

Civil Engagement and Participation in Defence

Helen Allas, Deputy Chairwoman in Womens Voluntary Defence Organization, Estonia



Hellen Allas is the deputy chairwoman of the Women's Voluntary Defence Organization in Estonia. Her main contribution is to find ways for women to voluntarily participate in national defence and civil protection. Ms. Allas started out as a voluntary member of the organization – as a voluntary leader, a paramedic, and a mortar platoon member. Five years ago, she became an employee as a member of the management of the organization. She is very passionate about their work and a true believer that this is not just a job but a lifestyle and lifelong commitment. She believes that more women should be part of comprehensive national defence and works every day to achieve that.

Ieva Bērziņa, Senior Researcher at National Defence Academy of Latvia & Assistant Professor at Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, Latvia



Ieva Bērziņa is a Senior Researcher at the Center for Security and Strategic Studies, National Defence Academy of Latvia, and an assistant professor at Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences. She obtained a Ph.D. in political science (comparative politics) from the University of Latvia. In her doctoral thesis, she studied the globalization of political communication and foreign influence on political campaigns in Latvia. Her current research interests and academic publications cover issues of Russia's influence on the foreign information environment, strategic communication, non-military aspects of national security, comprehensive national defence, and patriotism. Before her academic career, she gained practical experience in the field of marketing and communication.

Štěpán Daněk, Adviser to Deputy Minister of Defence, the Czech Republic



Štěpán Daněk is an Adviser to Deputy Minister of Defence of the Czech Republic. He served as Head of Community Center for War Veterans in Military University Hospital Prague. Prior to that he was an Assistant to Deputy Director of Military University Hospital Prague (2016-2019); and personnel assistant in 22nd Helicopter Air Force Base (2015-2016). Stepan holds a master's degree in economy and management from the University of Defence of the Czech Republic (2015) and a bachelor's degree in journalism from the Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic (2018).

Col Albertas Dapkus, Commander of Lithuanian Riflemen Union, Lithuania



Colonel Albertas Dapkus graduated from Vilnius Technical University and National Defence Academy of Latvia in the “Military Leadership and Security” program with the thesis topic “From assurance to deterrence in the Baltic States.” He joined the newly established Lithuanian Armed Forces (LAF) in 1991, soon after the reestablishment of Lithuanian independence, and started military service as NCO in National Defence Voluntary Forces (NDVF). In 1992, he was commissioned to Second Lieutenant and later in 2011 promoted to Colonel.

Cdre Jonathan Fry, Head of Youth and Cadets at the Ministry of Defence, the UK



Commodore Jonathan Fry joined the Royal Navy in 1979. He completed a degree at the Royal Naval Engineering College and took up his first appointment in 1985 as the Deputy Marine Engineer Officer in HMS BATTLEAXE. After obtaining MSc. in 1988, he served at HM Yacht BRITANNIA as the Electrical Officer. In 1993, he joined HMS CUMBERLAND as the Marine Engineer Officer and deployed to the Persian Gulf and the Adriatic. In 1996, he attended the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, and undertook roles ashore in training and acquisition. Later, he served at the aircraft carrier HMS INVINCIBLE as the Commander (Engineering). In 2003, he joined the RN Headquarters in Portsmouth as Head of the Marine Engineering branch. In 2007, he became the first serving officer to be appointed Captain of the Sea Cadet Corps and Director of Operations of The Marine Society & Sea Cadets. Later, he returned to the RN Headquarters as Chief Engineer responsible for the team providing engineering support to many of the Royal Navy’s warships. On promotion to Commodore in January 2014, he took up his current role as Head of Youth and Cadets in the Reserve Forces and Cadets Directorate in MOD Main Building, Whitehall.

Linda Hart, Researcher at Finnish National Defence University, Finland



Linda Hart, D.Soc.Sc works as a post-doctoral researcher in military sociology at the Department of Leadership and Military Pedagogy at the Finnish National Defence University. Since 2018, she has been working on externally funded research projects on public perceptions of security and national defence, the field of voluntary defence training, and the dissemination of defence-related information to different groups in society. She obtained her doctorate from the University of Helsinki in 2016. Her areas of specialization are political and legal sociology and gender studies.

Dr Weronika Grzebalska, Assistant Professor at Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland

Dr. Weronika Grzebalska is a sociologist and Assistant Professor at the Institute of Political Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences. Her work focuses on militarism, security, right-wing politics, and gender politics in Central Europe. Her Ph.D. thesis was dedicated to the rise of paramilitary organizing amidst structural demilitarization in post-1989 Poland. She is currently a Rethink CEE Fellow of the German Marshall Fund of the United States, researching the gendered implications of the ongoing restructuring of the defence sector in post-2014 Central Europe. In the past, she was a fellow at the Trajectories of Change Program of the ZEIT-Stiftung, a Kosciuszko Foundation fellow at Clark University, a member of the FEPS Young Academics Network, and a president of the Polish Gender Studies Association.

Pavol Kosnác, Researcher at Masaryk University, the Czech Republic

Pavol Kosnác is the Director of DEKK Institute in Slovakia, a Ph.D. researcher at the Department of Political Science of the Masaryk University in the Czech Republic, and Fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute in London. His current work sits at the crossroads of political science, psychology, field anthropology, cognitive sciences, and neurosciences. He studied comparative religion studies in Bratislava and Oxford, focusing on new religious movements, Christianity, and Islam. He is interested in overlaps between religion, ideology, violence, and war. For the last six years, he studied the motivations and value-trees of foreign fighters and members of paramilitary organizations in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. He also occasionally works as a consultant and fieldworker for humanitarian organizations and universities around the world, currently in the United Kingdom, Iraq, and Thailand.

Nad'a Kovalčíková, Program Manager at Alliance for Securing Democracy, Slovakia

Dr. Nad'a Kovalčíková is a program manager and fellow at the Alliance for Securing Democracy (ASD) in the German Marshall Fund's Brussels office. While leading the ASD's European outreach, she focuses on emerging security challenges, NATO, EU foreign affairs, security and defence, transatlantic cooperation, and election security. She analyses information operations, efforts to counter disinformation, and other threats to democracy. Prior to joining GMF, she has developed her expertise by working at NATO, the European Parliament, the French and Canadian embassies, and several NGOs and think tank projects in Belgium, Canada, France, Slovakia, the UK, and the USA. Nad'a Kovalčíková obtained her Ph.D. in international economic relations with a focus on globalization and security threats, and masters' degrees in politics

and government, European affairs, and international relations. She has frequently spoken at international public events and her work has appeared in news media such as Euronews, Euractiv, EUObserver, Politico, Bild, Agenda Pública, Slovak RTVS, Pravda, Euronet, Het Financieele Dagblad, The Atlantic, and others.

Dr Marcus Häyhtiö, Training and Liaison Officer in National Defence Training Association, Finland



Dr. Markus Häyhtiö is a Training and Liaison Officer for National Defence Training Association (MPK) is responsible for running the largest MPK training center in Finland. He serves as a Liaison Officer between MPK Southern Finland district and Guard Jaeger regiment in matters regarding co-operation between these two actors including day-to-day matters to annual planning, and implementation of large training combinations. He has been responsible for creating the service processes and necessary workflows to serve volunteer instructors, participants, and other stakeholders. He is also responsible for the security and safety of courses and premises including high-risk equipment in MPK's possession. Before joining MPK, Dr. Häyhtiö worked in academia for over a decade as a senior lecturer at the Haaga-Helia UAS. He wrote his doctoral dissertation titled: “Service Development in Public-Private Partnerships in the Military Domain: Requirements Management as a service Performance Development and Measurement System” at the National Defence University, Finland, obtaining a DSc in Military Studies in the field of Military Economy in 2018. His latest research focuses on how private services are legitimized in the military domain.

Justin E. Lane, ALAN Analytics & NORCE Center for Modeling Social Systems



Justin E. Lane is the CTO at ALAN Analytics s.r.o, a consultancy and AI technology company based in Slovakia that focuses on the development of advanced forms of AI for social prediction. He received his DPhil from the University of Oxford’s Institute for Cognitive and Evolutionary Anthropology. He has experience in consulting for AI and simulation design for both university projects and the private industry. Dr. Lane has worked as a post-doctoral fellow and consultant at Boston University and the Center for Mind and Culture, has worked as a Research Fellow at the Center for Modeling Social Systems. His research focuses on the use of computational methods and cognitive science to study the stability of social systems and cybernetics. Specifically, he is interested in how social and environmental ecologies contribute to market movements, the stability and instability of social systems, political movements, and economic and demographic shifts. His research projects in AI, simulation, and natural language processing (NLP) have been covered globally in outlets such as BBC News, Vice News, The Atlantic, New Scientist, and The Telegraph, and he has been a featured speaker at research, technology, and policy conferences in North America, Asia, and Europe.

Juraj Lizák, Director of Slovak Scouting Headquarters, Slovakia



Juraj Lizák became a member of the Scout Section in its 11 years and since then lives for the world of youth organizations. After graduating from educational studies, he started working in the NGO and later became the Executive Director of the Slovak Scouting Headquarters. For the last few years he has been politically representing the youth from the position of the President of the Youth Council of Slovakia and since 2020 took the position of the Director of the Youth Council of Slovakia.

Agata Mazurkiewicz, Assistant Professor at Jagiellonian University, Poland



Agata Mazurkiewicz holds a Ph.D. in Political Science (Jagiellonian University in Krakow) and is an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Political Science and International Relations at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. Her research interests include civil-military cooperation and interaction, peacekeeping missions, and NATO affairs. She was a principal investigator and researcher in several national and international research projects devoted to NATO, peacekeeping, as well as reconciliation in Poland. Currently, she focuses her attention on the roles of NATO civil-military cooperation officers as a part of her research grant funded by the National Science Centre, Poland. She teaches courses on international military relations, armed forces, and NATO.

Lt Col Aivis Mirbahs, Director of Youth Cadets Centre, Latvia



Lt Col Aivis Mirbahs serves in Latvian National Armed Forces since 1996. He began his military studies at the National Defence Academy of Latvia and after two years of service was ordered to the Land Forces Officers' School in Dresden, Germany, acquiring sapper and platoon commander specialty. After graduating from the officers' school, in 2001, he continued his service in diverse positions as an infantry officer. In 2008, he received a master's degree in political science and sociology from the Helmut Schmidt University, Germany. In 2020, he graduated from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, where he studied Command and General Staff Officers' Course.

During his service at the Latvian National Armed Forces, he participated in two international operations in Afghanistan - in 2009 and 2012. Additionally, he was deployed to Liberia as part of a military training team in 2013. Since 2017, he has been continuing his service as the director of the Cadet Force Centre of Latvia (Jaunsardzes centrs), where one of the main objectives is to develop and implement the State Defence Program as a compulsory subject in all general education schools in Latvia starting from 2024.

Col Eero Rebo, Commanding Chief of Staff, Estonian Defence League, Estonia



Colonel Eero Rebo completed his studies at the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences in 1999 while serving for Estonian army forces. He finished several military training courses focused on management and logistics. In 2013, Col Eero Rebo earned a master's degree in Strategic Studies at US Army War College and currently serves as a Commanding Chief of Staff of Estonian Defence League, which is a voluntary military national defence organization under the command of the Ministry of Defence.

Reelika Semjonov, Educational Adviser at Ministry of Defence, Estonia



textbooks for the aforementioned educational institutions.

Reelika Semjonov studied Politics and Governance and Education Sciences at the Tallinn University. She worked as the Deputy Head of the Public Relations Department at Estonian Ministry of Defence (2001-2007) and later as the Head of the Training and Education Section (2007-2009). Since 2010, she is the Educational Adviser, leading the development of National Defence Education in high schools providing advanced secondary education and vocational educational institutions. She also lectures National Defence Teacher Courses at the Tallinn University. Besides, from 2012 to 2019 she was the editor-in-chief of National Defence

Dr Jamie P. Shea, Strategy and Security Institute, University of Exeter



He is a Senior Transatlantic Fellow of the German Marshall Fund of the United States and a Senior Fellow at the London School of Economics, where he teaches a course on crisis management and political communication. Jamie Shea is an Associate Fellow at Chatham House and serves on the Board of the Danish Defence College, Copenhagen, and is currently a Senior Advisor at the European Policy Centre and a Senior Fellow at Friends of Europe. In 2020, Jamie Shea was awarded the honor of Companion of St. Michael and St. George for services to NATO and diplomacy.

Dr. Jamie P. Shea is a Visiting Professor of Strategy and Security at the Strategy and Security Institute, University of Exeter, United Kingdom, and a member of the Group of Strategic Advisors of the NATO Special Operations Forces Command at SHAPE in Belgium. He gained a lot of experience as an international public servant and a member of the International Staff of NATO for 38 years with his last position as a Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges. For 20 years, he was a Professor at the Collège of Europe, Bruges. He was also a lecturer at the University of Sussex and the American University, Washington DC in the fields of international relations.

Maciej Stępką, Assistant Professor at Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland

Maciej Stępką holds a Ph.D. in Security Studies (University of Warsaw). He is an Assistant Professor at the Institute of European Studies at Jagiellonian University in Kraków where he teaches courses on theories of security, European and international security policy, EU institutions, and politics. He was a guest researcher at the University of Amsterdam, Utrecht University, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, or École française d'Athènes. His research interests include critical security studies and migration studies, more particularly discourses and practices of security deployed during complex and persisting crises. He has authored articles and book chapters on the securitization of migration in the EU, resilience, crisis, and risk management in the EU.

Tiiia-Triin Truusa, Researcher at Baltic Defence College and University of Tartu, Estonia



Tiiia-Triin Truusa holds a master's degree in social work from the University of Tartu. Currently, she is in the final stages of completing her doctoral studies in sociology at the University of Tartu. Her dissertation concentrates on the civil-military entanglements within Estonia, especially on the life journey of the Estonian male citizen. She works at the Baltic Defence College as Manager of Academic and Outreach Activities and as a project manager at the University of Tartu. She is also the President of the European Research Group on Military and Society (ERGOMAS). She is a member of the voluntary Women's Defence Organization for almost 20 years.

Lt Col László Ujházy, Associate Professor at National University of Public Service, Hungary



Lieutenant Colonel László Ujházy is an Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Military Leadership and General Subjects at the University of Public Service in Budapest, Hungary. He started his military career as a conscript in 1983. Two years after completion of his university studies, he was recalled to active duty and trained as a reserve officer. He served in several (compulsory) reserve officer positions before becoming the first volunteer reservist in Hungary in November 2002. Over the years, he has been working on various international projects including peace operations. Between 2001–2005 and 2010–2013, he was the Vice-President of the Interallied Confederation of Reserve Officers. Since 2009 he is a regular officer. He has published several articles on military and security issues. Lieutenant Colonel Ujházy has an MA in History and English and a Ph.D. in Security Studies.

Tamás Csiki Varga, Researcher at National University of Public Service, Hungary



Tamás Csiki Varga, Ph.D. is a research fellow at the Institute for Strategic and Defence Studies of the National University of Public Service in Budapest, Hungary. He has been conducting security and defence policy analysis for ISDS, the background think tank of the Hungarian Ministry of Defence, since 2009. His research is focused on European security and defence, including the defence policy of individual European countries (e.g., Germany), Central European defence cooperation, as well as Hungarian security and defence policy.

Liudas Zdanavičius, Researcher at Gen Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy, Lithuania



Liudas Zdanavičius is the policy analyst at the Defence Research Center of the General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania. He also runs strategic level National security and defence courses. He has working experience in various think tanks and academic institutions. He published a considerable number of articles, book chapters, policy papers on topics related to the national security of the Baltic sea region.

Remigijus Žilinskas, Lithuanian Armed Forces, Lithuania



Remigijus Žilinskas is a Ph.D. student at the Gen. Jonas Zemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania and an active-duty officer of the Lithuanian Armed Forces. He graduated from the Lithuanian Military Academy in 2000 and the French École d'application de l'infanterie in 2004. Since then, he has served in different posts, including as platoon and company commander. He has multinational service experience as an action officer in the EU Military Staff (EUMS) and SME in the NATO Energy Security Center of Excellence (ENSEC). In 2019 he participated in the EUNAFOR mission SOPHIA on board of Italian ship LUIGI RIZZO as Chief J9 (CIMIC). Besides military education and training, he has master's degrees in public administration and international relations from the Lithuanian Law University and the International Relations and Political Science Institute in Vilnius. He also attended a year-long postgraduate course on defence and security at the politico-strategic level at the European Institute of International Relations (IERI) in Brussels, Belgium in 2009. His research focus on resilience, security and defence studies, civil-military relations, and governance. He was engaged in mentoring programs and contributed to several publications in media.