

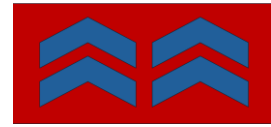
# **Forward facing approach to consolidating and integrating resilience at state level**

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## Introduction

2025 has seen an explosion of resilience programmes being developed and implemented across Europe, in reaction to observed increasing threat levels, warnings from intelligence services on the risk of sabotage and attacks on national interests and security and following the observations of the live and cumulative effects of the acute and prolonged war in Ukraine. This surge in resilience initiatives benefited from the balancing or evening effect across Europe from countries with established traditions of population resilience and active preparedness for engaging in conflict such as the states in the Scandinavian region, with transfer of best practices making these traditions better known on an European scale. Gap analysis have also led to the creation of regional resilience initiatives such as European Resilience Coalition in order to better address the resilience challenges posed by structurally integrated systems.

Resilience programmes are either government planned, coordinated and actively encouraged, practiced and implemented at population level, or have matured organically, in countries faced with the risk of conflict and war or war. This different way of coming into being is reflected in the terminology used in official documents and communication, in complexity and span of proposed initiatives and recommendations and in (anticipated) population reaction and acceptance towards these programmes, or, in other words, in degree of absorption and efficiency of the programme.

## War and conflict ready legislation

New legislation and regulations are being passed and old legislation is reviewed for addressing both civilian and military resilience. The stringent requirements that wars of necessity bring on one's own soil require rapid decision making. Requests for fast answering military requirements in response to the evolving threat landscape often get delayed by legislative vacuums. Current legislative systems that were constructed in peacetime and post-conflict periods require lengthy consultation and vetting processes, often by two distinct chambers of the Parliament, to become law, delaying crisis responses. The need for renewing legislation in order to timely and comprehensively respond to crisis and war has thus been observed by multiple states.

Modernisation of legislation and regulations requires revisiting classical concepts such as "war" or "veteran". The existent legal distinction between war and peace does no longer respond to the realities of the present day character of conflict. Questions on what would trigger article 5 reactions of the North Atlantic Treaty subsides to the difficulty of nowadays classifying what constitutes an act of war in the cyber domain. Definitions of what "imminent" is also vary



between the alliance partners as the UK and the US. In the same time, what is considered tolerable under the law can vary across NATO members.

Observed restrictions and difficulties in enhancing defence and military capacity in the Netherlands have called for legislative changes to facilitate solving conflicts of priorities and legislative gaps. Existing restrictions are a reflection of priorities set during peacetime and on the background of pressures streaming from conflicts of priorities over limited resources such as land allocation, quotas for noise or CO2 pollution. Practical and legal restrictions on training possibilities on own soil, including the possibility to train with drones, have night shooting exercises or extend the time interval in which military can practice shooting required legislative initiative. In acknowledgement of existing legislative gap, the Dutch government has advanced the Law on Wartime readiness - “Wet op de defensiegereedheid” – (Rijksoverheid, 2025). The law would facilitate training of the armed forces on own soil, including the use of new ways and technology of waging was such as the deployment of drones. The need for proactive legislation modernisation and adaptation in view of potential conflict is historically exemplified by the additional difficulties of responding to developing conflict conditions in a context of rigid or not-war suitable legislation. The need for new legislation and regulation includes the need for new and fast deployable organisational structures that would allow for a matrix approach to planning and execution of wartime operations. Looking at lessons from the past, on having to set up the War Cabinet when the UK entered WWII, Churchill noted that departmental embedding of the Minister of Defence would have required an “ill-timed constitution making” (Churchill, 1959; 2002) thus underlying the delays brought forward by engaging in complex legislative change during conflict.

The recent Nexperia case in the Netherlands, where the government had to refer to a wartime or crisis law from 1952 in order to prevent the takeover of a company considered critical to national interests by a foreign entity stands to further show the need for legislative reform, and new legislation that can respond promptly to current geopolitical tensions and threats on the international stage.

## Changes within military structures

Multiplying conflicts worldwide and the threat of conflict overspilling on NATO territory becoming acute have pushed not only for rearmament but also for reorganisation and modernisation of military structures and processes in order to increase personnel attrition, have more flexible and fast deploying structures and an increased power projection capability. Enabling flexible schemes for enlarging the active and reserve personnel base called for new laws and regulations. The need for rearmament has sparked national discussions on budget priorities, opposing expenditure on national interest such as education and health care, with the degree of international involvement and acceptance of threats to the direct interest of the state



being brought into question. These tension points in the global geopolitical order, within societies and, in the case of Europe, on the backdrop of the intense and prolonged diplomatic negotiations for the war in Ukraine, have resurfaced the centrality of the role the Defence branch has in the state and as overarching alliance.

In this very complex new world context, calls for the need to insulate the military from politics ignore realities of past and present conflicts and wars. This insulation becomes difficult if not impossible especially during prolonged conflict and even more so in cases of wars of existential survival. In times of peace, in preparations for such conflicts or in post-conflict debriefings and in line with the tradition of power separation, the political and military echelons come face to face and/or engage in formally sanctioned processes of interaction. The opacity or openness of this interaction is determined by the intrinsic character of secrecy of the military activity and it is sanctioned by tradition of openness of the governing process of each state.

During the hot stage of the conflict, visibility of the military alongside the political leadership in international forums serves an important communication function, signalling internal convergence around state interests and projecting power as means of deterrence, an element of increasingly higher importance in a time labelled as one dominated by great powers. Again, images with the Ukrainian president surrounded by his military staff in different work settings and in different attires serve this function of both public and political communication. The different attire, including the “work uniform” acts as marker of endurance, visible and continuous sustained effort for conducting war. Different military have different traditions regarding attire used for signalling maturity and endurance. This visual alliteration of the political and the military remains vital for maintaining internal social cohesion and for international messaging needed in gaining and maintaining support. This visual alliteration of military and civilian symbolism is transposed in different layers and contexts of society, and manifests itself as lived reality in everyday life in a country at war.

Political turmoil during conflict can affect the development of the hostilities on the battlefield and vice versa. The 4 years of war in Ukraine attest to this, with several rounds of changes at the top political and military levels taking place during the hostilities. Changes in military organisation are not uncommon during prolonged conflicts, reflecting the response to changes on the battlefield and wider national and geopolitical context. This is valid even more so in the case of a multiple front war and prolonged conflict. Churchill explains the need for changes in military High Command implemented during WWII in different theatres, linking post requirements with the profile of the individual candidate and wider integrated military strategy. For example, in motivating the proposed changes in the Middle East Command to the War Cabinet, Churchill notes that they are required due to the gravity and urgency of the situation (Churchill, 1959, 2002: 592). Developing and testing new structures in response to changing realities and characteristics of different combat theatres remained in the British military tradition post WWII (Barry, 2025). Such changes can incur risks, such as negative impact on unity of command or efficiency of deployment, diminished cohesion at combat unit level.



These must be counterbalanced against any foreseen benefits of the proposed restructuring at CC level.

## Reviewing defence personnel capacity

On the complex threat background, reforms have been initiated in European militaries in order to ensure flexible personnel policies for enlarging the active and reserve pool and to be fast deployable. The UK initiative for streamlining the zig-zag career paths of active and reserve personnel, allowing for easier lateral movements between active and reserve duty or the reserve pool is another indicator of how national armies, while observing increase and diversification of threats recognize the need for flexibility in creating the potential for a pool as wide and diverse as possible of resources and for the need of extending defence capacity to the “whole of society approach”.

The Netherlands is implementing a multi-layer strategy for upholding and developing its fighting and military capacity in terms of materiel, personnel and technology, while observing specific conflicts of priorities (Ministerie van Defensie, 2025, b; Popa, 2025). Novel solutions are put forward in order to increase personnel attrition and degrees of defence and deployment readiness. Fighting capacity is thus represented by the cumulation effect of material readiness, personnel readiness, digital readiness and autonomy (Defence State Secretary Tuinman, 2026).

Particular urgency is observed in the cyber defence domain and air force in terms of personnel, that requires novel solutions. A pool of defence reservists is also needed in the cyber domain. The creation of the pool is not sufficient in itself, knowing how know how becomes fast obsolete if not kept up to date through regular training. Moreover, just as exercising is vital to regular troops, defence cyber specialists need to exercise their military cyber capacity in scenario settings in order to best use them when necessary in real life settings (Minister of Defence Brekelmans, House of Representatives, Commission for Defence, 2026). The attrition of specialized human resources such as airplane pilots requires novel and adaptive solutions. State Secretary for Defence Tuinman (Nieuwe Ankers, 2026) indicates the need for creating a pool of resources in the case of airplane pilots that is shared between the Air Force (defence side) and KLM (the civilian national flight company) in order to allow for optimisation of resources allocation.

The Netherlands observes a wide national programme for developing its military personnel reserve capacity – the Dutch Defence National Resilience programme. During the programme individuals can go through basic/ initial military training in a scheme supported by their employers or academic institutions (the latter through accumulation of credit points for following the programme) or join the programme on their own. The programme develops transversal skills such as leadership, endurance and resilience that can be used in civilian activities, thus benefiting the civilian employer or educational institution as well. The National

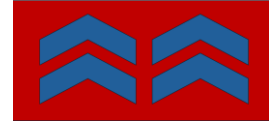


Resilience Training comprises a 10 week military training programme that includes the acquiring of military skills and know how such as weapons handling and compass use and military law knowledge acquisition (Defensie, 2026, a). The programme develops operational military skills for field work. By going through the programme, participants develop unique military skills, strengthen physical and mental resilience and (as final goal) contribute to the security and stability of the society (Ministerie van Defensie, 2025). National sentiment for participating in the national defence effort is stimulated and reinforced by the participation of members of the Dutch Royal House in military education and training (Defensie, 2026, b).

Unlike the campaign of “Prepare yourself for a crisis situation, the Dutch Defence National Resilience programme doesn’t make use of the word “war” in its communication materials. However, this is inherent to the military profile. The inclusion of elements of military law in the 10 weeks intensive programme is notable. As part of future structures having the government backed right to exercise violence and handle firearms, reservists needs to be acquainted with the understandings of *jus in bellum* sanctioned behaviour. In the same time, modern day warfare remarks intrinsic and reflective questions regarding behaviour in war, in particular with the deployment of disruptive technology and modern weapons, and the mentioned distinction between combatants and non-combatants. These aspects raise questions regarding the depth and extent of the compulsory knowledge that needs to be acquired.

## Military – civilian symbiosis

Yet again, prolonged war and conflict such the one in Ukraine exemplifies in practice what “whole of society” approach towards defence means. Reports from foreign military experts on having observed the developments in Ukraine since 2014 report that in Ukraine the military – civilian distinction is blurred, with civilians advising the military on resilience and preparedness following development of events on the ground, and with the civilian population filling in for the needed war effort when military action halted (The Telegraph, 2026). Research on war time resilience in Ukraine also indicates the growing and coexistence of the civilian and military in seamless structures, with civilians aiding the military in different ways. Previous reports on the war in Ukraine indicated towards the blurring of the demarcation between combatants and non-combatants, especially on the backdrop of the phenomenon of the civilian population feeding information useful for the war effort to the military via electronic means and online platforms. This has raised reflexive questions regarding degrees of civilian contribution or participation in the war effort. However, the following essential point must be noted: this interwoven fabric is not the result of a centralised, agency driven initiative of creating such an interdependent structure, but rather the result of an organic phenomenon that developed and matured on the go, of a country going through and being affected in its whole by prolonged war. While lessons learned during war and conflict can be transposed in government led resilience initiatives implemented in other locations during peacetime,



observed resistance and panic reactions within the population in the cases where such programmes were implemented in several European countries indicate towards the need for a phased approach and, more importantly, towards the conscientisation of the cumulative effect of resilience behaviour maturing in time and against the backdrop of crisis, that, in some cases, can have the function of leading to whole of society resilience exceeding in volume and – as important if not more so – in diversity of practices than any centralised and beforehand planned campaign. This voluntary character is here important as it can be a better incentive than following a set of instructions. To mind here comes another principle – that having a common enemy strengthens alliances against that enemy – thus also inter-network aid behaviour that contributes to the fight against the common enemy or threat.

Example of anticipatory government led initiatives of creating military- civilian resilience networks from the Netherlands include developing: a robust and redundant civilian – military warning chain in case of hybrid and military threat, signalling networks, resilience and shelter places within communities entities for fighting disinformation (NCTV, b).

The symbiotic relationship between military and civilians is observed in everyday life contexts in urban environments in Ukraine. Seeing (young) couples in urban environments where one partner is wearing the military uniform (most often the man) and the other partner is wearing civilian clothing is not uncommon. Facial expressions and body posture indicate appreciation of the moment. In cases where reunions of such couples are observed in the vicinity of transportation nodes such as train stations in large urban environments, the assumption that these reunions are taking place during permission periods away from the front lines is funded. By extrapolation, this symbiotic relationship is present in other household units where at least one member is incorporated in the army.

As a case of lessons learned, making the military more visible within society contributes to consolidating civilian – military relationship, ease the acceptance of potential conflict while proactive reassurances of defence posture are given to the population. This in turn can ease acceptance of costs that have to be incurred for defence needs.

## Interconnected resilient infrastructure

Power projection remains vital in modern military strategy. The capacity to rapidly and safely deploy troops and materiel across vast distances remains as important in the age of manned and unmanned aerial systems domination of the battlefield. Land and water military transport is less prone to enemy detection in comparison with air transport and can rely on different means of concealment.

Due to encountered difficulties in terms of military corridors for fast deployment and transportation across the European space, the development of a Schengen military mobility



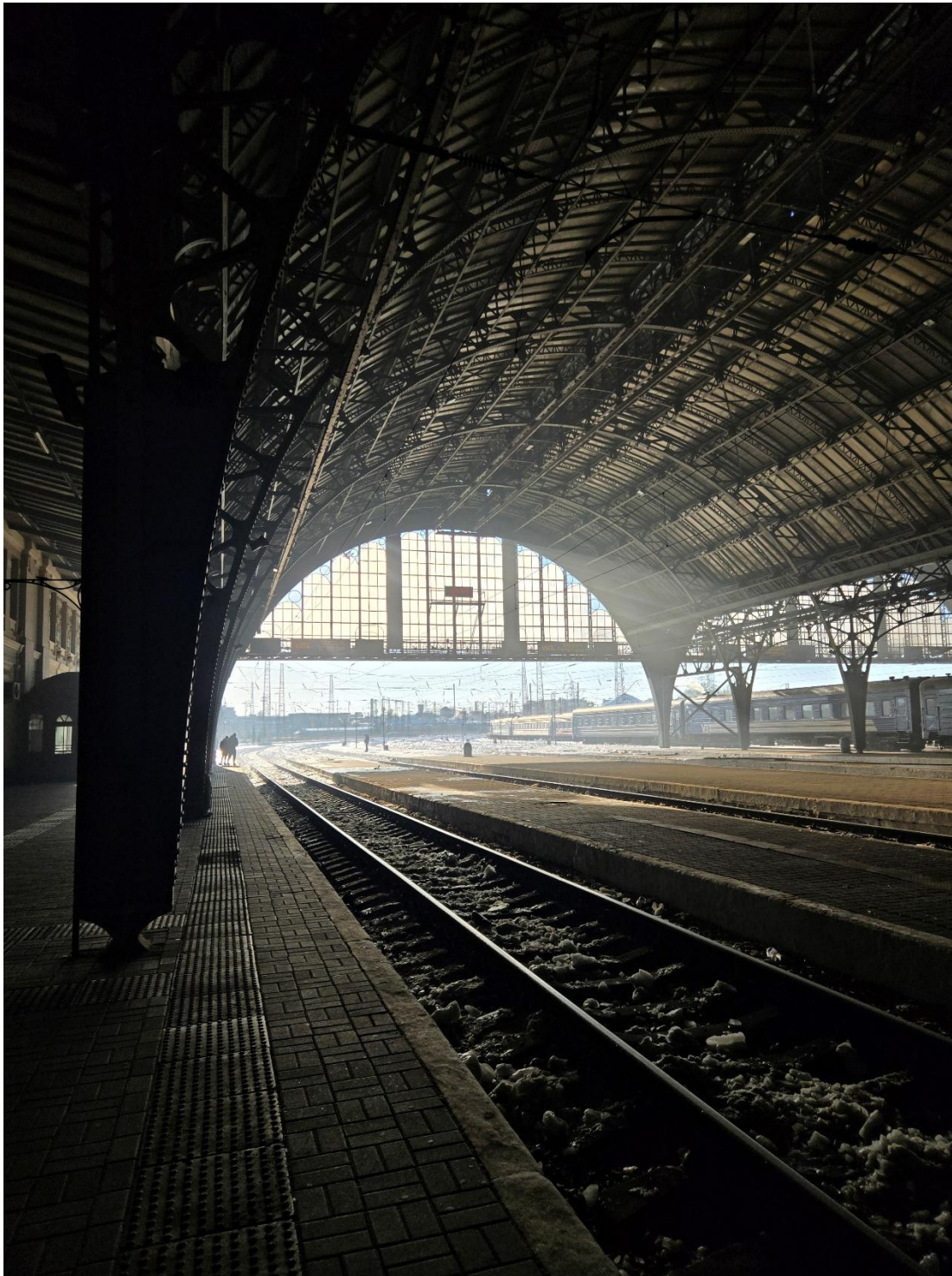
space – and its transposition into legislation have been overarching agenda points in the EU. These harmonisation exercises are accompanied by national initiatives of transposing needs into implemented actions and legislation, such as plans regarding defence corridors (NCTV, b). Military transport via railways presents particular challenges of administrative nature: they have a lower priority than civilian transportation, while in practical terms, mission critical deliveries still very much dependent on civilian infrastructure. In a forward facing approach, European governments are implementing projects for developing MEDEVAC transportation via railways. Alternative ways of raising priority levels for military transport via railway are sought. In the Netherlands this includes using private train operators in addition to the national provider (NCTV, b), with the constraint of having to use the same infrastructure.

Despite vulnerability towards attacks due to immobility and difficulty to protect in its whole from attacks by drones and missiles during war or sabotage during pre-conflict contexts, the railway system remains vital infrastructure in both pre-conflict and conflict situations for civilian evacuation, movement of troops and equipment. The railway system is also less affected by extreme weather conditions in comparison with the (conflict stricken) road system. In Ukraine, according to public communication of the Ukrainian railways, since the beginning of the invasion, 4 million people were evacuated via the railway system.



Lviv train station in below freezing point temperatures, Ukraine, 2026.

Source: The Author



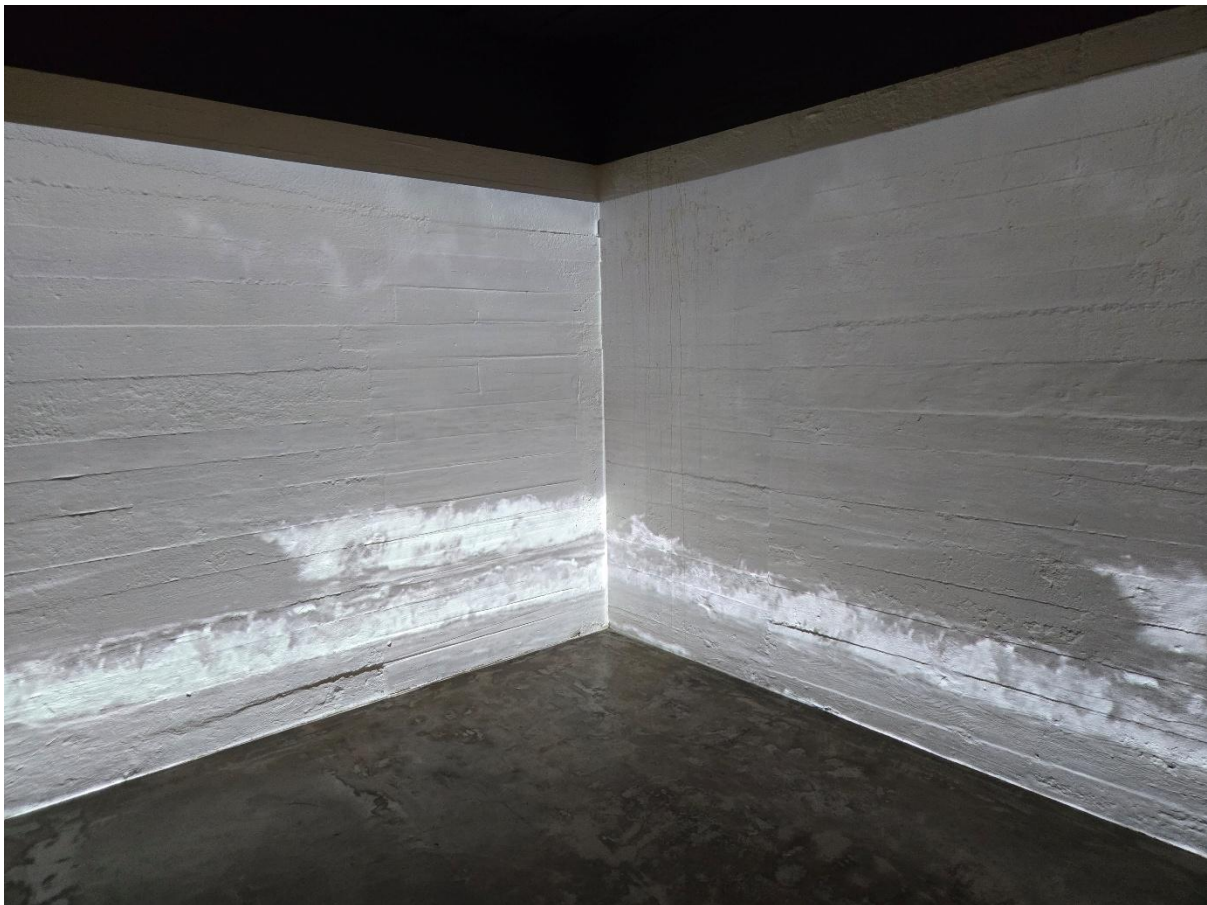
Lviv train station in below freezing point temperatures, Ukraine, 2026.

Source: The Author



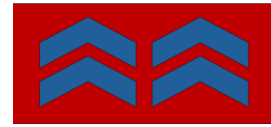
## Resilience infrastructure: defence of water and land borders

Countries having both land and sea borders need to develop and implement resilience strategies corresponding to the different settings. The coastline of the North Sea is where windmill farms provide for large part of the energy production and will continue to be a strategic energy source in the future (Ministerie van Infrastructuur en Waterstaat, 2025). The maritime zone represents additional strategic value for vital infrastructure in the data & internet sector, being the place where thousands of kilometres of cables for data and internet traffic cover the seabed. With the Netherlands serving as entry point for Europe via maritime transportation, the North Sea is of strategic value not only for the Netherlands and the UK but for all of Europe. Implementing projects for increasing energy production by developing small modular nuclear reactors in the region in partnership between the Netherlands and the United Kingdom further ensures regional energy independence. The defence of the physical and digital infrastructure in the North Sea is included in the National Programme for Protection of the North Sea Infrastructure (NCTV, 2025, b). Military transport via water is also further improved, with initiatives for implementing “assured access” for military assets in Dutch ports.



Museum Engelandvaarder, Noordwijk aan Zee, The Netherlands

Source: Author, 2025

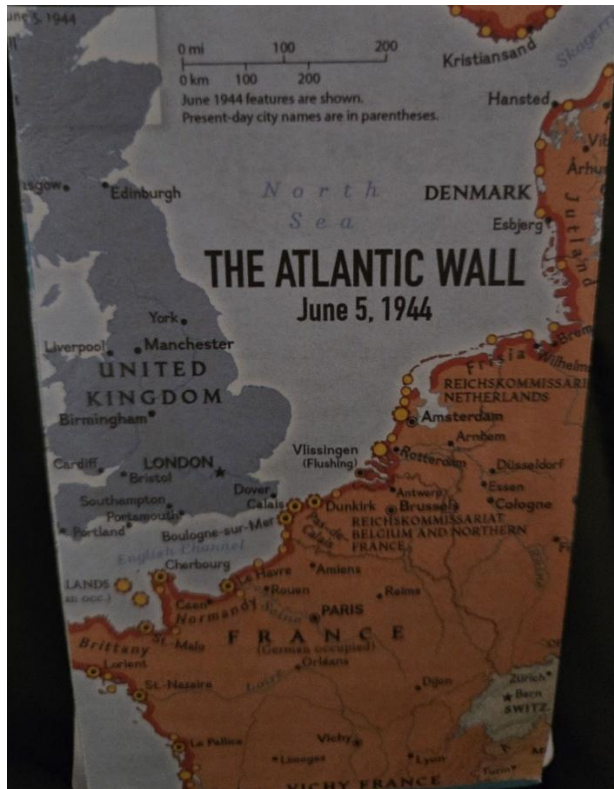
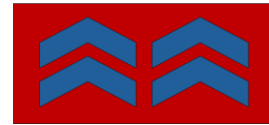


Considerable increase in suspicious behaviour of vessels in the North Sea has been reported in recent years, both by the Netherlands and the UK, including vessels with illogical movement patterns, suspected of conducting espionage under the cover of innocuous activities such as research of fishing. The case of the Yantar vessel has made the international news on several occasions recently in this regard. Sabotage of underwater cables is another activity observing increase in both manifestation and potential risk, with cable cutting due to anchor dragging being challenging to openly label as act of sabotage.



The North Sea defence line from WWII along the coast, consisting of bunkers and reinforcement positions – called The Atlantic Wall – is still to be seen today.

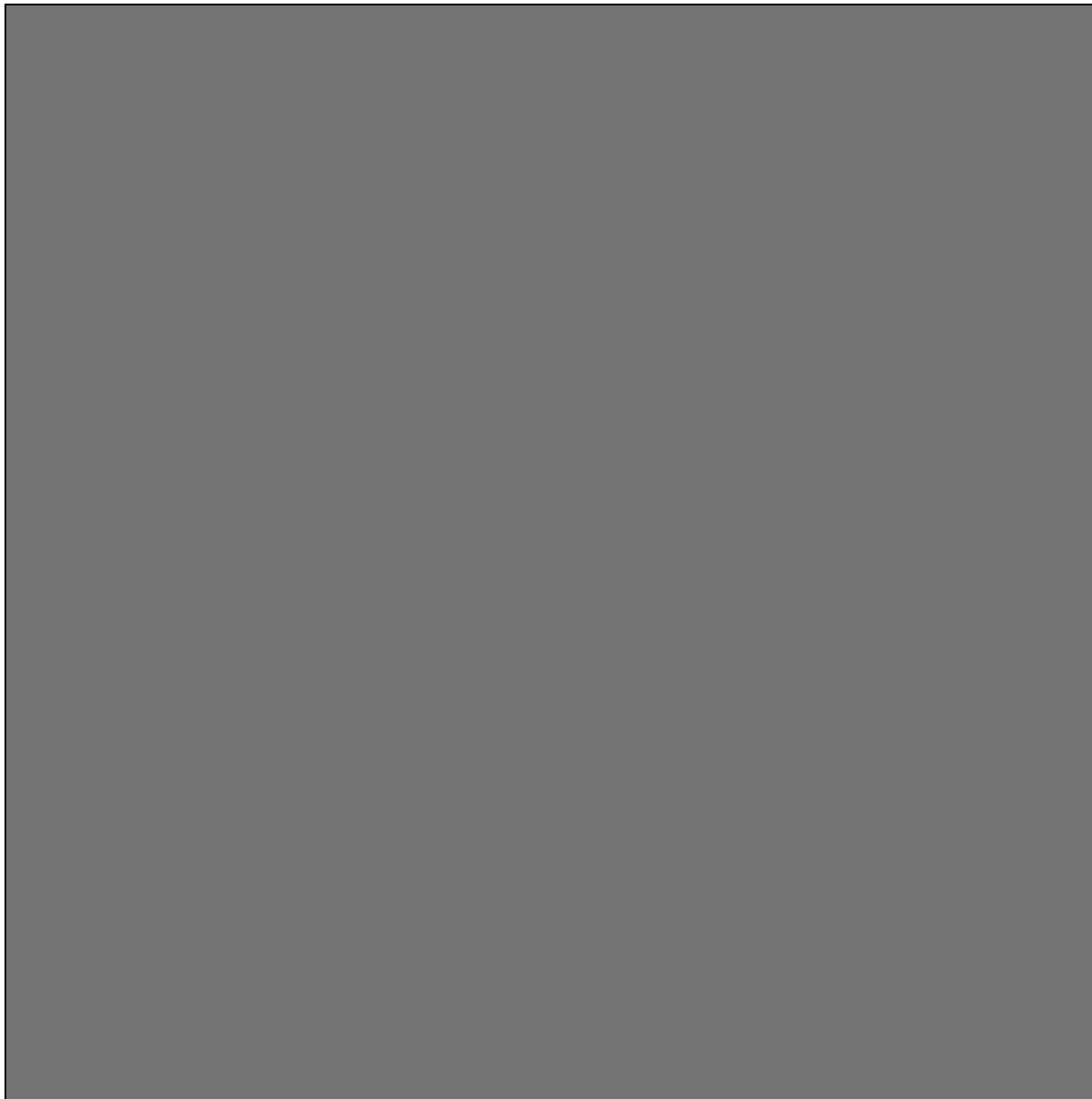
Vestiges of the Atlantikwaal;  
Hoek van Holland, The  
Netherlands. Source: Author;  
2025



The Atlantic Wall, June 1944.  
[Bezoekaanatlantikwall.nl](http://Bezoekaanatlantikwall.nl)

The system of dikes in the Netherlands has been used in the past during conflict for the systematic flooding of the land in order to stop enemy advancement. Given length and coverage of waterways system, number of privately owned vessels of different sizes and the culture of professional or recreational sailing, mobility and resilience via the water represents a strategic element in overall defence capacities. In the Second World War the North Sea route provided connection to the UK during occupation.

Parts of The Atlantic Wall used as defence system in WWII and constituting of a line of 3000 km of reinforcements along the coast line is still to be seen today in some parts of the Netherlands as example of border defence. While the modern war relies heavily on UAVs, in high intensity wars, land lines are still protected by layered hard defence lines and defensive systems comprised on dragon's teeth, bob wire and trench systems.



## Communicating threats to the population

Public documents of European governments on the need for resilience and the observed threats to national interests observe a difference in tone of alarm regarding messaging towards the general public on the dangers of these foreign threats and chances of conflict. The UK has had one of the strongest wording in terms of resilience needed for facing anticipated threats, declaring the need to “Increase national warfighting readiness” in her 2025 Strategic Defence Review (UK MOD, 2025). The difference between the IOB (2025) and the SDR (2025) is notable in this regard: the EU had long focused on efforts for harmonising organisational structures, mini lateral diplomacy, and multi-lateral dialogue. This procedural focus is both



observed and attested by practices, negotiations and documents put forward by the EU in the last years. The difference in messaging is not only a reflection of the observed or perceived threats in the external environment but also a strategic choice for internal communication and anticipated short to medium term public actions.

Two examples of nationwide resilience campaigns in view of preparation for conflict or war are from the Netherlands and Sweden. The latest publication of the Dutch government on resilience building was distributed nationally in the winter of 2025-2026. The Dutch national wide programme “Prepare yourself for a crisis situation” (Bereid je voor op een noodsituatie) mentions needed preparations for the eventuality of war: “The chance of crisis or war is increasing”; “despite the fact that the Netherlands does everything to prevent war, our country can still be involved [in war]” (NCTV, 2025, a). The measures put forward in the brochure contribute to a gradual build-up of resilience, introducing a phased approach to preparation for eventual crisis or conflict. The brochure contains a separate planning instrument with the vital information that citizens need to have at hand during a crisis situation (location of gathering, inventory of persons in the household and contact details) and that enables resilience in terms of analogue alternatives for storing vital information and serves a nudging function for mentally going through the steps required during an emergency.

A comparison with the Swedish equivalent of the brochure – *If crisis or war comes* – by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (2024) reveals a stark contrast in terms of the messaging and language used and in terms of level or active involvement of the general population not only to resist through a conflict but to bring active resistance towards opposing forces and actively participate in country defence. The Swedish approach to total defence specifically addresses the obligations of all citizens, both in the country and abroad, to defend the country in times of conflict, “the total defence duty”. The Swedish brochure includes a set of wider and more specific measures of self-sufficiency and self-help in case of different crisis, while focusing in detail on the case of war, including the use of air strikes, nuclear weapons, pathogens, and increasing defence capabilities through overall readiness to engage in the defence efforts. One also observes a stark discrepancy in tone between Dutch official government documents detailing multilayered resilience programmes and the official written materials that were distributed to the population, with a considerable dilution of level of warning.

The Swedish brochure puts forward these measures “in the case of war or the threat of war” thus phasing levels of threats and corresponding preparedness actions. Both brochures mention keeping the book in a safe place, in anticipation of the need to re-read the information when actually needed in the crisis situation.

The resilience campaigns in Ukraine during the war, distributed through mass media channels, attest to the need of reiterations and adaptations of the official messaging regarding actions to be taken at individual household and higher organisational unit levels (neighbourhood, city, region).



## National resilience programmes

Programmes for civil preparedness for conflict – more than just resilience in situations of war of crisis – i.e. are becoming wider across Europe. These go beyond being prepared for undergoing a period of basic services deprivation in an acute situation as the 72 hours self-sufficiency programmes communicated by the different public authorities to the population. Some resilience programmes address the development of the skills needed for actually engaging in the potential conflict and its consequences. Resilience campaigns thus take on different forms and come in through different channels: in the Netherlands the national delivery of the printed booklet “Prepare yourself for a crisis situation” was advertised long before actual delivery. Mass media programmes on main stream television further develop the whole of society resilience programme, by gradually introducing the potential of spreading conflict and its consequences in society, and making other national resilience programmes known to the own public. These resilience programmes vary in nature of measures, depending on proximity to conflict and collective memory of conflict or history background. In the Netherlands, programs for first help in case of emergency and reacting to a crisis include simulations and reenactment of real scenarios, targeting different age groups. Poland is implementing civil resilience programmes where citizens develop skills for combat medicine while Sweden observes the actions of developing shooting skills through the proposed opening of new shooting ranges.

Psychological resilience is specifically addressed in the Swedish approach as a measure of countering foreign disinformation. Recommendations for managing emotional reactions are only briefly addressed in the written material, including the limitation of news intake (that can be linked to the psychological resilience approach). Reflecting the polder model, the Dutch programme for civil resilience focuses in a much larger part on the social aspect of preparing for a crisis. This can be explained by cultural differences as well as historic exposure to potential armed conflict and in time developed and internalised mechanisms of coping and survival, as well as constraints imposed by geography, meaning high population density overlapping with the absence or difficulty of relocation or spreading possibility across a wider landscape allowing for easier or longer term subsistence. This conditioning calls for different anticipatory approaches, thus being not only a choice of approach but a solution for the faced concrete constraints.

The multicultural character of a society becomes a variable in overall social resilience during long term crisis (Popa, 2025), and thus must first be analysed in terms of potential for disruption and afterwards addressed in packages of actions. While the attention to social interaction around the topic of preparedness for crisis does have concrete benefits: diminishing volume of online communication when crisis does come and decongestion of communication networks through proactive planning and resilience measures thus diminishing impact of potential disinformation and destabilisation campaigns during the crisis, it bears the risk of signalling the fault lines that can be exploited (based on deductions of the need for management of psychological reactions) and paradoxically, due to predominance of informal approach – underestimates the seriousness of the scenario put forward and the needed preparedness levels. It



does represent a way of preventing social unrest that might spark during crisis and further exacerbate it, if serving a nudging function to bridge social gaps in an anticipatory manner.

By cultivating resistance at society level through the motto “Together we stand stronger”, the Dutch resilience programme stimulates an anticipatory depressurizing function for when crisis does come: decreasing vulnerabilities and preventing cumulation of vulnerabilities that would lead to chocking points in the system. The development and reliance on first level support at social level presents several advantages: triage of urgencies: cases that can be handled and emergencies that can be prevented at social level handled by first level – proximity circle and reliance on crisis support points at neighbourhood level.

## Urban resilience

Demographic density becomes a system vulnerability when resources become limited during crisis and conflict and when the possibility to decongest urban areas or resources network is limited.



The Netherlands under occupation during the Second World War. Museum Engelandvaarder, Noordwijk aan Zee, The Netherlands. Source: Author, 2025.



Wars of attrition change the meaning of resilience, with energy, heating and water supply systems being pushed to their limits. Countries with high density urban areas thus face additional challenges in terms of resilience during extra pressure on critical systems. The energy crisis in Ukraine in the winter of 2025-2026 stands as example for the importance of having this relocation potential in order to spread the population (and subsequently energy consumption) across a wider geography. In January 2026 the mayor of Kyiv asked the inhabitants of the capital to temporary move outside the city or to the country side, where alternative sources of power and heating are available. The call was made in order to diminish the strain on the energy networks brought by enemy air strikes (Denisova & Culverwell, 2026). While occupation, armed conflict and the front line urban areas observing destruction of living units in different degrees have led to high number of internally displaced individuals, the conflict and general (male) incorporation has normalised network reliance for temporary accommodation and short/medium term lodging patterns. These reiterations of relocations on different distances and for different time periods, while indicating patterns of disruption, coagulate to form national survival and resilience mechanisms. Consumption levels can thus be spread out. Formal systems for evacuations of civilians are implemented in urban areas close to the front line. In large urban settings such as Kharkiv, communication regarding “free evacuation service for civilians from combat areas or dangerous territory” is done through telephone signal localisation and is reiterated periodically. Similar alert initiatives are implemented in European countries, such as the NL Alert app sending messaging on emergencies in the vicinity of the mobile device in question.

Urban resilience programmes implemented in Ukraine include water supply points that can provide drinking water during interruptions of the centralised system.



Water supply point for the population. Kharkiv  
Source: Author, 2026



Drinking water for Kharkiv.  
Source: Author, 2026

These supply points are often found between residential buildings, in points both accessible but not conspicuous. In the scenario of long time interruption of water supply, reliance of the emergency water supply would lead to forming of agglomerations around this points, making them potential targets for enemy attacks. Previous strikes on post offices in urban areas near the front lines are an indication

of this risk, as the postal service is intensely relied upon in Ukraine during the war. Surrounding such points by protection walls most often used for the protection of military objectives indicates the blurring of the civilian. military objectives distinction and defensive behaviour internalizing past attack patterns.



Water supply point for the population.  
Kharkiv, Ukraine.  
Source: Author, 2026



The Dutch resilience programme includes the recommendations for all households to have a 72 hours emergency package in house, including 3 liters of water per individual per day. Seen that the Dutch population relies on drinking water from the public system with delivery in all households, acquisition of water goes against a proud tradition of consuming high quality drinking water from the household faucet. While public sources of drinking water are available, in natural habitats as well, they are not implemented as an alternative source for providing for the entire population or signalled as such. Similar to neighbourhood level crisis resilience points proposed in the Dutch resilience programmes, in a forward facing initiative, drinking water provision points could be deployed in urban settings in scenario testing exercising in order to observe efficiency and eventual bottle necks.

## Concluding thoughts

In European countries where resilience awareness initiatives were introduced, despite observed panic reactions of some parts of the population especially in the older generation towards the programmes raising awareness for the risk of crisis and war, gradual build-up of preparedness is needed.

With the “total defence” and “whole of society” approaches gaining ground in European countries, the line between civilian and military participation in the defence of the state becomes blurred. The 4 years of war of attrition in Ukraine have demonstrated the need for addressing and incorporating resilience measures at different levels and through different systems.

During the acute phase of conflict, distributing and accessing resources through social networks becomes a formal way of depressurizing overburdened centralised systems such as the energy and heating networks during the winter season. This requires planning at different organisational units: city; metropolis; region and requires a note of attention in terms of the time span in which such solutions would be accepted by the population. This is due to the fact that although encouraging civilian interaction and the creation of resilience networks, including hybrid forms of military – civilian structures and forms of involvement, Western approaches to resilience do not replace economic resilience with network reliance. The importance of economic resilience is still very much stressed in official documents on national resilience, at individual level, sector level, critical sector level (for example the Law on Resilience for Defence and Security related Industry, NCTV, 2025, b.) and national level. Individual households are encouraged to implement initiatives for ensuring resilience during the first phase of a crisis, companies are encouraged to strengthen their economic stance and portfolio so as to avoid coming under foreign acquisition and critical sector companies observe government oversight in order to prevent or control such acquisitions.

If territories market by internal displacement patterns due to war observe more flexible housing patterns, displacement caused by war observes particularities, with individuals choosing to remain in their households under foreign occupation, for different reasons. As such, the



questions of choice or need in terms of displacement or relocation must not be simplified and assumed as implicit.

In contexts with high population density and geographical constraints, urban resilience is of particular interest, with the question of resilience housing in focus. On the issue of urban housing resilience, in the Netherlands, known resistance towards any form of compromise on housing conditions in terms of co-habitation forms indicates an expression not only of preference for economic resilience but a limitation of what is considered acceptable in terms of social resilience. It indicates the choice of preserving a way of life. The fact that the living space crisis is long being solved by the construction of new buildings, not by the implementation of new forms of living reflects the consistent long term behaviour of the population of rejecting any form of compromise on what is considered *the Dutch way of life*. It is not mobility that is rejected. On the contrary, the Dutch population is highly mobile in terms of housing in response to relocation for work thanks to its mortgage system, that allows transfer of the mortgage to another property. These patterns rather reflect the predominance in the Dutch society of the bridging social capital, across groups boundaries, and the predominance of weak ties. This is where the difference between bonding and bridging social capital put forward by Putnam (2000) must be incorporated into resilience programmes targeted at the specific population and its psychological profile.

In states that maintain their course in terms of what makes their way of life and show consistency of espoused beliefs even during changes of governments, how national crisis are solved reflects a set of internalised practices and systems of values developed historically. The choices made when solving national problems reflect national identity. As such, the transfer of any good practices or lessons learned from contexts that have different views and internalised practices of solving national problems must be considered in terms of fit with one's own state character.

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**Forward facing approach to consolidating and integrating resilience capabilities.**



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**About the author.**

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