

INTRODUCTION

The Advisory Board for Defence Information, ABDI, (*Maanpuolustustiedotuksen suunnittelukunta, MTS*) commissioned this survey to ascertain the opinions of Finns on Finnish foreign and security policy and on defence policy. The survey also includes questions regarding Finland-NATO cooperation and the relationship between Finland and NATO. In addition, citizens were asked to provide their views on how they feel security will develop over the next five years and to assess the factors which affect their feeling of security.

The survey also polled citizens' views on the planned natural gas pipeline traversing the Gulf of Finland, U.S. plans to place a missile defence system in the Czech Republic and Poland, Finland's stance on the convention banning cluster munitions as well as Finland's decision to accede to the convention prohibiting anti-personnel landmines. Altogether twenty-five questions were asked, five of which were completely new.

Commissioned by ABDI, Taloustutkimus Oy conducted the survey through personal interviews as part of an omnibus survey. Altogether 980 persons were interviewed. The target group was Finland's population of 15 to 79 year olds, with the exception of the Åland Islands. The sample was formed by quota sampling, in which the target group's quotas were the distribution of age, gender, province and municipality. Interviews were conducted at 101 locations, 47 of which were cities and 54 were other types of municipalities. The sample is weighted according to the target group with the weighted numbers corresponding to Finland's population of 15 to 79 year olds in thousands.

The error of margin is \pm three point two (3.2) percentage points.

When interpreting background variables related to party affiliation, it must be taken into account that the data representing the supporters of larger political parties are more reliable than those of smaller parties, whose supporters are numerically fewer in the sample. The following question was asked: 'Which party would you vote for, if parliamentary elections were held now?' Of all of the respondents, 71.5 % (701 persons) revealed their party affiliation and 28.5 % (279 persons) declined to respond.

On the basis of written instructions drafted for this survey, fifty-seven pollsters trained by Taloustutkimus Oy conducted the interviews from 17 October to 4 November 2008.

The report comprises a text section and illustrating figures that also present the time sequence of the previously asked questions. The illustrations were produced at Taloustutkimus Oy. Some of the questions represent a continuous sequence since 1964. The ABDI research branch and work branch were responsible for drawing up the questions. The research branch compiled the report.

Throughout the history of the surveys ABDI has cooperated with its Swedish counterpart, the National Board of Psychological Defence (*Styrelsen för Psykologiskt Försvar, SPF*), which began to conduct similar surveys in Sweden as early as the 1950s. The SPF's reports can be found at www.psydef.se.

The data from this survey, like the previous surveys, are stored in the Finnish Social Science Data Archive (www.fsd.uta.fi), University of Tampere. The ABDI's survey reports are available in Finnish, Swedish and English on the ABDI's home page (www.defmin.fi/mts).

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Preface

Compared with the results from the previous year, support for Finland's military non-alignment as well as opposition to NATO membership have decreased. This is particularly evident from the higher share of persons with no opinion regarding the questions. On the other hand, this year citizens were increasingly critical with regard to Finland-NATO cooperation. Likewise, a higher share of people with no opinion indicates decreased support.

Support for Finland's military non-alignment decreased eleven percentage points, from 69 per cent to 58 per cent. Conversely, support for military alignment increased four points, from 27 per cent to 31 per cent. The share of those with no opinion rose eight points, from 3 per cent to 11 per cent. This question has been polled since 1996 and support for military non-alignment has varied between 79-58 per cent while support for military alignment has varied between 34-16 per cent.

The share of those with a negative opinion regarding NATO membership has decreased nine percentage points, from 69 per cent to 60 per cent. In turn, the share of those with no opinion rose from 5 per cent to 12 per cent. Support for NATO membership is now two percentage points higher compared to the results of the previous year.

Four out of five Finns hold that Finland's foreign policy is well run. The question regarding the conduct of foreign policy has been continuously polled since 1964.

Citizens were also asked whether Finland should accede to the Oslo Convention banning cluster munitions. The topic received plenty of press coverage and on 30 October 2008 the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy decided that Finland will not sign the Oslo Convention. The majority (52 %) of citizens believe that Finland should sign the convention. Sixty-two per cent (62 %) of women and forty-two per cent (42 %) of men hold this view.

The planned natural gas pipeline from Russia to Germany divides the population. While 46 per cent of citizens oppose the project, forty-two per cent support the plan. Women are clearly more negative towards the pipeline than men.

An overwhelming majority of citizens, 74 per cent, support the present conscription system. This year half of the respondents were also asked to provide their opinion regarding voluntary conscript service for men. The other half of the respondents was asked whether Finland should institute national civic service, either military or non-military, which would uniformly apply to men and women. While two thirds of the respondents opposed voluntary conscript service for men, one third supported the idea. More than half of respondents rejected the idea of national civic service.

Support for military non-alignment has decreased from the previous year

The question 'Should Finland remain militarily non-aligned or should Finland try to ally itself militarily?' has been polled in ABDI surveys since 1996. Compared with the 2007 survey, support for military non-alignment has clearly decreased, whereas support for military alignment has slightly risen and the share of those with no opinion has increased. In the autumn of 2008, 58 per cent of citizens (69 % in 2007) held that Finland should remain militarily non-aligned. Fifty-nine per cent (70 %) of men and fifty-seven per cent (68 %) of women hold this view. Eighty-seven per cent (95 %) of Left Alliance supporters and 68 per cent (74 %) of Centre Party, 61 per cent (70 %) of Greens, 60 per cent (75 %) of SDP and 31 per cent (43 %) of National Coalition supporters hold the same view. Looking at the entire timeline, the result of 2005 was similar to that of this year.

One third of citizens, 31 per cent (27 % in 2007), believes that Finland should seek membership of a military alliance. Thirty-four per cent (28 %) of men and twenty-eight per cent (27 %) of women think so. Sixty-four per cent (54 %) of National Coalition supporters and 31 per cent (20 %) of SDP, 27 per cent (25 %) of Centre Party, 22 per cent (25 %) of Greens and two per cent (5 %) of Left Alliance supporters hold this view.

Eleven per cent (3 % in 2007) of citizens had no opinion; 16 per cent (5 %) of women and seven per cent (2 %) of men have no opinion. (Figures 1 and 2)

Indecision regarding NATO membership has increased

Sixty per cent (69 % in 2007) of citizens regard that Finland should not seek NATO membership. Sixty-one per cent (67 %) of women and 60 per cent (70 %) of men hold this view. Eighty-eight per cent (97 %) of Left Alliance supporters and 70 per cent (67 %) of Centre Party, 67 per cent (77 %) of Greens, 60 per cent (75 %) of SDP and 29 per cent (38 %) of National Coalition supporters agree. Whereas 35 per cent (30 %) of those earning more than EUR 35,000 per year support NATO membership, 26 per cent (28 %) of those earning EUR 25,000-35,000 and 19 per cent (24 %) of those earning less than EUR 25,000 per year think so. By regional comparison, more people in southern Finland, 31 per cent (31 %), favour NATO membership compared to eastern and northern Finland where they express less support, 20 per cent (22 %), towards NATO membership.

Twenty-eight per cent (26 % in 2007) of citizens deem that Finland should seek NATO membership. Thirty-one per cent (27 %) of men and 25 per cent (25 %) of women think this way. Sixty-two per cent (55 %) of National Coalition supporters and 23 per cent (21 %) of SDP, 22 per cent (28 % and 19 %) of Centre Party and Greens as well as three per cent (3 %) of Left Alliance supporters concur.

Eleven per cent (5 % in 2007) of citizens had no opinion; 14 per cent (8 %) of women and 10 per cent (2 %) of men have no opinion.

Compared with the results of 2007 the share of those negative towards NATO membership has clearly decreased, the share of those with no opinion has risen and the share of those positive towards NATO membership has slightly increased. (Figures 3 and 4)

For the second time the respondents were asked to provide justifications both for and against Finland seeking NATO membership. Half of the respondents wrote their answers by filling in an open question and the other half answered a multiple-choice question by selecting their top three reasons.

Why Finland should not seek NATO membership

As in previous surveys Finns believe that keeping Finnish troops from fighting in foreign wars is the most important reason for not seeking NATO membership. Forty-eight per cent (48 % in 2007) of citizens hold this opinion. Other reasons cited were an increased Russian threat against Finland, 40 per cent (40 %); Finland should remain outside great-power disputes, 39 per cent (46 %); the excessive dominance of the United States in NATO, 38 per cent (43 %); NATO membership would increase Finland's defence budget, 32 per cent (29 %); membership of the Alliance would not bolster Finland's security, 30 per cent (26 %); in the final analysis Finland would still be responsible for its own defence, 26 per cent (29 %).

As for the open-ended questions, the most often cited reasons related to Russia (N=86), followed by increased costs and defence budgets (N=60), Finnish troops being deployed to wars outside Finland (N=59), no perceived benefits from NATO membership (N=34) and that NATO membership would compromise Finland's sovereignty and independence (N=19). In all 411 answers from open-ended questions were given, nine of which were 'no opinion' responses.

Why Finland should seek NATO membership

This year's questions included two additional positive factors: NATO membership would increase Finland's security, and NATO membership would bolster Finland's defence capability. Hence, comparisons with the previous year's survey results do not provide a completely accurate picture.

The most important reasons for seeking NATO membership include the following: The Finnish Defence Forces cannot defend Finland alone, 36 per cent; NATO membership would bolster Finland's defence capability, 35 %; NATO membership would provide military security against Russia, 31 %; Finland could participate in decision-making pertaining to NATO operations, 30 %; It behoves Finland to participate in western organizations, 27 %; NATO membership would increase Finland's security, 25 % and Finland could generate savings in defence spending, 16 per cent. (Figures 5 and 6)

As regards the open-ended answers, the most often cited reason was the positive effect on Finland's security (N=82), followed by no perceived benefits or gains from NATO membership (N=59), Finland would not be left alone and that we would receive assistance when required (N=37) and that NATO membership would provide military security against Russia (N=26). In all 334 answers from open-ended questions were provided, 12 of which were 'no opinion' responses.

The best security policy option for Finland

This year was the second time citizens were polled as regards the best security policy solution for Finland (military non-alignment, NATO membership, developing the EU into a military alliance as well, defence alliance with Sweden). Half of citizens, 49 per cent (50 % in 2007), regard that Finland should remain militarily non-aligned. The 24-34 age group has a slightly different opinion, 40 per cent (54 %) of them think that it should. Seventy-six per cent (82 %) of Left Alliance supporters, 61 per cent (54 %) of Centre Party, 54 per cent (53 %) of Greens, 47 per cent (53 %) of SDP and 26 per cent (32 %) of National Coalition supporters hold the same opinion.

Twenty-three per cent (18 % in 2007) regard NATO membership with no other NATO countries' troops or NATO bases in Finland during peacetime as the best option. Half of National Coalition supporters, 49 per cent (37 %), think so, 23 per cent (9 %) of Centre Party, 20 per cent (11 %) of SDP, 17 per cent (14 %) of Greens and one per cent (6 %) of Left Alliance supporters agree.

Three per cent (6 % in 2007) of citizens regard NATO membership with the caveat that there be other NATO countries' troops and bases in Finland during peacetime as the best solution. As regards this question, the pooled support for NATO membership is 26 per cent (24 %).

Seventeen per cent (17 % in 2007) of citizens believe that the best option would be to strive towards developing the European Union into a military alliance. Twenty-five per cent (23 %) of SDP supporters believe so and 22 per cent (4 %) of Left Alliance, 20 per cent (19 %) of Greens, 15 per cent (14 %) of National Coalition and eight per cent (23 %) of Centre Party supporters concur.

Three per cent (7 %) regard a defence alliance with Sweden as the best solution. (Figures 7 and 8)

Finns are less favourable towards Finland-NATO cooperation

Since 2004, the ABDI has polled opinions regarding Finland-NATO cooperation. Compared with the results of the 2007 poll, support for NATO cooperation has slightly decreased, indecision is on the rise and negativity towards cooperation has increased to an extent. (Figure 9)

Participation in NATO-led crisis management operations

Half of citizens, 52 per cent (60 % in 2007), are positive towards Finnish participation in NATO-led crisis management operations. Thirty-six per cent (34 %) oppose such participation and 12 per cent (5 %) have no opinion.

While 79 per cent (72 % in 2007) of National Coalition supporters are positive towards this participation, 52 per cent (68 %) of Centre Party, 51 per cent (67 %) of SDP, 41 per cent (52 %) of Greens and 32 per cent (22 %) of Left Alliance supporters feel this way.

NATO interoperability of the Defence Forces' weaponry and command systems

Fifty-six per cent (67 % in 2007) of citizens support NATO interoperability of the Defence Forces' weaponry and command systems. This view is shared by sixty cent (73 %) of men and fifty-three per cent (61 %) of women. Eighty-six per cent (90 %) of National Coalition supporters hold this view and 59 per cent (67 %) of Centre Party, 55 per cent (69%) of SDP, 48 per cent (55 %) of Greens and 29 per cent (41 %) of Left Alliance supporters agree. Whereas, 29 per cent (27 %) of citizens oppose it and 15 per cent (6 %) have no opinion. (Figure 11)

Finnish participation in the exercises of the NATO Response Force (NRF)

Fifty-nine per cent (68 % in 2007) of citizens are favourable towards Finland's participation in NRF exercises; sixty-one per cent (72 %) of men and 58 per cent (64 %) of women think in this way. While 79 per cent (81 %) of National Coalition supporters espouse it, 64 per cent (72 %) of SDP, 56 per cent (75 %) of Centre Party, 51 per cent (57 %) of Greens and 33 per cent (40 %) of Left Alliance supporters agree.

Thirty per cent (27 % in 2007) of citizens oppose participation in NRF exercises and 11 per cent (5 %) have no opinion. Of Left Alliance supporters 52 per cent (56 %) oppose the practice; 39 per cent (38 %) of Greens, 31 per cent (21 %) of Centre Party, 29 per cent (25 %) of SDP and 16 per cent (14 %) of National Coalition supporters also oppose it. (Figure 12)

Finnish participation in the NATO Response Force (NRF)

Fewer than half of the citizens, 42 per cent (49 % in 2007), hold a positive view on Finnish participation in the NATO Response Force (NRF); forty-six per cent (53 %) of men and 38 per cent (46 %) of women are of this opinion. Sixty-eight per cent (62 %) of National Coalition supporters have a positive opinion of such participation and 45 per cent (49 %) of SDP, 39 per cent (58 %) of Centre Party, 26 per cent (38 %) of Greens and 18 per cent (23 %) of Left Alliance supporters also have a positive opinion.

Forty-five per cent (45 % in 2007) of citizens oppose participation in the NRF; 45 per cent (45 %) of women and 46 per cent (44 %) of men think this way. Of Left Alliance supporters 70 per cent (77 %) oppose such participation and 59 per cent (53 %) of Greens, 46 per cent (39 %) of Centre Party, 43 per cent (45 %) of SDP and 25 per cent (29 %) of National Coalition supporters also oppose it.

Thirteen per cent (6 %) of the respondents had no opinion. Seventeen per cent (9 %) of those with no opinion were women and eight per cent (3 %) were men.

Finnish foreign policy is well run

Seventy-eight per cent (84 % in 2007) of citizens consider Finnish foreign policy either extremely or fairly well run. Seventy-eight per cent (86 %) of women and 79 per cent (84 %) of men are of this opinion. Eighty-six per cent (84 %) of National Coalition supporters hold this view and 81 per cent (84 %) of Centre party, 78 per cent (84 %) of SDP, 75 per cent (90 %) of Greens and 73 per cent (75 %) of Left Alliance supporters think likewise.

Sixteen per cent (84 % in 2007) of citizens regard foreign policy as being fairly poorly or extremely poorly run. Whereas 22 per cent (25 %) of Left Alliance supporters think so, 20 per cent (7 %) of Greens, 19 per cent (14 %) of SDP, 15 per cent (6 %) of Centre Party and 12 per cent (14 %) of National Coalition supporters also agree. Five per cent (3 %) of citizens had no opinion regarding the conduct of foreign policy. (Figures 14 and 15)

The conduct of Finland's external relations

This year the respondents were polled on the conduct of foreign relations with Sweden, Estonia, Russia, Germany, the United States, China and developing countries. In 2007 the question also included the Nordic countries, the rest of the Baltic countries and the United Kingdom.

Ninety-four per cent (92 % in 2007) of citizens thought that Finland had properly conducted its relations with Sweden, 88 per cent (88 %) held that the same applied with Estonia, 79 per cent (71 %) with Russia, 86 per cent (88 %) with Germany, 75 per cent (67 %) with the United States, 70 per cent (67 %) with China and 54 per cent (53 %) with developing countries. (Figures 16 and 17)

The majority of Finns think that the OSCE Chair handled itself well during the crisis between Georgia and Russia

This year the respondents were asked how Finland, as the OSCE Chair, managed the crisis between Georgia and Russia.

More than half of the citizens, 55 per cent, think that Finland, as the OSCE Chair, managed the crisis between Georgia and Russia either extremely well or fairly well. Fifty-seven per cent of men and 54 per cent of women think so. Sixty-one per cent of citizens in the 50-79 age group also hold that view. Of National Coalition and Greens supporters 60 per cent think this, 59 per cent of SDP, 57 per cent of Centre Party and 49 per cent of Left Alliance supporters also share this opinion.

A little less than a third of citizens considers that Finland, as the OSCE Chair, managed the Georgia-Russia crisis either extremely poorly or fairly poorly. Thirty-six per cent of citizens in the 35-49 age group hold this view. (Figure 18)

Finnish defence policy is well run

In all, 80 per cent (83 % in 2007) of citizens think that Finland's defence policy has been either extremely well or fairly well run in recent years. Eighty-two per cent (83 %) of women and 80 per cent (82 %) of men think so. While 88 per cent (94 %) of Centre Party supporters hold this view, 86 per cent (85 %) of SDP, 83 per cent (74 %) of Greens, 81 per cent (80 %) of National Coalition and 67 per cent (74 %) of Left Alliance supporters also agree.

Fourteen per cent (15 % in 2007) of citizens think that Finland's defence policy is either extremely poorly or fairly poorly run. Eighteen per cent (17 %) of men and 11 per cent (13 %) of women think this way. Of Left Alliance supporters 25 per cent (26 %) hold this view and 16 per cent (18 %) of National Coalition, 11 per cent (22 %) of Greens as well as 10 per cent of SDP and Centre Party (14 % and 6%) supporters agree. (Figures 19 and 20)

Finns are satisfied with the present level of defence appropriations

Half of the citizens, 49 per cent (47 % in 2007), want to preserve the present level of defence appropriations. Fifty-five per cent (54 %) of women and 44 per cent (41 %) of men want this. Fifty-nine per cent (60 %) of Centre Party supporters agree and 56 per cent (52 %) of SDP, 50 per cent (42 %) of Left Alliance, 48 per cent (48 %) of Greens and 43 per cent (38 %) of National Coalition supporters also share the view.

One third of citizens, 33 per cent (39 % in 2007), supports an increase in defence appropriations. Forty per cent (45 %) of men and 27 per cent (33 %) of women support this. Of National Coalition supporters 52 per cent (55 %) support an increase; 38 per cent (36 %) of Centre Party, 28 per cent (38 %) of SDP, 13 per cent (17 %) of Greens and 10 per cent (36 %) of Left Alliance supporters agree with this.

Fourteen per cent (12 % in 2007) of citizens support decreasing the defence budget. Fifteen per cent (13 %) of men and 13 per cent (12 %) of women think this. While 35 per cent (35 %) of Greens supporters advocate decreasing the defence appropriations, 33 per cent (22 %) of Left Alliance, 12 per cent (9 %) of SDP, four per cent (7 %) of National Coalition and three per cent (4 %) of Centre party supporters think likewise.

The will to defend the nation remains at a high level

Seventy-two per cent (77 % in 2007) of citizens believe that if attacked, Finland should defend itself militarily in all situations, even if the outcome were uncertain. Seventy-nine per cent (82 %) of men and 65 per cent (73 %) of women think this. The difference between men and women with regard to this question historically varies between 9 and 19 per cent. Eighty-four per cent (77 %) of National Coalition supporters hold this opinion and 78 per cent (83 %) of Centre Party, 74 per cent (76 %) of SDP, 52 per cent (59 %) of Greens and 49 per cent (71 %) of Left Alliance supporters agree.

One fifth of citizens, 22 per cent (19 % in 2007), believes that Finland should not defend itself militarily in all situations. Twenty-seven per cent (23 %) of women and 18 per cent (15 %) of men think so. Forty-seven per cent (27 %) of Left Alliance supporters have this opinion and 37 per cent (36 %) of Greens, 18 per cent of SDP and Centre Party (20 % and 16%) and 14 per cent (17 %) of National Coalition supporters think alike. (Figures 23 and 24)

Finland's defence capability

Forty-six per cent (48 % in 2007) of citizens believe that Finland could defend itself extremely well or fairly well in a conventional war. Fifty per cent (53 %) of men and 43 per cent (44 %) of women believe so. Younger people, i.e. the 15-34 age group have slightly more confidence, 49 per cent (61 %), in this than the 35-79 age group, 45 per cent (47 %).

Sixty-two per cent (54 %) of Centre Party supporters believe this to be so and 57 per cent (45 %) of National Coalition supporters, 42 per cent (60 %) of SDP, 34 per cent (37 %) of Greens and 29 per cent (47 %) of Left Alliance supporters' beliefs coincide.

A little more than half of the citizens, 52 per cent (49 % in 2007), believe that Finland's chances are either extremely poor or fairly poor in a conventional war. Fifty-four per cent (54 %) of women and 50 per cent (45 %) of men think this way. Whereas 66 per cent (47 %) of Left Alliance supporters hold this view, 60 per cent (61 %) of Greens, 56 per cent (40 %) of SDP, 42 per cent (53 %) of National Coalition and 37 per cent (45 %) of Centre Party supporters agree. (Figures 25 and 26)

A credible defence consists of several factors

A question related to having a credible defence was polled for the first time in 2007. The question lists 13 factors, each of which was to be separately assessed as regards its respective significance to a credible defence. Citizens believe that the most important factors affecting a credible defence include: good relations with neighbouring countries, 94 per cent (94 % in 2007); the quantity, quality and maintainability of defence materiel, 89 per cent (92 %); the citizens' will to defend the nation, 88 per cent (90 %); modern weapon systems, 87 per cent (91%); defence of the entire territory of the nation, 87 per cent (92 %); general conscription for men, 84 per cent (87 %); the level of defence appropriations, 83 per cent (90 %); regular refresher exercises, 64 per cent (68 %); Finland's participation in international peace support and crisis management operations, 56 per cent (60 %); NATO interoperability in command systems and weaponry, 55 per cent (59 %); Finnish participation in the EU's battle groups, 53 per cent (59 %) as well as women's voluntary service, 41 per cent (49 %). (Figures 27 and 28)

Finns believe that the Defence Forces should participate in military tasks at home and abroad

Virtually all citizens, 96 per cent (98 % in 2007), believe that the Defence Forces' task is to defend the territorial integrity of the nation.

Sixty-two per cent (68 % in 2007) are of the opinion that one of the military tasks of the Finnish Defence Forces is to participate in the defence of the European Union. A little less than one third, 30 per cent (28 %), of the population disagrees.

Fifty-six per cent (50 % in 2007) of citizens consider participation in crisis and threat prevention in various parts of the world a military task for the Defence Forces. A little more than one third, 39 per cent (47 %), disagrees. (Figures 29 and 30)

Finns want to preserve general conscription

Seventy-four per cent (73 % in 2007) of citizens support the present-style defence system which is based on general conscription, 73 per cent (68 %) of men and 75 per cent (79 %) of women. The current system enjoys fairly uniform support among different age groups, the exception being the

25-35 age group, 67 per cent (68 %) of whom support the present system. Whereas 91 per cent (88 %) of Centre Party supporters believe in the present system, 77 per cent of SDP and National Coalition (73 % and 63%), 58 per cent (73 %) of Left Alliance and 49 per cent (49 %) of Greens supporters back it.

Fifteen per cent (17 % in 2007) of citizens advocate a more selective conscription system with a smaller number of conscripts given military training. Thirty per cent (34 %) of Greens supporters hold this view and 29 per cent (22 %) of Left Alliance, 12 per cent of SDP and National Coalition (12 % and 27 %) and 12 per cent (6 %) of Centre Party supporters do as well.

Ten per cent (9 % in 2007) of men and women view that Finland should abandon general conscription and institute a fully professional military. Twenty-one per cent (17 %) of Greens supporters hold the same view, along with 12 per cent (5 %) of Left Alliance, 11 per cent (8 %) of SDP, 10 per cent (7 %) of National Coalition and two per cent (5 %) of Centre Party supporters.

Should conscript service be made voluntary for men as well?

This year was the first time a question related to voluntary conscript service for men as well was polled. Half of the respondents answered this question. The other half answered the following question: 'What is your opinion with regard to Finland instituting national civic service for both men and women, which could be completed as military or non-military service?'

More than half of the citizens, 64 per cent, reject the option of voluntary conscript service for men as well. Respondents in eastern Finland and Lapland are the most unreceptive to the idea. While 82 per cent of National Coalition supporters oppose the idea, 77 per cent of Centre Party, 73 per cent of SDP, 40 per cent of Left Alliance and 26 per cent of Greens supporters also disagree with the proposal.

One third of citizens, 31 per cent, are receptive to the idea. The most positive response comes from people living in southern Finland (36 %). Sixty-four per cent of Greens supporters favour the option and 51 per cent of Left Alliance, 24 per cent of SDP, 19 per cent of Centre Party and 15 per cent of National Coalition supporters agree with the thought. (Figure 33)

Should there be national civic service for men and women?

Half of the citizens, 51 per cent, reject national civic service for men and women; 54 per cent of women and 47 per cent of men oppose the idea. The most unreceptive are the 25-34 group (64 %) and the 15-24 group (56 %). Of Left Alliance supporters 62 per cent dislike the idea, 55 per cent of SDP and National Coalition, 46 per cent of Centre Party and 39 per cent of Greens supporters also oppose the proposal.

Forty-two per cent of the respondents favoured the idea; 44 per cent of women and 39 per cent of men supported the proposal. The 50-79 age group was the most receptive (47 %) to the thought. While 53 per cent of Greens supporters agree with the idea, 51 per cent of Centre Party, 42 per cent of SDP, 37 per cent of National Coalition and 35 per cent of Left Alliance supporters agree.

Eight per cent had no opinion; nine per cent of women and seven per cent of men provided this answer. (Figure 34)

Finns support the decision to destroy the anti-personnel landmines

The majority of citizens, 63 per cent, support Finland's decision to abolish its anti-personnel landmines, 75 per cent of women and 52 per cent of men. With 84 per cent of Left Alliance supporters seconding the decision, 83 per cent of Greens, 74 per cent of SDP, 55 per cent of National Coalition and 48 per cent of Centre Party supporters also agree.

Twenty-eight per cent of citizens oppose the decision, 44 per cent of men and 12 per cent of women. Thirty-nine per cent of National Coalition supporters disagree with the decision and 36 per cent of Centre Party, 17 per cent of SDP, 15 per cent of Greens and 10 per cent of Left Alliance supporters think alike. Nine per cent of citizens had no opinion; 13 per cent of women and five per cent of men gave no opinion. (Figure 35)

Should Finland accede to the convention banning cluster munitions?

Half of the citizens, 52 per cent, think that Finland should accede to the convention banning cluster munitions. Sixty-two per cent of women and 42 per cent of men think so. While 77 per cent of Greens supporters have the same opinion, 58 of Left Alliance, 48 per cent of SDP and 41 per cent of Centre Party and National Coalition supporters also agree.

One third of citizens, 33 per cent, thinks that Finland should not accede to the convention banning cluster munitions; 50 per cent of men and 17 per cent of women have this opinion. Whereas 49 per cent of National Coalition supporters think this way, 40 per cent of SDP and Centre Party supporters, 19 per cent of Left Alliance and 18 per cent of Greens supporters think the same.

Fifteen per cent of citizens, 21 per cent women and nine per cent men, had no opinion. (Figure 36)

Finns are slightly more insecure about the future

Half of the citizens, 49 per cent (46 % in 2007), believe that Finland and Finns will live in a less secure world during the next five years. Fifty-eight per cent (53 %) of women and 40 per cent (40%) of men think this. The most insecure are in the 25-34 age group, 58 % (58 %), and the 35-49 age group, 54 per cent (49 %).

One third of citizens, 31 per cent (29 % in 2007), sees no difference from the present. Thirty-six per cent (31 %) of men and 26 per cent (27 %) of women have this opinion.

Eighteen per cent (24 % in 2007) of citizens believe that the situation will be more secure. Twenty-two per cent (28 %) of men and 14 per cent (20 % of women think so. (Figures 37 and 38)

Citizens are worried about the military situation in the neighbouring areas

One third of citizens, 32 per cent (22 % in 2007), senses that the military situation in the neighbouring areas will become more threatening in the next ten years; 36 per cent (24 %) of women and 28 per cent (19 %) of men feel this way.

Over half of the citizens, 58 per cent (68 % in 2007), think that the situation will remain more or less the same; 62 per cent (68 %) of men and 54 per cent (67 %) of women have this opinion.

Six per cent (9 % in 2007) of citizens feel that the situation in Finland's neighbouring areas will become less threatening. (Figures 39 and 40)

This year the respondents who answered that the situation will become either more threatening or less threatening were asked to elaborate on their answers.

The most often cited reasons of the respondents who answered that the military situation in Finland's neighbouring areas will likely be less threatening during the coming ten years included economic interdependence through globalization (N=12), positive developments in Russia (N=10) and the absence of any military threats on the horizon (N=4).

The ones who felt that the military situation in Finland's neighbouring areas will likely become more threatening justified their answers with topics related to Russia, such as: Russia's development and rearmament (N=149); Russia's threat increases if Finland joins NATO (N=21); relations between Russia and the Baltic countries (N=9); the situation between Russia and the areas of the former Soviet Union (N=8) as well as the crisis between Georgia and Russia (N=8). Further reasons mentioned included the general instability in global policy (N=40) and the global economic crisis (N=20).

Factors affecting Finland's security

When citizens are asked about factors affecting the security of Finland and Finns, topics linked to the European Union and its action appear as the most important factors increasing security. The new item on the list was Georgia's potential NATO membership.

This year, as in the three preceding years, Finland's participation in the EU's common defence was seen as the most important issue, 64 per cent (69 % in 2007), bolstering Finland's security. This was followed by Finland's membership of the European Union, 63 per cent (60 %); Finland's increasing economic activity, 49 per cent (48 %); Finnish participation in the EU's battle groups, 44 per cent (50 %) and Finland's military non-alignment, 42 per cent (45 %).

Citizens thought that the increasing foreign ownership in Finland's economy has the most detrimental effect on security.

Factors that are felt to be irrelevant to the security of Finland and Finns include Sweden's military non-alignment, 64 per cent (65 % in 2007); Ukraine's potential NATO membership, 61 per cent (62 %); the NATO membership of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, 60 per cent (59 %); Georgia's potential NATO membership, 56 per cent; Sweden's potential NATO membership, 51 per cent (51 %) and Turkey's potential EU membership, 52 per cent (45 %), which one third, 31 per cent (37 %), of citizens believes to be a factor detrimental to security.

Finland's possible NATO membership is felt to be both a factor increasing security, 34 per cent (37 % in 2007) as well as a factor decreasing security, 33 per cent (35 %). (Figures 41, 42 and 43)

Finns oppose the U.S. plan to deploy a missile defence system in the Czech Republic and Poland

The majority of citizens, 72 per cent, oppose the U.S. plan to deploy a missile defence system in the Czech Republic and Poland; 76 per cent of women and 69 per cent of men have this opinion. Whereas 89 per cent of Left Alliance supporters are critical of the plan, 88 per cent of Greens, 77 per cent of SDP, 70 per cent of Centre Party and 62 per cent of National Coalition supporters also disagree.

Fourteen per cent of the respondents supported the plan; the most receptive were among the 15-24 age group (18 %). Fourteen per cent had no opinion, 17 per cent of women and 11 per cent of men.

The natural gas pipeline project divides the opinions of the population

Forty-six per cent of citizens, 53 per cent of women and 38 per cent of men, are critical of the natural gas pipeline project traversing the bottom of the Gulf of Finland from Russia to Germany. The most critical respondents (52 %) are in the 15-24 age group. Sixty-four per cent of Greens supporters oppose the project and 49 per cent of Left Alliance, 46 per cent of Centre Party, 43 per cent of National Coalition and 35 per cent of SDP supporters are also critical of the plan.

Forty-two per cent of citizens support the project, 52 per cent of men and 31 per cent of women. The most receptive respondents (46 %) were in the 35-49 age group. Whereas 57 per cent of SDP supporters favour the plan, 43 per cent of National Coalition, 41 per cent of Centre Party, 40 per cent of Left Alliance and 29 per cent of Greens supporters support the project.

Thirteen per cent of the respondents, 16 per cent of women and 10 per cent of men, had no opinion on the question. (Figure 45)

People are worried about the state of the global environment

Respondents were given a list of phenomena and factors, followed by a request to rate the topics in order of importance as regards future concerns. This year the situation in Afghanistan, cyber threats and the crisis in the financial market were added to the list.

Of the topics presented, the state of the global environment worried people the most, 87 per cent, followed by the use of global resources, 86 per cent (86 % in 2007); international terrorism, 80 per cent (89 %); nuclear weapons, 77 per cent (86 %); global warming, 75 per cent; cyber crime, 69 per cent; the use of nuclear power in energy production in Russia, 69 per cent (71 %); proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, 67 per cent (79%) and international organized crime, 66 per cent (78 %). (Figures 46, 47, 48 and 49)

The UN and the EU bolster Finland's security

The question whether the UN, EU, OSCE, NATO, China, Russia and the United States have positive, negative or both positive *and* negative effect on Finland's security was polled for the second time.

Seventy per cent (72 % in 2007) estimated that the UN has a positive effect on Finland's security; 18 per cent (20 %) considered it to be irrelevant and nine per cent (7 %) deem that the UN has both a positive and negative effect.

Sixty per cent (59 % in 2007) held that the EU has a positive effect; 20 per cent (20 %) believe that the EU has both a positive and negative effect; 13 per cent (15 %) think that the EU is irrelevant and six per cent (5 %) consider its effect negative.

Whereas half of the citizens, 50 per cent (46 % in 2007), estimate that the OSCE has a positive effect, 24 per cent (29 %) deem it to be irrelevant, 13 per cent (14 %) think that it has both a positive and negative effect and three per cent (2 %) regard its effect as negative.

While one third of citizens, 32 per cent (28 % in 2007), believes that NATO has a negative effect on Finland's security, 23 per cent (23%) deem that NATO has both a positive and negative effect. Sixteen per cent (22 %) deem NATO to be irrelevant.

Forty per cent (34 %) of citizens feel that Russia has a negative effect on Finland's security; 34 per cent (34 %) believe that Russia has both a positive and negative effect; 18 per cent (19 %) deem it to be irrelevant and four per cent (11 %) consider Russia's effect to be positive.

Thirty-five per cent (33 % in 2007) of citizens deem that the United States is irrelevant as regards Finland's security, 33 per cent (31 %) think that it has both a positive and negative effect, 22 per cent (23 %) feel that the effect of the United States is negative and seven per cent (11 %) consider the effect of the United States to be positive.

Half of the citizens, 51 per cent (50 % in 2007), think that China is irrelevant with regard to the security of Finland. One fifth, 22 per cent (23 %) thinks that China's effect is both positive and negative, 14 per cent (14 %) deem its effect as negative and six per cent (9 %) consider China's effect as positive. (Figures 50 and 51)

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