection would remain applicable? If so, please answer sections F and G with regard to such legislation.

D. School system

13. Is attendance at any days of introduction to the armed forces or military careers or other programmes which could be seen as preparatory to military recruitment an obligatory part of the secondary education curriculum?
No binding statute in force; a government working group proposed a joint national defence day for all 17-year-olds (information on defence/conscription) — proposal stage and not in effect.
14. Do the armed forces have access to personal data of students? *Not before they are in service.*
15. Do military institutions offer temporary programs to students aged under 18 to learn more about military careers?
Only volunteer organizations, not the military.
16. Are military personnel involved in teaching classes at schools, on a temporary or long term basis?
Not as official military service or duty. As a voluntary basis for general information only.

E. Voluntary recruitment into military service

17. What incentives or measures are used by the national armed forces to encourage voluntary recruitment? (financial incentives, scholarships, career prospects, advertising, etc.).
Females have voluntary service. Conscripts and women in voluntary service receive a daily allowance (as of 1 Jan 2025: €6.10 / €10.15 / €14.15 by service length); Kela provides Conscript's allowance (housing and certain costs).
18. What is the minimum age for recruitment?
18.
19. What was the total first-time military recruitment in recent years? Please disaggregate by age, gender and (if appropriate) whether as conscripts or volunteers.
20. What legislation governs voluntary recruitment into military service?
Act on Voluntary Military Service for Women (194/1995).
21. What is the duration of service initially required?
22. What proportion of recruits sign up for a second period of the same length or longer?
23. How many persons were called up for reserve service, and of what duration?
>28,000 reservists trained in refresher exercises (~185,000 training days); legal maxima per person: 200/150/80 days by category.

F. Application process for recognition of conscientious objectors

24. What process is used to decide upon applications for the recognition of conscientious objectors?
Application for non-military service may be made at call-up, after call-up, or during military service; conscripts who apply are discharged immediately. The application is a standard form, in which the applicant declares that reasons of conviction prevent them from serving in the military. No specification of reasons is required under normal circumstances / peacetime, all applications are accepted. Decisions on liability are issued by the Regional Office; service is then administered by the Non-Military Service Centre.
25. What information is provided to conscripts regarding the possibility of applying for recognition?
Official guidance exists via Defence Forces and the Centre for Non-Military Service websites and at call-ups/Regional Offices.
26. What body is responsible for deciding upon applications?
In peacetime, Regional Offices decide applications; in special circumstances, cases may go to the Board for the Examination of Conscript Convictions established under the Act.
27. Who sits in the responsible body?
During war: Mainly civilians appointed by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, The Ministry of Justice, Helsinki University, Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare and Non-military Service Centre. Chair, vice chair and presenting officer must be acquainted with the duties of a judge, one member must be acquainted with different convictions and one member must be a psychiatrist. There is also a member representing the Non-military Service Centre and one representing the Defence Forces.
28. In recent years, how many applications were received? How many were successful on first consideration; how many unsuccessful applications were appealed, and with what results?
Approx. 2000 applications per year + applications from reservists (more variation). All applications are accepted.
29. Are you able to indicate on which grounds any were rejected?
30. How can the decision be appealed?
*Decisions are administrative and are accompanied by appeal instructions under Finnish administrative-judicial procedure (appeal to an Administrative Court; further leave-to-appeal to the Supreme Administrative Court).
During war, appeals must be given priority in Courts.*
31. What are the legal provisions for those who also refuse to perform alternative service?
Imprisonment equal to half of the remaining service time (Non-Military Service Act §74).

G. Terms of alternative service

32. If alternative service is / would be required of conscientious objectors, under what authority are the arrangements administered?
Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment; Centre for Non-Military Service.
33. What is the duration of alternative service?
347 days (minus the days served in military service if applicable).
34. To what duration of military service would the objector otherwise have been liable?
165/255/347 days (role-dependent)
35. What is the rate of remuneration?
Daily allowance at the same statutory levels as conscripts (progressive by days served, 6,10 – 14,15 €).
36. How does the rate of remuneration compare to that of military conscripts?
Same daily allowance scales apply.

37. Under what authority is the system administered?

Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment

38. Where is the alternative service usually performed?

A 4-week basic training at Non-military Service Centre, after that work service at approved non-profit/public service locations (~1,500 nationwide), generally state and municipal authorities and wellbeing services counties. Service locations and duties must be of a civilian nature and compatible with the CO:s conviction.

39. Are conscientious objectors assigned to placements, or do they have a free choice?

Relatively free choice, resembles regular job recruiting process. Approved organizations willing to recruit advertise for placements and COs seek and apply to service placements from the approved list (subject to Centre oversight).

40. Is it possible to perform alternative service while continuing to live at one's permanent address?

Yes, with the exception of a short training period.

H. Conscientious objection during military service of conscripts/volunteers

41. What legislation or regulations would apply to the case of a serving member of the armed forces who applied for release having developed conscientious objection?

A serving conscript may apply for transfer to non-military service; immediate discharge from military service follows, and non-military liability is determined by the Regional Office. All applications are accepted during peacetime.

42. What procedures are followed in the event of an application?

43. What information is available to serving personnel about the right of conscientious objection and the means of applying for release?

Published guidance (Defence Forces; Non-Military Service Centre website).

44. Have any such cases been recorded in recent years? Please give details of the number of applications, the number of acceptances.

About half of applications for non-military service come from people performing military service – approx. 1000 applications / year. Additionally several reservists apply for non-military service

45. Give details, if relevant, of the grounds for any rejections.

46. How many persons were prosecuted for desertion? Were any of these persons who had declared themselves conscientious objectors? What was the outcome, and what sentences were imposed?

I. Conscientious objection after military service

47. What legislation or regulations would apply to the case of a reservist who applied for recognition as a conscientious objector?

A reservist may refuse reserve duty by applying for supplementary service administered by the Non-Military Service Centre; legal maximum 40 days in peacetime (currently implemented as short courses).

48. Have any persons sought to refuse reserve service on this basis in recent years? With what results?

Before 2022 only a few hundred per year, since 2022 1500-3800 per year. During peacetime, all applications are accepted, and stating specific reasons in the application is not required.

J. Asylum for conscientious objectors

49. Would it be possible for you to obtain statistics on approvals/rejections of those asylum applications in your country that were citing conscientious objection?

Finnish Immigration Service does not have these statistics.

K. Developments since last year

Here you can find the information published in last year's Report.

50. What legislative changes have happened within the last year?

Reservist age limit raised to 65 (in force 1 Jan 2026); corresponding change also to the Non-Military Service Act.

51. Is there any legal initiative undergoing at the Parliament or any other state body which concerns the military service, the right to conscientious objection, or related issues?

Cross-ministerial working group (23 May 2025) to prepare reform of the Non-Military Service Act (linking civilian service more clearly to comprehensive security; clarifying procedures incl. switch between forms of service). The reform is planned to enter into force in the beginning of 2027. We are not able to give further details, as the work is still in progress.

Government proposal (10 July 2025) to amend the Conscription Act: clarifies volunteering by Åland domiciliaries and service continuity for persons whose legal gender is recognized/changed.

Conscription Act amended (15 July 2024) to allow short-notice refresher call-ups for certain border-security situations.

52. Anything else that you would like to report?