RESILIENT BY DESIGN

LESSONS FROM LITHUANIA FOR THE NETHERLANDS

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MANAGEMENTSAMENVATTING

WEERBAARHEID IN EEN NIEUW VEILIGHEIDSTIJDPERK: LESSEN UIT LITOUWEN VOOR NEDERLAND

De toenemende dreiging vanuit Rusland en een onvoldoende mate van voorbereiding op grootschalige crises, in het bijzonder van militaire aard, vormen de aanleiding voor dit rapport. Het vergelijkt de Nederlandse en Litouwse aanpak van maatschappelijke weerbaarheid, met als doel concrete lessen te trekken voor Nederlands beleid. Nederland staat op een keerpunt: het idee van een 'weerbare samenleving' krijgt steeds meer aandacht, maar kent weinig historische basis of culturele verankering. Decennia van vrede, geopolitieke stabiliteit en decentralisatie hebben geleid tot een samenleving die sterk is in preventie, maar minder in staat blijkt om gezamenlijk crisis te lijf te gaan. De coronapandemie liet daar al tekenen van zien, maar veel van die inzichten verdwijnen inmiddels weer naar de achtergrond. In Litouwen daarentegen, waar eeuwen van Russische bezetting sterk doorsijpelen in het collectieve geheugen, is het besef van existentiële dreigingen diepgeworteld. Voorbereiding voor crises en oorlog is er geen taboe, maar een bron van trots waar burgers en beleidsmakers kracht uit putten.

Dit rapport is gebaseerd op literatuuronderzoek, beleidsanalyse en gesprekken met beleidsmakers in Nederland en Litouwen. Het tracht geen volledige evaluatie van beider landen hun weerbaarheidsstrategie te geven. In plaats daarvan richt het rapport zich op elementen die relevant zijn voor hervormingen in Nederland, met name rond militaire en hybride dreigingen. Vier dimensies staan centraal in de vergelijking: maatschappelijke context, beleidsprioriteiten, juridische en crisisstructuur, en risicocommunicatie en -educatie. Op basis van deze analyse worden zes samenhangende aanbevelingen gedaan, specifiek afgestemd op de Nederlandse context. Ze zijn bedoeld om de stap te zetten van denken naar doen, met als uitgangspunt dat weerbaarheid geen exclusieve taak is van de overheid, maar een verantwoordelijkheid van de samenleving als geheel.

HOOFDBEVINDINGEN

- **Culturele grondslag van weerbaarheid:** Litouwen bouwt voort op een geschiedenis van bezetting en verzet, wat leidt tot een gedeeld gevoel van urgentie en saamhorigheid. In Nederland ontbreekt zo'n historische ervaring, wat ten koste gaat van het publieke bewustzijn en de bereidheid om zich op crises voor te bereiden.
- **Strategische ontwikkeling en prioriteiten:** Litouwen beschikt over een doordacht en gelaagd weerbaarheidsbeleid met concrete doelstellingen en actieve burgerparticipatie. In Nederland is de strategie nog in ontwikkeling: de ambities zijn breed, maar de uitvoering beperkt en de betrokkenheid van burgers gering.
- **Bestuurlijke organisatie:** Litouwen werkt vanuit een sterk gecentraliseerd crisisstelsel met duidelijke aansturing en gecoördineerde mobilisatieplannen. De Nederlandse aanpak is juist versnipperd en gedecentraliseerd, met uiteenlopende plannen, beperkte afstemming en ontoereikende communicatie.
- **Publieke betrokkenheid en educatie:** In Litouwen wordt breed geïnvesteerd in training en bewustwording, vanaf jonge leeftijd en over sectoren heen. In Nederland zijn deze inspanningen nog in ontwikkeling, ondanks een groeiend gevoel van dreiging onder de bevolking.

AANBEVELINGEN

1. **Vertel een nieuw verhaal over wat er op het spel staat:** Lanceer een nationale campagne die appelleert aan typisch Nederlandse waarden zoals vrijheid, gemeenschap en traditie, en zo draagvlak creëert voor weerbaarheid.
2. **Bouw historisch besef op via onderwijs:** Breng de dreigingen van oorlog en onderdrukking dichterbij door meer aandacht te geven aan autoritaire regimes en conflicten in het geschiedenis- en maatschappijonderwijs.
3. **Train en onderwijs holistisch vanaf een jonge leeftijd:** Ontwikkel een breed en samenhangend trainingsprogramma voor scholen, burgers, werknemers en vitale sectoren, te beginnen op de basisschool. Door herhaling en vroege blootstelling aan crisisvoorbereiding wordt weerbaarheid een integraal onderdeel wordt van de samenleving.
4. **Plan tijdig voor en handel direct tijdens de 'grijze zone':** Stel juridische en procedurele kaders op voor de fase tussen vrede en noodtoestand, zodat tijdige besluitvorming gegarandeerd is, het democratisch proces gewaarborgd blijft en eventuele civiele mobilisatie mogelijk wordt.
5. **Zet strakke lijnen uit vanuit het Rijk, laat lagere bestuurslagen deze invullen:** Standaardiseer planningsformats voor alle overheidslagen, zodat samenwerking, interoperabiliteit en daadkracht tijdens crises verbeteren.
6. **Plan de details, en neem de hele samenleving daarin mee:** Zorg dat planners rekening houden met tweede- en derde-orde effecten waardoor de voorziening van essentiële diensten gewaarborgd wordt. Betrek ook private en maatschappelijke partijen bij de voorbereidingen.

INTRODUCTION

A renewed, undeniable military threat emanating from Russia and the realisation that the Netherlands is under-equipped to deal with that threat have put the concept of resilience high on the agenda of policymakers. Yet much of the work to be done remains uncharted train. Particularly the notion that *the whole of society* should be prepared for and be able to respond to a (military) crisis is a novelty, both for policymakers and the Dutch population. Save the Covid-19 pandemic (which is fading from collective memory at an increasing rate[1]), the Netherlands has not faced crises on a national scale for generations, and it has not had to seriously consider a domestic military threat since the fall of the Iron Curtain. At the policy-level, this is reflected in decades of military budget cuts, the absence of a national crisis plan for military threats and a patchwork of regulations and reports on crisis management. Among the population, it is reflected in low levels of crisis preparation and risk awareness. For the Netherlands to create a truly resilient society, it is starting from virtually nil, and a long road lays ahead.

A wholly different picture emerges from Lithuania, a country that regained independence from Moscow only 35 years ago and which has been grappling with the Russian peril for centuries. In the context of crisis preparedness, the constant threat of Russia once more crossing the border takes precedence over all others. Accordingly, crisis and contingency planning has been a priority since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, and the population remains keenly aware of the risks emanating from the East. Both at the political and societal level, this has translated to robust planning and a relatively high degree of crisis preparedness. Lithuanian society thus provides an insightful model for resilience-building.

This report therefore compares Dutch resilience strategies to Lithuanian ones in order to identify lessons for the Netherlands to apply. To do so, it first outlines both countries' resilience strategies separately, touching on the societal resilience contexts, official resilience strategies, legal frameworks and crisis structures, and risk communication and education. Subsequently, a comparative analysis is provided to highlight key differences between both countries' strategies. Based on that analysis, the report ends with five policy recommendations for the Netherlands.

Before commencing, however, several scope-related notes are in order. First, This report does not intend to be a catch-all overview of Lithuanian or Dutch resilience strategies, nor is it an exhaustive evaluation of either countries' strategies – references are provided to documents to those ends. The report intends to succinctly provide a policy-oriented comparison of both countries' approaches. Second, the report evaluates Dutch resilience efforts *in the context of Lithuania*. Thus, only those parts of the Dutch strategy are included that warrant comparison to Lithuanian strategies, and they are only evaluated insofar there exists room for improvement based on the Lithuanian model. Third, and in extension of the point prior, analytical focus will predominantly lay on resilience against military threats, as this stands front and centre in Lithuania's resilience approach and is arguably the domain where most can be gained in the Netherlands. The bulk of this report, albeit tailored to the military domain, may nonetheless be applied to other resilience domains and its recommendations are hence interoperable with the *all-hazard* resilience approach envisioned by the Dutch government.

DEFINITIONS

This report uses the term 'resilience' in reference to crisis resilience at the societal level. In the broadest sense of the word, resilience refers to an objects' ability to return to its original state after a disruption[2]. It then follows that societal crisis resilience is a society's ability to return to the greatest

[1] See e.g.: Brown, N. R. (2021). *The possible effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the contents and organization of autobiographical memory: A Transition-Theory perspective.* Cognition, 212, 104694;

[2] Cambridge English Dictionary, 2024

extent possible to the *status quo ante* during or after disruption by a crisis[3]. Because of the increased attention for societal resilience in the post-2022 European security landscape, however, the definition has been contested[4] and expanded[5]. Yet for the purposes of this report the orthodox definition suffices. The working definition of societal resilience is hence as follows: *'a society's capacity to prepare for, respond to, continue functioning during and return to its state prior to a crisis'.* For the sake of practicality the remainder of this report simply uses 'resilience' instead of 'societal resilience' or 'crisis resilience'.

Furthermore, the concept of *whole of society defence* is frequently mentioned in conjunction with resilience, but often in the absence of conceptual clarification. Although not synonymous, this report considers them effectively two sides of the same coin. If resilience is a society's ability to cope with a crisis, and *whole of society defence* refers to a society's ability to respond to a military threat, then *whole of society defence* is simply a concrete operationalisation of resilience in the military domain. However, exact technicalities and semantics are not the subject of this report. What matters is that for a successful *whole of society defence*, society must also be resilient in the non-military context – the two cannot be examined in a vacuum[6]. All recommendations provided by this report related to resilience efforts are therefore equally applicable to those policymakers concerned with the *whole of society defence/approach*.

Lastly, resilience should not be mistaken for the average citizen's or the general population's resilience. If a *whole of society* approach is the objective, then the whole of society is the subject of resilience efforts. Thus, the wholesale resilience efforts that this report considers also include crisis structures and planning at the national and sub-national planning, as well as businesses, NGOs, local communities and other stakeholders.

METHODOLOGY

To research both countries' resilience strategies, a combination of desk research, document analysis and interviews was used. The desk research and document analysis focused on publicly available policy documents to establish an outline of the institutional, legal and policy frameworks that dictate each country's resilience approach. References to those documents are provided throughout the report.

Additionally, interviews were conducted with *twelve policymakers*, seven Lithuanian and five Dutch, involved in resilience building. They were either directly affiliated with a ministry responsible for (a part of) resilience strategies, or an NGO which works on resilience. The interviewees have been anonymised in this report to encourage honest assessment of current strategies.

The interviews focused on both governments' crisis preparation, planning and management structures, as well as their populations' levels of crisis preparedness. Several interviews were predominantly factual in nature, focusing on legislation and policies, while others where more reflective, critically assessing and challenging both countries' approach.

[3] Haavik, T. K. (2020). *Societal resilience – Clarifying the concept and upscaling the scope*. Safety Science, 132, 104964. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssci.2020.104964

[4] Global resilience report | Deloitte UK. (2022, October 19). Deloitte United Kingdom.

[5] Eken, M., Lucas, R., Hoorens, S., & Nederveen, F. (2024, October 1*). Strengthening societal resilience: A perspective on strategic priorities for the Netherlands amidst geopolitical tensions*. RAND.

[6] The notion that resilience is not confined to one crisis domain is the rationale behind the *all-hazard approach* that is gaining popularity among policymakers all across Europe.

DUTCH RESILIENCE STRATEGIES

SOCIETAL CONTEXT

The relative absence of nation-wide crises in modern Dutch history is a double edged sword as regards resilience. On the one hand, it demonstrates a combination of proficiency in crisis prevention at the policy level, an effective approach to diplomacy that mitigates geopolitical risk and, admittedly, a degree of sheer luck. On the other hand, it means that the Dutch population per default has limited knowledge of emergency preparation, identification and response. Resilience strengthening, or in most cases the very possibility of a crisis occurring, is simply not a part of the Dutch collective psyche.

Recent statistics on risk awareness and crisis preparation among Dutch citizens reflect that observation. In a large-scale 2024 study representative of the Dutch population, only 37% of respondents believed there exists a significant chance of an emergency occurring in their immediate environment, and 9% believed that such an emergency would have serious consequences for their personal well-being[7]. Yet a different 2024 study found that 91% of citizens believe a geopolitical or military threat to national security is at least somewhat likely to materialise – a number which has been drastically increasing since Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine[8]. But only 51% of respondents rank the geopolitical and military threats in the top 5 threats causing them most concern, and 35% indicates to be worried about their own, family's and friends' safety due. There thus seems to be a sense of dissonance between the awareness about security risks and the extent to which people believe those risks may affect them.

Levels of crisis preparation among civilians in the Netherlands is accordingly underwhelming. In 2024, only 24% of the population had an emergency kit, and over half of respondents indicated never to have even considered assembling one[9]. Upon closer inspection, among those who do have several components of an emergency kit, those components are almost exclusively ones that are already present in a domestic setting such as soap, a hammer or canned foods[10]. A similar dynamic can be observed for emergency planning and training: the vast majority of people only know emergency actions and procedures insofar those are already familiar outside the emergency context, like knowing how to cut off the water supply or following a first aid training. When it comes to emergency-specific preparation and training, only a marginal part of the population is prepared.

RESILIENCE STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES

The 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine and accompanying increase of both conventional and hybrid military threats have provided a powerful impetus to build societal resilience and awareness about security risks. Not only for the central government, but across all layers of government in the Netherlands resilience is becoming a strategic priority. Accordingly, an initial guiding document that maps the challenges in building resilience was presented to parliament in 2024[11]. Of the six pillars constituting the national resilience approach, four concern civilian resilience (protecting vital processes; a resilient society; ensuring continuation of democratic processes; a resilient economy),

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[7] D&B Onderzoeks- en Adviesbureau. (2024). *Rapportage Onderzoek naar Weerbaarheidsgedragingen - november 2024.* Rapport | Nationaal Coördinator Terrorismebestrijding En Veiligheid.

[8] Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid. (2025, February 12). *Risico- en crisisbarometer - meting eind 2024. Rapport* | Nationaal Coördinator Terrorismebestrijding En Veiligheid.

[9] Het Nederlandse Rode Kruis. (2023, December 12). *Minder dan één op de vier Nederlanders heeft noodpakket in huis* - Rode Kruis Nederland. Rode Kruis Nederland. https://www.rodekruis.nl/persberichten/minder-dan-een-op-de-vier-nederlanders-heeft-noodpakket-in-huis/

[10] See 7.

[11] Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid. (2024b). *Kamerbrief over weerbaarheid tegen militaire en hybride dreigingen. Kamerstuk* | Rijksoverheid.nl.

and two focus on military resilience (protecting own and allies' territorial integrity; ensuring civilian support of armed forces)[12].

Based on this document, government bodies such as the National Coordinator Crisis and Security (*NCTV*) and the Ministry of Defence are currently in the process of formulating interdepartmental resilience policies as part of a national campaign. For the NCTV, priority in those policies lay in ensuring the continuation of vital processes such as food supply, logistics and healthcare, as well as streamlining the coordination between different government institutions and local networks. The Ministry of Defence, on the other hand, is drawing up a National Crisis Plan Military Threats, the first complete draft of which will be presented in September[13]. Although the latter is first and foremost concerned with military preparations, it also includes plans for the mobilisation of civilian resources insofar those are necessary for the functioning of the military.

The concept of *whole of society defence* is a cornerstone of this renewed emphasis on resilience building. The 2024 white paper issued by the Ministry of Defence, for instance, stresses the importance of including "government, citizens, civic organisations, business, industry, research institutes and other stakeholder"[14], an echo of the National Security Strategy 2023-2029[15] published a year earlier. This focus on including all of society in national defence and resilience efforts is, moreover, not confined to executive institutions – advisory organs such as the National Institute for Public Safety (*NIPV*) and the Advisory Council on International Affairs (*AIV*) have made similar appeals[16]. Resilience building across all strata of society is, in sum, gaining traction rapidly, although the exact implementation of these policies is currently being devised.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND CRISIS STRUCTURE

"Dutch crisis and emergency law still dates from the times that firefighters were responsible for crisis management. It is hopelessly outdated." - Dutch resilience expert

The Netherlands maintains a considerably decentralised approach to crisis preparation and response under the banner of 'extended local governance' (*verlengd lokaal bestuur*). This means that crisis preparation and response (in the European Netherlands) is spread out across the central government, 12 provinces, 25 safety regions (*veiligheidsregio's*) and 342 municipalities. Even though exact competences vary for different types of crises, with 26 formal crisis networks and structures contingent on the type of crisis at hand[17], this section aims to briefly outline the overall competences of the central government, safety regions and municipalities.

[12] Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid. (2024b, December 6). *Weerbaarheidsopgave - Versterken van weerbaarheid in het licht van militaire en hybride dreigingen.* Rapport | Rijksoverheid.nl.

[13] The National Crisis Plan Military Threats will be subject to consistent revision.

[14] Ministerie van Defensie. (2024). *Defence White Paper 2024: Strong, smart, together.* News Item | Defensie.nl.

[15] Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid. (2023, April 3). *Veiligheidsstrategie voor het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden (Rapport).* Publicatie | Rijksoverheid.nl.

[16] Gelton, P. (2024). *Verkenning naar het versterken van maatschappelijke weerbaarheid en veerkracht in tijden van crises*. Nationaal Instituut Publieke Veiligheid.

Adviesraad Internationale Vraagstukken. (2024, September 17). *Hybride dreigingen en maatschappelijke weerbaarheid*. Publicatie | Adviesraad Internationale Vraagstukken.

[17] Instituut Fysieke Veiligheid. (2018). *Bestuurlijke Netwerkkaarten Crisisbeheersing* - Handreiking.

At the national level, the central government is among others tasked with coordinating lower government levels and the preparation of national-scale crisis management. This principally happens through the NCTV (under the Ministry of Justice and Safety), which through subordinate teams and agencies serves as the chief national crisis manager. The NCTV, however, does not have an executive agency of its own to carry out resilience or crisis policies. Additionally, each ministry carries responsibility for crisis management in the policy areas of its portfolio[18]. Although on paper, such a system seems sophisticated, both interviewees and prior studies indicated inconsistent top-down coordination and standardisation in practice, in part due to NCTV's lack of executive authority[19]. Furthermore, the central government is involved in resilience building through training and education to a limited extent.

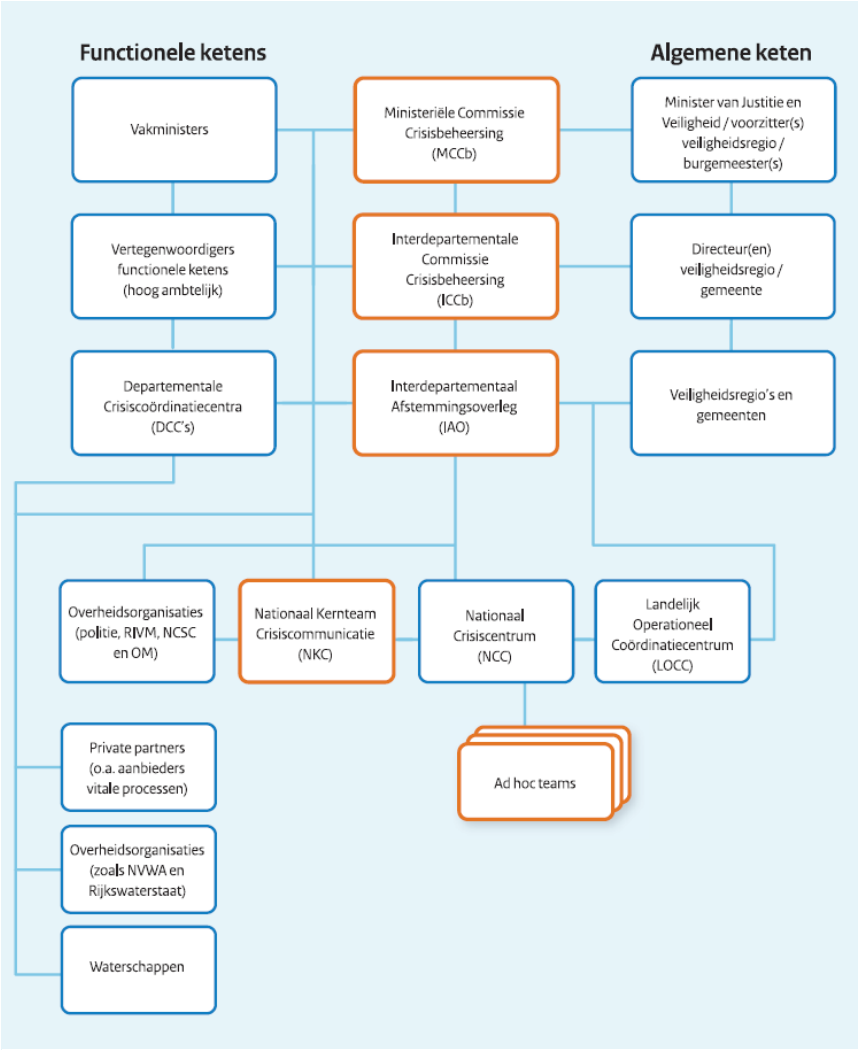

Figure 1: The Dutch crisis response structure. (NCTV, *crisisstructuur*, 2025)

That latter task falls to the sub-national level, with safety regions and municipalities shaping efforts to increase resilience through training, communication and education. Moreover, safety regions bear chief responsibility for crisis planning and management. Because each region has the room to formulate its own policies in that regard, crisis approaches very extensively among regions. In Limburg, for instance, crisis planning focuses more on water management while Groningen's approach revolves around earthquakes. Likewise, some regions are currently investing significantly in preparedness for a military threat, whereas others are neglecting the military domain.

Under the safety regions, the municipalities serve as the 'eyes and ears' of the country-wide crisis approach. They generally have the best overview of local actors and networks, and are therefore best positioned to integrate local communities, NGOs and business into resilience efforts. The mayor is also chiefly responsible for public order at the municipal level and therefore closely involved in any type of crisis response.

[18] Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid. (2023a, March 6). *Nationaal Handboek Crisisbeheersing. Publicatie* | Nationaal Coördinator Terrorismebestrijding En Veiligheid.

[19] Nationaal Instituut Publieke Veiligheid. (2024). Werken aan weerbaarheid en veerkracht - Kennismobilisatie: beelden en ervaringen.

An important note for the final analysis, however, is that the substantial degree of decentralisation can be dismantled if necessary. Naturally, the state assumes more competences during a state of emergency[20], but it can also do so without declaring a formal state of emergency, albeit under stricter constitutional restrictions and parliamentary oversight. Yet ultimately crisis and emergency law remains, in the words of one of the interviewees, "a legal patchwork". It is hence currently under revision by Dutch parliament as to allow for more flexibility for central government crisis management in cases short of a national state of emergency[21].

RISK COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

Over the last few years, the Dutch government has ramped up efforts in risk and crisis communication. To this end, the NCTV has launched a national public awareness campaign in 2025 concerning contemporary crisis risks[22]. Besides the targeted communication in this campaign, NCTV has set up the website www.denkvooruit.nl as the national forum for information about security risks and crisis preparation. In line with the findings of a NCTV-requested 2024 report on the drivers of resilience behaviour[23], the public communication campaign and denkvooruit.nl stress not so much the security risks per se as the actions people can take to better prepare for crisis. As such, no mention is made about conventional war or military threats on the main page called 'risks in the Netherlands'. Only when one looks up the 'complete list of security risks', can one find a reference to 'international tensions', although even on that page hard military threats are listed in euphemistic terms.

On the sub-national level, it is up to the safety regions (and to a lesser extent the municipalities) to communicate regional risks, immediate crisis response actions and emergency plans. Logically, since the regions carry responsibility for crisis planning, they are also the one informing the region's inhabitants about those plans. Moreover, crisis training and education is also provided at the regional or municipal level. Current efforts to that end are being scaled up but still in their infant stages. One the one hand, this regional approach to risk communication ensures congruity between crisis preparation and crisis management, but on the other hand it suffers from the same defect as regional crisis planning: significant divergence in prioritisation between regions.

[20] Art. 103 Gw (grondslag voor staatsnood en -crisisrecht); Art. 7 Coördinatiewet uitzonderingstoestanden

[21] Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid. (2022). *Kamerbrief over modernisering staats nood en crisisrecht.* Kamerstuk | Rijksoverheid.nl.

[22] Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid. (2025a). *Communicatiemomenten 2025. Weerbaarheid* | Nationaal Coördinator Terrorismebestrijding En Veiligheid. https://www.nctv.nl/onderwerpen/weerbaarheid/communicatiemomenten-2025

[23] See 7. The report stressed that fear is a poor driver for crisis preparation, from which the NCTV derived that crisis communication ought not to focus on security risks too much to not spread panic.

LITHUANIAN RESILIENCE STRATEGIES

SOCIETAL CRISIS CONTEXT

Lithuania has spent the better part of the last 3 centuries under Russian occupation. As such, collective memories of mass deportations, political oppression and a persistent Russian attempt to destroy Lithuanian culture and national identity have been passed on across generations. It only gained lasting independence in 1990, being the first to formally break away from the Soviet Union. With that independence still young, and the scars remaining from occupation fresh and deep, the Lithuanian determination to maintain its independence is omnipresent. Likewise, Lithuanian national identity is strong and awareness about the ever-looming Russian threat widespread. In 2024, 70% of Lithuanians believed Russia to be a direct threat to national security; the majority of those who did not respond in the affirmative believed Lithuania is sufficiently protected, not that the Russian threat does not exist[24].

"If you want to make Dutch people aware of the threat Russia poses, all you have to do is open your history books." – Lithuanian policymaker

Unsurprisingly, Lithuanians are therefore relatively well-prepared for crises. A 2024 survey showed that 52% of respondents are confident they know how to act in case of an emergency, with that figure dropping slightly to 45% in case of war[25]. Yet only 28% of respondents have taken emergency courses[26], and 26% has an emergency package[27]. Interviewees were at pains to point out, however, that these statistics can be misleading – the fact that people have not had formal training or an official emergency package does not mean that they are wholly unprepared, but can also imply that their preparations do not fall within the standardized requirements. Moreover, although nominal figures may seem rather low, they rank among the highest in the EU. Interviewees nonetheless broadly acknowledged that there remains ample room for improvement, as "… you can never be prepared enough."

RESILIENCE STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES

Although Lithuania already has a tradition of civil resilience and crisis preparedness, it intensified those efforts rapidly in the aftermath of Russia's 2022 invasion. Only three months after the invasion, Lithuanian parliament already approved a national strategy to prepare citizens for civil resistance in case of war. The guiding principle towards *whole of society defence is to* "… strengthen resilience, civil will, knowledge, and skills that ensure citizens' preparedness and participation in responding to national security threats and resisting aggression and occupation."[28] Though at first glance civil resistance seems to imply some form of kinetic resistance, the document in fact focuses predominantly on countering disinformation, creating trust in public institutions and preparing for unarmed resistance. As such, it provides a holistic resilience strategy.

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[24] LrtLt, D. P., & Nuotr, A. (2024, April 22). *Does Russia pose real threat to Lithuania? Poll shows most Lithuanians think yes.* lrt.lt.

[25] Vileikienė, E. (2025, March). *Gyventojų nuomonė apie viešąjį saugumą, teisėsaugos institucijų vertinimą ir pasiruošimą stichinėms nelaimėms (residents' opinion on public safety assessment of law enforcement institutions and civil preparedness for disasters).* Lithuanian Ministry of the Interior.

[26] Ibid. Note that these numbers do not include general first aid training.

[27] Platūkytė, D., & Nuotr, A. (2024, September 9). *„Išsilepinome visuomenę": 70 proc. gyventojų neturi atsargų ekstremalioms situacijoms ("we are weakening the public": 70% of the population has no reserves for emergencies.)*. Lrt.lt.

[28] *Piliečių Rengimo Pilietiniam Pasipriešinimui Strategija (Strategy for Preparing Citizens for Civil Resistance)*. (2022). Lithuanian Ministry of National Defence.

For the concrete implementation of resilience strategies, the Ministry of Interior formulated the flagship Civil Protection Strengthening and Development programme, which sets out three strategic priorities[29]: Strengthening preparedness to manage crises and extreme situations and eliminate their consequences; Increasing the resilience of state and municipal institutions and agencies, economic entities and other institutions; Empowering competencies, cooperation and public education and self-protection culture. Each priority is accompanied by concrete policy directions, progress measures, result indicators and medium-term funding goals. The third priority, for instance, further specifies the increasing of public awareness of civil protection, which in turn is measured in the share of residents who have participated in civil protection training.

An additional, overarching theme that stood out throughout the interviews is that policymakers stress the importance of active civilian participation in crisis response. Civilians are not only expected to know how to get themselves to safety in case of a crisis, but also how they can contribute to the collective crisis response. Although still a policy objective rather than a reality, the adage is that citizens are expected to be active participants, not passive bystanders.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND CRISIS STRUCTURE

Lithuania's crisis approach remains highly centralised under the principle that the government dictates policy and lower levels are responsible for implementation. As such, the overall approach retains the efficiency and coherence of central governance while allowing sub-national levels to use their networks and local know-how. In the trade-off between those two, Lithuania opts for centralisation.

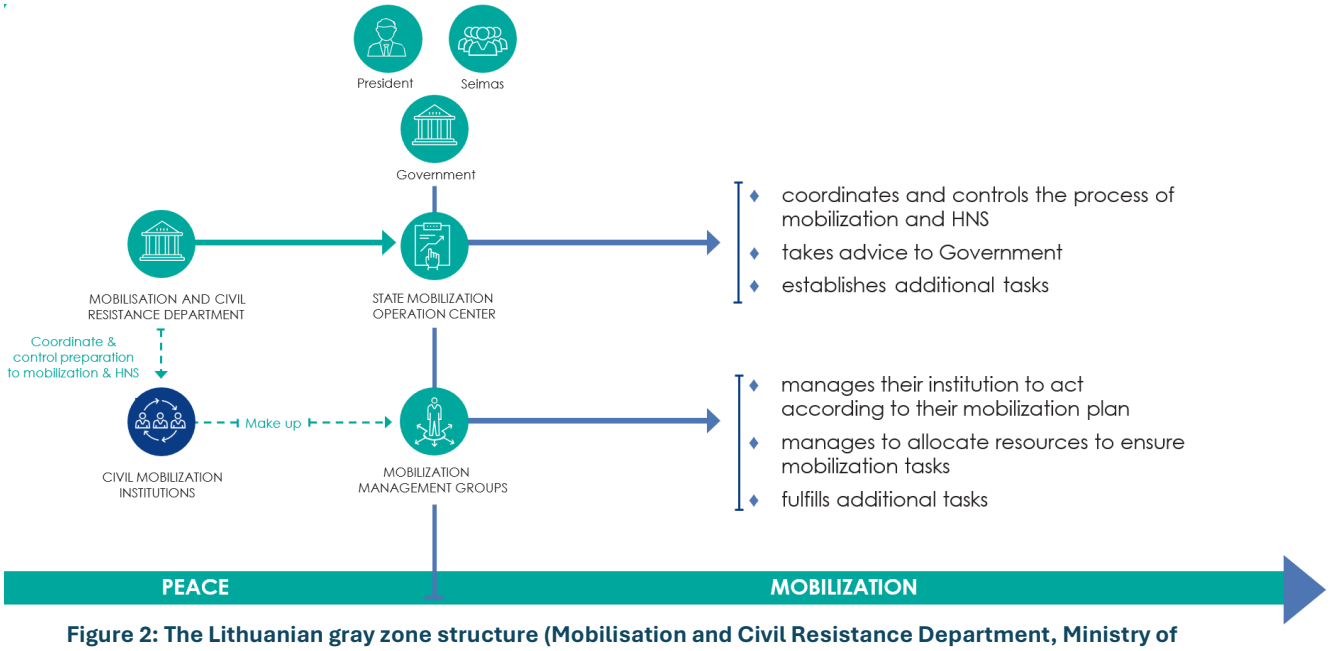


Figure 2: The Lithuanian gray zone structure (Mobilisation and Civil Resistance Department, Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Lithuania, 2025)

To enhance central crisis response, Lithuania established the National Crisis Management Centre (NCMC) in 2024 which, among others, is tasked with the monitoring of security risks and coordinating immediate crisis response. Regarding the latter, NCMC is the central organ which determines the course of action for crisis response and oversees its implementation. Besides NCMC, the Mobilisation and Civil Resistance Department (MCRD; part of Ministry of Defence) is responsible for mobilisation plans to prepare for a state of war. This includes not only military mobilisation and conscription, but also comprehensive plans for the mobilisation of 96 state institutions (60 municipalities, 14 ministries and 22 institutions) and their employees as to ensure the continuation

[29] *Civilinės Saugos Stiprinimo ir Plėtros Programa (Civil Security Strengthening and Development Programme).* (2024). Lithuanian Ministry of Interior.

of vital state functions during a state of war. Upon mobilisation, MCRD and NCMC, together with other government agencies, merge into the State Mobilisation Centre tasked with coordinating mobilisation and adivising the government.

To facilitate planning, MCRD provides the 96 state institutions with a template, or a mobilisation 'algorithm', which sets out clear lines on what needs to be arranged for mobilisation and how this should broadly be done. Such plans do not merely include actions of the first order, such as the mobilisation of healthcare workers, but also of the second and third order – who will fill up the vacant spot of those who are mobilised, and who takes over childcare of those people? After filling in the template, MCRD still needs to approve the plans. Although as interviewees admit, execution of the templates is far from perfect, this approach ensures a standardised crisis approach and significantly facilitates cooperation across all layers of government.

Notwithstanding the plethora of acts and directives passed to implement resilience policies, the basic legal framework for Lithuania's emergency, crisis, mobilisation and martial law approach is relatively straightforward. In 2024, Lithuanian parliament passed several key amendments to the Law on Crisis Management and Civil Protection[30] which determine the competencies of NCMC and other state institutions in crises short of the military domain. As soon as a military threat is considered a direct threat to the country's sovereignty, partial or complete mobilisation can be initiated through the Law on Mobilisation and Host Nation Support[31]. This law provides competencies for the aforementioned planning, preparation and mobilisation procedures, and is intended to govern the 'gray zone' between peacetime and a formal state of war. In case of a direct military attack, the Seimas can then resort to a martial law through the Law on Martial Law, which stipulates far-reaching wartime government and military competences[32]. As this structure demonstrates, Lithuania employs a scalable approach for crisis management, in which it can gradually increase its competences through different legal pathways the more intense a crisis gets.

RISK COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

The Lithuanian Ministry of the Interior has, in collaboration with NGOs and other state agencies, launched a public awareness campaign concerning national resilience efforts. The centrepiece of the campaign is the www.lt72.lt website, which serves as the government's direct medium for risk communication. It includes , for instance, detailed instructions on the courses of action in case of air raids, bombing and shootings in Lithuanian, English and Russian. Added to this are country-wide videoclips, advertisements and radio messages to spread awareness about and create a sentiment favourable to resilience-building. As a central theme for the campaign the government has opted for symbolism at the heart of contemporary Lithuanian national identity: basketball. Working under the allegory "We are a team, we have a plan", well-known basketball players feature in the campaign's videoclips, and wore journeys referring to the new resilience campaign upon its launch. Through utilising national symbols, one interviewee explained, the Lithuanian government hopes to foster the sense of national unity necessary for a resilient society.

Furthermore, both the Lithuanian Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defence put considerable emphasis on crisis training and education. The effect, as interviewees explained, is twofold: Training not only immediately enhances an effective crisis response, but the very act of participating in crisis training also creates awareness about security risks, particularly at a young age. As such, it is now mandatory for government employees to follow a crisis response course, as is for gun owners, and the Ministry of Defence has published an online portal containing courses on mobilisation, civic

[30] *Krizių Valdymo ir Civilinės Saugos Įstatymas (Law on Crisis Management and Civil Protection)*. (1998). Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania.

[31] *Mobilizacijos ir Priimančiosios Šalies Paramos Įstatymas (Law on Mobilisation and Host Nation Support)*. (1996). Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania.

[32] *Karo Padėties Įstatymas (Law on Martial Law)*. (2000). Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania.

resistance and host nation support[33]. Moreover, the Ministry now also offers day-long courses on hybrid threats and civil resistance, as well as a two-day course on civil drone controlling. For the younger generations, the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union (LRU) plays an important role, providing survival and resilience training at a young age. Next to its Junior Programme, which prepares cadets for service in Lithuania's (voluntary) armed forces, LRU takes all 15-year olds in the country on a three-day camp to practice survival skills, first aid and preparation for extreme situations.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

This section compares the Dutch and Lithuanian resilience approach in parallel to the structure above. It highlights key differences between both countries as to lay a foundation for the policy recommendations in the following section. Much of the analytical work to support the arguments for the recommendations is thus provided here. Note must be made, however, that the Netherlands is currently formulating and updating its resilience strategy, so some of the deficiencies outlined in this section may already be addressed in the not yet published works. A comparative summary is provided in the table below.

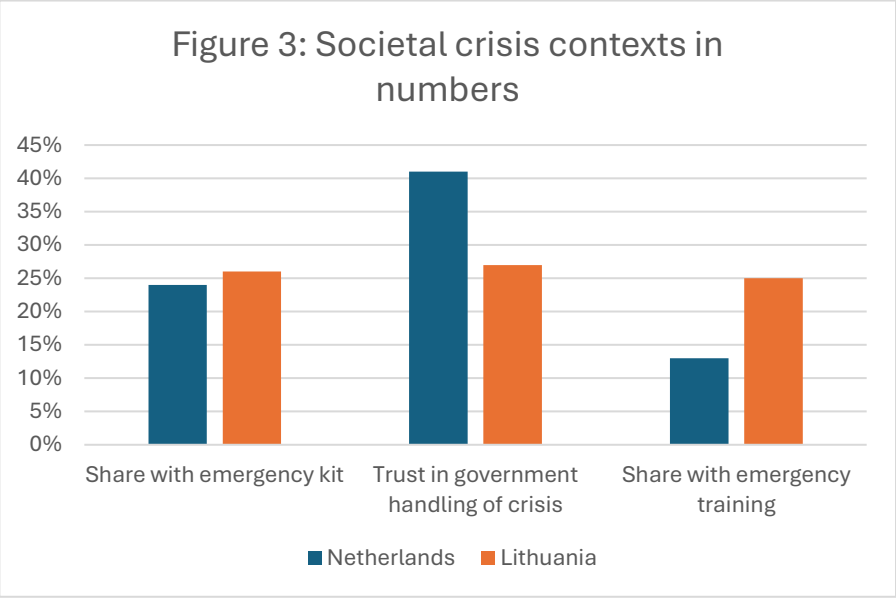
Feature	**Netherlands**	**Lithuania**
Crisis context	Long absence of crises has led to low public awareness and preparedness. Military threats are not seen as personal or urgent by most citizens.	Strong collective memory of occupation drives high threat awareness. Preparedness is linked to identity and civic responsibility.
Strategies and priorities	Strategy is early-stage and broadly defined. Focuses on vital services and general awareness; citizen role mostly passive.	Well-developed, with clear goals and national coordination. Citizens expected to take active part in crisis response.
Legislation and structure	Highly decentralised system. Roles and planning vary across regions. Central coordination is weak and legislation complex.	Centralised with unified crisis law. Standardised plans ensure consistent preparation across government levels.
Communication and education	Communication avoids military language. Training and awareness vary by region and are still limited.	Direct, urgent messaging. Broad training programs for youth, civil servants, and the public are widely implemented.

SOCIETAL CRISIS CONTEXT

Lithuania has a culture of national resilience and resistance, fostered over the course of centuries, which the Netherlands does not. Being resilient, in the words of one interviewee, "… is in Lithuanians' DNA." Appeals to that resilience culture are therefore inherently more effective. That resilience culture is, moreover, embedded in a strong sense of national unity and patriotism, which is less observable in the Netherlands. Concretely, this gives the Dutch government less room for maneuverability than Lithuania, for society is simply much less accustomed to anything pertaining to crises preparedness, let alone military threats; pushing too hard can work counterproductively. In addition, the willingness to prepare for a crisis as a collective – to work towards the shared protection of the country – is less powerful as a result of a weaker sense of national identity. As one Dutch interviewee put it: "We certainly see progress, but the fact is that we have to come from very far."

[33] Pagrindinis | Mobilizacijos mokykla (Mobilisation school). (2024). https://mobilizacijosmokykla.lt/

An interesting observation, however, is that levels of formal crisis preparation do not diverge as much as history would suggest. Although Lithuanians are more acutely aware of security threats, particularly those emanating from Russia, the share of people that assembled an emergency kit and formulated an emergency plan is only slightly higher than in the Netherlands. The amount of people that has followed resilience training, on the other hand, is higher and growing at a faster pace in Lithuania.



Accounting for the relatively low degree of emergency kits and plans in Lithuania remains matter of speculation, but can provide valuable insights nonetheless. First, interviewees reasoned that particularly younger generations (those born and raised post-Soviet Union) lack the experience that gives rise to resilience actions among older generations, and therewith push down the overall numbers. Second, multiple interviewees stressed that these statistics can be deceiving; people may feel prepared for a crisis without having a kit or plan that conforms to government-issued standards. In Lithuania, half of the population[34] knows what to do in an emergency situation; a number substantially higher than the formal preparation statistics. Third, the number of people following resilience training is rising steadily, with 11.000 people having followed a course last year[35]. What seems to be at play is that Lithuanians are enhancing their resilience outside the confines of standardised preparation, for instance through local networks, bearing testament to a shared resilience culture nonetheless. Indeed, as one interviewee mentioned: "We like to keep track, but we are not too strict on efforts outside our own programmes as well – what matters is that people are prepared."

RESILIENCE STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES

In the context of strategies and priorities Lithuania is ahead on all fronts, not in the least because it published its first guiding documents several years earlier than the Netherlands. Consequently, while the Netherlands' is still in the early stages of policymaking, with documents broad in nature and focused on the strategic level, Lithuania has begun implementing its policies with measurable indicators of process. Moreover, Lithuanian policymakers are not afraid to point out the weaknesses and points for improvement, in written form nor verbally. The 2022 Civil Resistance Strategy[36], for instance, does not shy away from explicitly highlighting the deficiencies in Lithuania's and Lithuanians' resilience efforts. Neither did the Lithuanian interviewees. Such introspection, not merely about the deterioration of external factors but also about internal shortcomings, is less visible in Dutch strategies and communication.

[34] Note that this figure concerns people who have not followed resilience training. For those who have followed such training the figure goes up to 70%-90%.

[35] Number mentioned by interviewee.

[36] See 28.

In terms of prioritisation, the key difference lays in the degree of participation that is expected from citizens in resilience-strengthening. Whereas the Netherlands largely focuses on individual protection, the expectation that citizens must assume an active role in crisis preparation and particularly in crisis response runs as a red thread through the complete Lithuanian resilience approach. People are not only expected to know how to fend for themselves, but also contribute to the collective – hence the emphasis on civil 'resistance' and civil 'defence'. Ultimately, this is what constitutes true *whole of society defence*: The active participation of society in its own protection and defence. That presupposes an active and collaborative approach from each and every citizen.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND CRISIS STRUCTURE

Perhaps the most impactful difference between both countries is the degree of centralisation in their resilience approach, a feature neatly reflected across three dimensions. First, the Netherlands, as per Dutch governance tradition, employs a significantly more decentralised approach regarding the competences for different levels of government, both in preparation and response. Although the central government, through the NCTV and a certain extent the Ministry of Defence, is formally tasked with country-wide crisis management, primacy lays with the safety regions and municipalities; the latter two draw up and execute their own plans and risk communication. Lithuania, however, is considerably more centralised. The government coordinates the country's crisis policies, and NCMC (for all intents and purposes the Lithuanian equivalent of NCTV) has executive powers to execute those policies. That centralisation allows for the concerted and decisive decision-making necessary for an effective crisis response.

Second, the Lithuanian method of crisis planning is more conducive to knowledge-sharing and cooperation. Because the government provides other state institutions with a 'crisis algorithm', everyone's plans are standardised and shaped along the same axes without sacrificing local networks and know-how. Naturally, if state institutions want to cooperate and beware of each other's plans – an imperative in national emergencies – that is considerably less burdensome if all players use the same format. The adage 'set out lines centrally, let them be filled in locally' holds true to that effect. Considering that, in the Netherlands, all layers of government use their own format according to their own priorities, cooperation is heavily impeded. The NIPV already highlighted these difficulties with network-building in one of its reports, calling for more coherent cooperation between actors[37]. Solid networks are, in short, a prerequisite for solid crisis management, and it cannot be expected that local governments streamline their approach in the absence of central management. Lithuania demonstrates how such management may look.

Third, Lithuanian legislation is more unified and action-oriented and therefore more easily translated into policy. The Dutch legislation concerning crisis preparation and management, besides being in urgent need of modernisation, provides a web of competences and responsibilities that is remarkably complex to disentangle, even for the trained practitioner. Admittedly, Lithuania has only one sixth the population of the Netherlands, inherently rendering centralised governance an easier exercise, but interviewees agreed Dutch regulations have overshot the mark. Such comprehensive regulations are, however, a natural product of Dutch decentralisation, for a division of competences begets a division of regulations. Again, it seems that streamlining from the centre is the watchword.

RISK COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

When comparing the Dutch www.denkvooruit.nl to the Lithuanian www.lt72.lt one difference jumps out: The Lithuanian site is more urgent and explicit in its instructions and warnings, especially about a military attack. On the one hand, this is a logical derivative of Lithuania's geographical position – if war with Russia were to break out, Lithuania is on the front line while the Netherlands is not. On the other hand, the messaging used by the Lithuanian government may contribute to creating the necessary sense of urgency among the population, something which is lacking in the Netherlands. Balancing between creating urgency that spurs action whilst not sparking panic is a fine line,

[37] See 16.

interviewees from both countries emphasised, but leaning towards the urgency side seems to be a safe bet. As one Dutch interviewee put it:

> *"You should not be fearmongering, but a little stomach ache won't hurt."* – Dutch resilience expert

The most marked difference, however, is the role that training and education plays in both countries' strategy. Whereas Lithuania is actively trying to enroll as many citizens as possible into training across different crisis domains, the Netherlands is just getting started. This seems to be a culmination of several of the points identified prior: Risk communication, including crisis, is formally a responsibility of the safety regions, and a unified training programme is therefore lacking; in the absence of shared importance attributed to crisis preparation, training will naturally receive little attention; and actionable training is simply not a priority at this stage of Dutch resilience policymaking. In this regard especially, Lithuania lays miles ahead.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis provided above, this section proposes five policy recommendations for the Netherlands' resilience strategies. Note that these recommendations should be interpreted as a coherent package. The centralised method proposed in the fourth recommendation, for instance, is equally applicable to the second recommendation on education. Likewise, the first recommendation on fostering national unity is a precondition for a successful resilience strategy, and therewith should be considered in tandem with all other recommendations. As was rightfully pointed out by the Lithuanian interviewees, resilience building is only as strong as its weakest link. A serious reconsideration of Dutch resilience strategies thus necessitates holistic reflection and restructuring; it is not an à la carte exercise.

1. FORMULATE A NEW STORY ON WHAT IS AT STAKE, TAILORED TO THE DUTCH EXPERIENCE

A targeted communication campaign to inspire collective resilience.

HOW: The task is to develop **a national communication campaign aimed at strengthening Dutch unity** and encouraging personal responsibility in times of crisis. To do so, the government needs to lay out a central, uniting message about what is at stake if a crisis breaks out or the Netherlands is attacked – not through fear, but by appealing to what Dutch citizens already hold dear: their communities, traditions and freedoms. Familiar, culturally rooted symbols such as the national football team, King's Day and the Dutch tradition of institutions could be the medium of that message. In essence, this employs the logic of patriotism, but without calling it patriotism.

That strategy should **be integrated into the NCTVs communication campaign** as well, and, crucially, be translated into local contexts as well. If the idea is to incorporate the communal and traditional aspects that foster unity, then sub-national governments have the ability to tailor communication to regional identities. To guide implementation, it would be wise to conduct a new study on national identity similar to the seminal 2019 SCP study .

WHY: The key motivating element of patriotism is the willingness to protect, and hence make sacrifices on behalf of, one's country. Traditional patriotism, however, does not strongly resonate in the Netherlands. **Sacrifice for abstract symbols is culturally alien, but protecting one's community and way of life is not.** Trying to emulate wholesale the strategy from a country such as Lithuania, where national symbolism is widespread and patriotism a powerful motivator, will most likely yield little results. Raising the flag, praising Dutch history and singing the anthem in the morning thus not seems to be a fruitful approach.

Instead, **Dutch citizens feel a closer connection to their community, traditions and Dutch values.** The Dutch population has a remarkable degree of social trust and connectivity with neighbours and friends[38], values traditions such as King's Day or Sinterklaas[39] and overwhelmingly believes in the Dutch values of liberty, freedom of speech and tolerance. A Dutch-style patriotism should be pragmatic, understated, and centred on real-life values: a *nuchtere* form of unity.

Admittedly, this is no easy task, and certainly not one that can be tackled perfectly or immediately. But social cohesion is the vehicle of national resilience. Investing in a shared story now means laying

[38] Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. (n.d.). *Samenleving*. Centraal Bureau Voor De Statistiek. https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/visualisaties/monitor-brede-welvaart-en-de-sustainable-development-goals/hier-en-nu/samenleving

[39] See 7 and 38.

the groundwork for a society that stands firm when tested. **Doing so transcends the domain of resilience, but so do the benefits that it will reap.**

2. BUILD SECURITY CONSCIOUSNESS THROUGH HISTORY EDUCATION

Foster societal preparedness by embedding historical awareness of conflict, occupation, and authoritarianism into the national curriculum.

HOW: The government should initiate a **revision of the history and social studies (*maatschappijleer*) curricula at both primary and secondary levels to better reflect Europe's darker historical chapters,** with particular attention to the 20th century's authoritarian regimes, wars, and their impact on our modern way of life. This should include more thorough education on events such as KGB deportations, Soviet occupation policies, the consequences of appeasement, and the civic erosion under dictatorial regimes. Crucially, these lessons should not be taught as distant historical abstractions, but as direct precursors to contemporary vulnerabilities, showing how these regimes undermined exactly the freedoms Dutch citizens value today, such as free speech and democracy.

Where relevant, **personal testimonies, survivor accounts, and materials from affected communities** in the Baltic states, Poland, and other formerly occupied territories can be used to make this history tangible and emotionally resonant. This component should be incorporated not only in schools, but also in broader public education efforts, such as exhibitions, public media campaigns, or national remembrance days linked explicitly to themes of resilience and resistance.

WHY: **People are moved to prepare when they understand what they stand to lose**, and what has been lost before. While fear alone does not build resilience, historical consciousness does. Societies that understand their past threats are better equipped to recognise present-day warning signs and take proactive steps to safeguard their future.

In the Netherlands, where crisis feels abstract and remote to many, this kind of historical grounding is **crucial to build a sense of realism and urgency without resorting to alarmism**. It provides the moral and civic context for the "what is at stake" narrative by showing that peace, freedom, and security are not self-evident; they have been won, lost, and won again. Making this history part of civic identity is a foundational step toward a resilient, vigilant society.

By understanding the historical threats posed by powers like Russia, citizens are more likely to grasp the reality that peace is fragile, and that the values and freedoms they enjoy today have been, and may again be, under threat.

3. TRAIN HOLISTICALLY, STARTING AT A YOUNG AGE

A central training and education programme aimed at strengthening crisis preparedness.

HOW: The government should set up **a central training and education programme that includes scaling levels of resilience training.** This can begin at the end of primary school with simple, age-appropriate instructions on evacuation, finding shelter and contacting emergency services. Such training need not be complex; several (half) days a year suffice, which can then be intensified in secondary school. There, the primary focus should be on learning students basic first aid skills (akin to the current CPR trainings already being given) and sufficient survival skills to survive 72 hours without basic services, as well as media-literacy and cyber threats.

More extensive and in-depth training programmes should follow post-graduation, with several core modules complemented with sector-specific trainings. Consider providing information sessions on emergency kits and sessions for citizens that have bought their first home, as well as basic first aid

and 72-hour training. Additionally, government workers should receive mandatory training on their role in crisis response, as should workers in essential industries such as the healthcare, infrastructure or energy sectors. More holistic courses should be offered free of charge on cyber-resilience, disinformation, civil resistance and civil mobilisation plans. Training and repetition is key.

WHY: Centrally introducing resilience training from a young age offers three key benefits. First, it builds the practical skills and confidence needed for effective crisis response, something information campaigns alone can't achieve. Second, **early exposure to basic preparedness fosters awareness that essential services are not always guaranteed,** laying the foundation for long-term resilience. Third, a central framework ensures consistent standards nationwide, while still allowing local governments to tailor delivery, ensuring no region is left behind.

4. DEFINE, PLAN AND TAKE ACTION DURING THE 'GRAY ZONE'

Make plans and define expanded government competences in the gray area between peacetime and martial law.

HOW: In close coordination with the Ministry of Defence, the government should set up detailed plans on the course of action for all (semi-)government institutions in **periods that do not qualify as true peacetime, nor warrant a formal state of emergency or martial law.** Arguably, this is the period we find ourselves in now, or at least the situation we are moving towards.

Those plans should **grant government bodies more competences to act decisively,** as well as set out clear conditions for when and through which procedures these competences may be granted. The prospect of a military conflict, whether hybrid or conventional, should be taken into account in that planning, and profound legislative adaptations may be required. In effect, a complete overhaul, or at the very least a thorough revision, of Dutch crisis and emergency law is necessary to face contemporary security challenges; a process initiated already in 2022 in Lithuania.

This should not only include procedural aspects (what decisions need to be made, who will partake and what criteria will be used) but also detailed information on the execution of what will **effectively amount to civil and state mobilisation.** Details on which government bodies are necessarily mobilized, an overview of needed resources and a database of people in essential services that can be called upon are a minimum benchmark for such plans. The actual term 'mobilisation' may be reconsidered given the martial connotation and consequent political sensitivity the word carries with it.

WHY: In the gray area, difficult decisions must be made that will be ethically and politically sensitive, particularly if the central government needs to commence civil mobilisation**. Predefining the space for such decisions a priori provides the clarity needed for effective crisis decision-making.** Moreover, it allows for careful, democratic deliberation at the parliamentary level about decision-structures which would be lost if gray zone decision-making would have to be conducted ad hoc when a crisis arises.

5. SET OUT STRICT LINES CENTRALLY, LET THEM BE FILLED IN LOCALLY

A standardised, enforceable template for crisis planning across all layers of government; a planning 'algorithm'.

HOW: The central government should **formulate a central template on crisis planning that is filled in by all layers of government.** That template should stipulate what sub-national levels need to prepare, set approximate parameters on how these preparations should be arranged and provide a toolkit with guidance for preparations. Importantly, those plans should be verified and archived by the central government as to ensure compliance and accessibility. The NCTV is the

logical candidate to implement a standardised format, and it may be granted additional authorities to enforce it. A similar approach could, moreover, be used in other domains of resilience efforts, for instance in the risk communication and training programmes set out in recommendation 2.

WHY: A central planning template **ensures coherence across the crisis landscape without undermining local expertise.** When each region uses its own format and priorities, as is currently the case, cooperation becomes fragmented, and critical interdependencies are overlooked. A shared framework fosters interoperability, speeds up response coordination, and allows actors to easily understand each other's roles and responsibilities in a crisis. Moreover, verifying and archiving these plans at the national level provides visibility, accountability, and a real-time overview of national preparedness. It also guarantees that no region can neglect planning for critical threats, including military or hybrid scenarios.

This is indeed **tantamount to centralisation of crisis preparation and management.** Even though centralisation is not ingrained in Dutch governance DNA, hybrid threats and modern warfare do not respect jurisdictional silo's. Enhancing actors' ability to access, understand and coordinate each other's crisis response is a *sine qua non* for contemporary crisis preparation and response. An earthquake may stop at the border of safety region Groningen. Cyber-attacks and rockets do not.

6. PLAN THE DETAILS, INCLUDING THE WHOLE OF SOCIETY

A planning benchmark that requires crisis actors to include second and third tier contingency plans in their preparations.

HOW: Across all layers of government and all crisis planning, it should be a requirement to **not only include details on the actions and actors pertinent to the immediate crisis response, but also on the actors that fill up the gaps left behind** by that response. For everyone involved in crisis management, it should be clear how, for instance, child or informal care tasks are being taken care of through a care chain analysis. For all reservists or civilian personnel subject to mobilisation, it should be clear how their jobs will be taken over by establishing a role-backfill protocol. A similar logic should be applied to all crisis and mobilisation planning.

To further **involve the whole of society into crisis preparation**, actors should also engage with community organizations, NGOs, businesses and informal care networks as a formal part of the planning process. If a state institution is suddenly unable to provide an essential service, agreements with a private actor for taking over that service should be established *a priori*. The roles and capacities of private actors should be acknowledged and integrated, with clear coordination mechanisms during a crisis.

WHY: In a truly resilient society, **crisis planning cannot stop at identifying first-order responders**. It must anticipate the cascading effects of mobilising those individuals and ensure continuity across all essential services and social functions. Without pre-established plans for second- and third-order effects, crisis response will be reactive, fragmented, and vulnerable to systemic breakdowns. Moreover, resilience is not the sole responsibility of the state. NGOs, businesses, and informal care networks play critical roles in maintaining societal function, yet they are often excluded from formal crisis planning. By structurally including these actors, the government builds redundancy, fosters ownership, and expands crisis response capacity well beyond institutional boundaries.

This kind of detailed, inclusive planning embodies the **true spirit of whole of society defence**. It recognises that resilience is not just about the state protecting its citizens: it's about empowering all layers of society to protect and support each other.