



Aizsardzības ministrija

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA

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Answers to the Questionnaire for EBCO's Annual Report 2025

Dear Mr. Diamantidis,

It is a great pleasure to provide you information for EBCO's Annual Report 2025 on Conscientious Objection in Europe. In the sections below you will find answers to your questions but should you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Mārtiņš Dātavš (Phone: (+371) 67335134, E-mail: Martins.Datavs@mod.gov.lv), Senior Expert of the Draft Planning Section at Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Latvia.

1. What legislative changes have happened within the last year which concern the military service, the right to conscientious objection, or related issues?

No legislative changes have been made regarding conscientious objectors.

2. Is there any such legal initiative undergoing at the Parliament or any other state body?

Currently no legislative initiatives that affect conscientious objectors are under consideration in any state body.

3. Anything else that you would like to report?

Informal discussions have taken place regarding the potential future expansion of civilian institutions that can carry out national defence civil service (alternative service).

A. Conscription

4. 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?

Evasion of the national defence service (NDS) is not prosecuted but administrative liability may be applied. According to the NDS Law for the failure to arrive at the (health) examinations specified for a recruit at the place and time indicated in the summons of the Ministry of Defence without a justifying reason, a warning or a fine of up to 700 EUR shall be imposed on a recruit. Arrival at the place of service shall be ensured by the Military Police of the National Armed Forces of Latvia in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Administrative Procedure Law if the conscript fails to do so.

B. Voluntary recruitment into military service

5. What was the total first-time military recruitment in recent years? Please disaggregate by age, gender and (if appropriate) whether as conscripts or volunteers.

The absolute majority of the NDS soldiers are males between the ages 18 and 19. The statistics are following:

- 2023 – 253 persons (all volunteers);
- 2024 – 561 persons (498 volunteers / 63 conscripts);
- 2025 – 949 persons (773 volunteers / 176 conscripts).

6. What proportion of recruits sign up for a second period of the same length or longer?

There is no possibility in the NDS to sign up for a second period. The soldiers, if they wish, can sign up for the professional military service after 6 months of NDS.

7. How many persons were called up for reserve service, and of what duration?

Each year, a selected number of reserve soldiers are called up for a two-week reserve soldier's exercise. Although the exercise is considered mandatory, reserve soldiers will not face any sanctions if they fail to attend these exercises. At the same time, all Latvian adult citizens may voluntarily apply for a three-week reserve soldier's exercise and learn the necessary skills for state defence.

C. Application process for recognition of conscientious objectors

8. 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?

In 2024 the Conscription Control Commission of NDS received and approved one application for alternative service. However, the applicant was later fully exempted from the performance of alternative service duties due to health conditions. In 2025 the Conscription Control Commission of NDS received three applications for alternative service. Two of the applications were unfounded, but one application remains under consideration, as not all required information has been received. None of the decisions mentioned above have been appealed in court.

9. Are you able to indicate on which grounds they were rejected?

One application was unfounded because during the application review meeting, the applicant expressed dissatisfaction with the sudden change of his life plans rather than with the pacifistic beliefs mentioned in the application. The other application was unfounded because the applicant had misconceptions that people with Christian faith could not perform military service, moreover, it became clear that the applicant had not developed a strong religious conviction.

D. Conscientious objection during military service of conscripts/volunteers

10. Have any cases of serving members of the armed forces who applied for release having developed conscientious objection been recorded in recent years? Please give details of the number of applications, the number of acceptances.

No such cases have been recorded.

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

No such cases have been recorded.

12. 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?

No such cases have been recorded.

E. Conscientious objection after military service

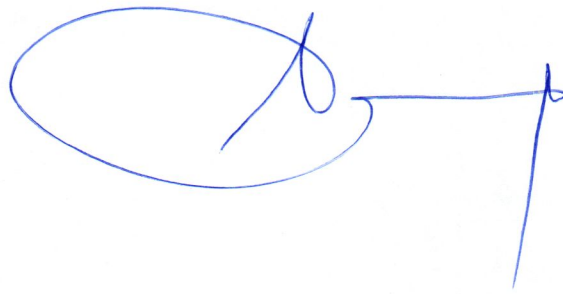
13. Have any persons sought to refuse reserve service by applying for recognition as conscientious objectors in recent years? With what results?

No such cases have been recorded.

F. Asylum for conscientious objectors

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

During the assessment of asylum applications the information provided by the asylum seeker regarding religious beliefs and military service in the country of their origin is taken into account. This information is recorded in the Asylum seekers register; however, this information is not structured in a way that allows the identification of conscientious objectors. In light of foregoing, it is not possible to provide the requested statistics.



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