

# ABDI (MTS)

## FINNS`OPINIOS ON FOREING AND SECURITY POLICY, NATIONAL DEFENCE AND SECURITY

THE ADVISORY BOARD FOR DEFENCE  
INFORMATION



Bulletins and reports  
November, 2017



ABDI Bulletins and reports November, 2017

## **Finns`opinions on foreign and security policy, national defence and security**

The Advisory Board for Defence Information (ABDI)



Ministry of Defence

ISBN print: 978-951-25-2968-1

ISBN PDF: 978-951-25-2969-8

Layout: Government Administration Unit, Publications

Text in English Katri Suvanto, Government Administration Department

Helsinki 2017



## FOREWORD

A survey commissioned by the Advisory Board for Defence Information (ABDI) explored the opinions of Finnish people on Finnish foreign and security policy and on defence policy. The survey also included questions on factors relating to safety and citizens' sense of security pertaining to developments concerning the next five years, on factors giving rise to concern as well as on confidence over the future of the European Union and Finland. Altogether 20 questions were asked, two of which for the first time.

Commissioned by the ABDI, the survey was carried out by market research company Taloustutkimus Oy. The study was done as a part of omnibus research carried out in the form of personal interviews. A total of 1,001 individuals were interviewed. The target group of the study comprised the entire population between the ages of 15 and 79, with the exception of the Åland Islands. The sample was formed by quota sampling in which the target group's quotas were the distribution of age, gender, province and municipality. The interviews were conducted at 87 localities, 52 of which were cities and the remaining 35 other municipality types. The sample was weighted to match the target group. The weighted N values correspond to the population aged 15 to 79 in thousands (SVT 31.12.2016).

The interviews were conducted from 22 September to 10 October, 2017. The error of margin is  $\pm$  three point two (3.2) percentage points.

When interpreting background variables related to party affiliation, it must be taken into account that the margin of error regarding the large parties is smaller, which enables the collection of more reliable information on them compared to smaller parties whose supporters are numerically fewer in the sample.

The following question was asked: 'Which party would you vote for, if parliamentary elections were held now?' Of all of the respondents, 67 per cent (673 persons) revealed their party affiliation, while 33 per cent (328) declined to do so. In 2016 the respective numbers were 65 per cent and 35 per cent.

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

The data from this survey, like the previous surveys, are stored in the Finnish Social Science Data Archive at the University of Tampere ([www.fsd.uta.fi](http://www.fsd.uta.fi)).

The ABDI's survey reports are available in Finnish, Swedish and English on the ABDI's home page ([www.defmin.fi/mts](http://www.defmin.fi/mts)).

In Sweden, the 'Myndighet för Samhällsskydd och Beredskap' (MSB) conducts similar surveys. The most recent report was published in January, 2017. It can be accessed here: <https://www.msb.se/Sok/?query=opinionsunders%c3%b6knin-gen+2017>

Also in Norway, the 'Folk og Forsvar' conducts annual surveys on security and defence policy; their most recent report was published in September, 2017. It can be accessed here: <http://www.folkogforsvar.no/meningsmalinger/meningsmalinger-2017>.

The survey reports published by the ABDI are in the public domain. When referring to them, reference must be made stating that the data come from a survey conducted by the ABDI.

# Contents

Foreword .....	3
Introduction.....	7
Confidence in the management of foreign policy has increased .....	9
Why do respondents think that Finnish foreign policy is well managed?.....	9
Why do respondents think that Finnish foreign policy is poorly managed?.....	10
Support for military non-alignment has remained unchanged .....	10
Support for membership in NATO has slightly fallen .....	11
Confidence in Finland’s future .....	12
Over half of the respondents hold that their confidence in the EU is unchanged.....	13
The UN and the EU are believed to contribute positively to Finland’s security .....	14
Finland’s defence policy is widely believed to be well managed.....	15
General conscription enjoys strong support .....	15
Conscription is seen as the basis for Finland’s defence system .....	18
Support for increasing defence appropriations and keeping the current level .....	19
The will to defend the nation remains unchanged .....	19
Independence is the most important reason for defending Finland by military means .....	22
The will to defend the nation is strong at the personal level.....	22
Support for Finland’s military cooperation .....	23
Compared to men, women envisage the future as more insecure.....	23
The global refugee situation and international terrorism cause the greatest concern.....	24
Preparedness for different threats.....	25
Preparedness for acts of terrorism against Finland is seen as the key issue.....	26
Figures 1 - 45 .....	27
The Research Branch of ABDI in 2015–2019.....	72





## Introduction

Citizens of the 100-year-old Finland have confidence that foreign and defence policy will be well managed, and they want to defend their country, continue to support general conscription, and support defence cooperation and military non-alignment. They are most concerned about the world's refugee situation, international terrorism and climate change. Future is perceived as fairly insecure. Defence cooperation with the Nordic countries and the EU and Finland's membership in the European Union is believed to improve Finland's security.

### **Confidence in the management of foreign policy has grown**

Three out of four find that Finland's foreign policy is well managed. When asked why they think that Finnish foreign policy is well managed the most commonly received answer is that good relations are maintained to all countries, and the neighbouring countries and Russia in particular were mentioned. Finland's calm, dispassionate approach towards getting things done and working with others was also appreciated. Respondents commended the activities of the President.

Those who thought that Finland's foreign policy has been poorly managed most often justified their view with immigration, refugee and asylum issues and the European Union's measures.

### **The will to defend the country is unchanged - independence is the most important reason for defending Finland by military means**

Seven out of ten or 72 per cent think that Finns should defend themselves by military means in all situations even if the outcome seemed uncertain

Finland's independence was given as the most important factor for willingness to defend the country.

### **General conscription enjoys strong support**

Eight out of ten or 81 per cent support the current conscription system in Finland. Nine per cent are in favour of abolishing general conscription and instituting professional armed forces.

### **Conscription is seen as the basis for Finland's defence system**

Two out of three support the current conscription system as Finland's defence solution. Sixteen per cent of the respondents are in favour of gender-equal conscription for men and women alike.

### **Support for military non-alignment has remained unchanged**

Six out of ten support Finland's military non-alignment. This question has been asked in the ABDI surveys since 1996 and support for military non-alignment has varied from 79% (in 2001) to 54% (in 2015).

### **Support for membership in NATO has slightly fallen**

Slightly over one in five, 22%, replied in the affirmative to the question, 'Should Finland seek membership in NATO?' A year ago one in four or 25% supported membership in NATO. The support for membership in NATO has varied from 30% (in 2014) to 18% (in 2012) in the ABDI surveys.

## Confidence in the management of foreign policy has increased

Three out of four or 73 per cent of the respondents consider that Finland's foreign policy is well managed (70% in 2016); 73 percent (72%) of men and 72 per cent (68%) of women. Younger people are more critical than older age groups. Of those younger than 24 years of age, 57 per cent (61%) think that foreign policy is well managed; of the 25 to 34 years of age, 63 per cent (64%); of the 35 to 49 years of age, 78 per cent (63%); and of those older than 50 years of age, 80 per cent (78%) were of this opinion.

Of the supporters of the Centre Party, 91 per cent (85% in 2016) think that Finnish foreign policy is well managed; 87 per cent (83%) of the Coalition Party; 82 per cent (71%) of the Green Party; 75 per cent (75%) of the Social Democratic Party (SDP); 71 per cent (69%) of the Left Alliance; and 50 per cent of the Finns Party supporters (42%) agree.

One out of five or 20 per cent of the respondents consider that Finland's foreign policy is poorly managed (24% in 2016); 22 percent (24%) of men and 18 per cent (24%) of women agree. This opinion is shared as follows: of those younger than 25 years of age, 29% (26%); of the 25 to 34 years of age, 25% (29%); of the 35 to 49 years of age, 19% (32%); and of those older than 50 years of age, 16% (18%).

Of the supporters of the Finns Party, 42 percent (52% in 2016) think that Finnish foreign policy is poorly managed as do 28 percent (27%) of the supporters of the Left Alliance; 23 percent (25%) of the SDP; 11 percent (17%) of the Coalition Party; eight percent (25%) of the Green Party; and 3 percent (10%) of the Centre Party supporters agree. (*Figures 1 and 2*)

## Why do respondents think that Finnish foreign policy is well managed?

Each respondent argued his or her viewpoint with a maximum of three factors. Of those who regarded foreign policy as well managed, 598 persons gave reasons for their opinions; the total number of reasons was 1080.

There was, on the whole, satisfaction with the way Finland's foreign policy has been managed. Good relations are maintained to all countries, and the neighbouring countries and Russia in particular were mentioned. Finland's calm, dispassionate approach towards getting things done and working with others was also appreciated.

Especially the President was praised for the good management of foreign policy; 187 comments. The Minister for Foreign Affairs received 40 favourable comments. Good relations with the neighbouring countries and other countries; 72 comments. Good relations with Russia 74 comments. It was also pointed out that Finland is not involved in a war or a conflict and Finland has not been attacked; 68 comments. Fifty-five respondents commented on the following: Finland's calm and diplomatic way to deal with matters, Finland continues to be aligned with its chosen policy and is cooperative.

### **Why do respondents think that Finnish foreign policy is poorly managed?**

Each respondent argued his or her viewpoint with a maximum of three factors. Of those respondents who regarded foreign policy as poorly managed, 145 persons gave reasons for their opinions; the total number of reasons was 266. Immigration, refugee and asylum issues received 40 comments. There were also views that Finland's immigration policy has been too strict. Finland's membership in the EU and the EU policies received 25 comments.

There were 17 comments according to which the poorly managed foreign policy is caused by Finland's lack of clear and active own policy. Nineteen comments were directed at the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Favouring too much the USA and the West; favouring too much Russia, both views received about 10 comments

General discontent with decision making also explained the view on poorly run foreign policy. Other reasons included terrorism, economic and trade policies, climate policy, social policy and agricultural policy.

### **Support for military non-alignment has remained unchanged**

Should Finland continue the policy of military non-alignment or seek membership in a military alliance? More than half of the respondents, 58% (57% in 2016) support Finland's military non-alignment; 59% (57%) of men and 58% (58%) of women. Those aged under 25 years of age hold more critical views; 49% (50%) support military non-alignment while in other age groups the support is 60% (51%, 63% and 60%).

Of the Finns Party supporters, 70% (74% in 2016) are in favour of military non-alignment as are 69% (56% and 67%) of the supporters of the Centre Party and of the SDP; 68% (66%) of the Left Alliance; 52% (60%) of the Green Party; and 37% (35%) of the Coalition Party supporters agree.

This question has been asked in the ABDI surveys since 1996 and support for military non-alignment has varied from 79% (in 2001) to 54% (in 2015).

Twenty-nine percent (31% in 2016) of the respondents support membership in a military alliance; 32% (36%) of men and 27% (26%) of women. Thirty-five percent (31%) of the under 25 years of age share this view; 29% (29% and 30%) of those over 35 years of age; and 25% (36%) of the 25 to 34 years of age agree. Fifty-two percent (60%) of the Coalition Party supporters; 31% (29%) of the Green Party supporters; 29% (32%) of the Left Alliance; 26% (27%) of the SDP; 24% (19%) of the Finns Party; and 19% (30%) of the Centre Party supporters agree.

The support for military alliance has varied from 34% (in 2004 and 2014) to 16% (in 2001) in the ABDI surveys.

Twelve percent (12% in 2016) have no opinion; 16% (16%) of women and 9% (7%) of men. (*Figures 3 and 4*)

## Support for membership in NATO has slightly fallen

Twenty-two per cent (25% in 2016) of the respondents answered in the affirmative to the question 'Should, in your opinion, Finland seek NATO membership?'; twenty-six percent (30%) of men and 18% (20%) of women. The most critical age group is the 25 to 34-year-old; 13% (27%) replied in the affirmative.

Of the Coalition Party supporters, 44% (53% in 2016) support membership in NATO as do 26% (24%) of the Green Party supporters; 20% (29%) of the Centre Party; 16% (23%) of the Left Alliance; 15% (16%) of the SDP; and 10% (25%) of the Finns Party supporters agree.

The support for membership in NATO has varied from 30% (in 2014) to 18% (in 2012) in the ABDI surveys.

Sixty-two percent of the respondents hold a negative view on seeking membership in NATO (61% in 2016); 63% (62%) of men and 61% (60%) of women share this view. Eighty-one percent (75%) of the Left Alliance supporters think this way, as do 73% (77%) of the SDP supporters; 72% (73%) of the Finns Party; 70% (57%) of the Centre Party; 49% (62%) of the Green Party; and 41% (33%) of the Coalition Party supporters agree.

Seventeen percent (14% in 2016) have no opinion; 22% (20%) of women and 12% (8%) of men. (*Figures 5 and 6*)

## Confidence in Finland's future

This year the following was asked as a new question: How is your confidence in Finland's future; has your confidence grown stronger, become weaker or has it remained unchanged?

Two out of three or 65 percent says that their confidence in Finland's future has remained unchanged; 67% of men and 64% of women.

Seventy-seven percent of the supporters of the SDP think this way; 71% of those of the Green Party; 68% of the Centre Party; 65% of the Left Alliance; 64% of the Coalition Party; and 60% of the Finns Party.

One out of four or 25% have weakened confidence in Finland's future; 30% of women and 20% of men. Of those younger than 25 years of age, 24% have this opinion; of the 25 to 34 years of age, 36%; of the 35 to 49 years of age, 22%; and of those older than 50 years of age, 23%.

Thirty-eight percent of the Finns Party supporters think this, as do 35% of the supporters of the Left Alliance; 21% of the Green Party; 17% of the Centre Party; and 15% of the supporters of the Coalition Party and of the SDP.

Nine out of every hundred respondents think that their confidence in Finland's future has grown stronger; 12% of men and 5% of women share this view. Nineteen percent of the supporters of the Coalition Party take this view, as do 15% of the Centre Party; 8% of the Green Party and of the SDP; 1% of the Finns Party; and none of the supporters of the Left Alliance. (*Figure 7*)

## Over half of the respondents hold that their confidence in the EU is unchanged

The question, 'How is your confidence in the future of the European Union; has your confidence grown stronger, become weaker or has it remained unchanged?' was asked for the third time. Over one half, 58% (45% in 2016) of the respondents have retained their confidence in the future of the European Union; 39% of men and 51% of women. Of those younger than 25 years of age, 70% (56%) feel this way; of the 35 to 49 years of age, 59% (46%); of those older than 50 years of age, 55% (40%); and of the 25 to 34 years of age, 53% (46%) share this view.

Sixty-four per cent (43% in 2016) of the supporters of the SDP think this way; 62% of the Centre Party and of the Left Alliance (48% and 37% respectively); 61% (46%) of the Green Party; 58% (50%) of the Coalition Party; and 45% (29%) of the Finns Party supporters agree.

Slightly more than a third, 37% (52% in 2016) of the respondents feel that their confidence in the future of the European Union has weakened; 38% (57%) of men and 37% (47%) of women. Forty-three per cent (52%) of the 25 to 34 years of age share this view, as do 39% (52%) of those over 35 years of age; and 22% (35%) of those younger than 25 years of age.

Fifty-three per cent (69% in 2016) of the supporters of the Finns Party think this way; 38% (45%) of the Centre Party; 37% (63%) of the Left Alliance; 34% (56%) of the SDP; and 33% (46% and 53% respectively) of the supporters of the Coalition Party and of the Green Party agree.

Three per cent (2% in 2016) are of the opinion that confidence in the European Union has grown stronger. (*Figure 8*)

## The UN and the EU are believed to contribute positively to Finland's security

A number of actors are listed and respondents are asked about their impact on Finland's security. These include: UN, EU, OSCE, NATO, the United States, China and Russia.

Sixty-one percent (61% in 2016) of the respondents regard the UN as having a positive impact on Finland's security; 60% (58%) think this way regarding the EU; 44% (38%) regarding the OSCE.

Twenty-five percent (25% in 2016) regard NATO as having a negative impact on Finland's security while 24% (26%) regard its impact as positive. Just under a third or 30% (24%) of the respondents see NATO's impact as both positive and negative.

Thirty-five percent (28% in 2016) of the respondents see the impact of the United States as both positive and negative while 22% (19%) see it as negative and 16% (21%) see it as positive.

As to Russia, 37% (50% in 2016) see its impact as negative; 31% (24%) see its impact as both positive and negative while 14% (6%) see its impact as positive.

Less than one half of the respondents, 44% (55% in 2016) think that China has no impact on Finland's security. Thirteen percent (8%) see China's impact as positive. One out of five or 22% (17%) sees its impact as both positive and negative while 11% (10%) sees its impact as negative. (*Figures 9 and 10*)

Defence cooperation with the Nordic countries and the EU is believed to improve Finland's security

The question lists eight different factors which the respondents assess, based on whether they believe that they improve or weaken the security of Finland and the Finnish people or have no effect at all. Factors that are believed to improve security:

Finland's participation in Nordic defence cooperation, 83% (79% in 2016);

Finland's participation in the EU's common defence, 70% (62% in 2016);

Finland's membership in the European Union, 62% (54% in 2016);



- Finland's increasing international economic interaction, 52% (48% in 2016);
- Finland's participation in international crisis management duties, 51% (46% in 2016);
- Finland's military non-alignment, 46% (45% in 2016);
- Finland's possible NATO membership, 29% (32% in 2016);
- The increasing share of foreign ownership in the Finnish economy, 8% (7% in 2016)

*(Figures 11, 12, 13 and 14)*

## **Finland's defence policy is widely believed to be well managed**

Four out of five, 79% (79% in 2016), consider that Finland's defence policy is well managed; 81% (76%) of women and 79% (81%) of men hold this view. Of the supporters of the Coalition Party, 90 per cent (82% in 2016) think that Finnish defence policy is well managed; 87 per cent (87%) of the Centre Party; 83 per cent (81%) of the Green Party; 79 per cent (78%) of the SDP; and 76 per cent of the Finns Party and Left Alliance supporters (78% and 79% respectively) agree.

Thirteen per cent (16% in 2016) of the respondents consider that Finland's defence policy is poorly managed; 16% (16%) of men and 10% (15 %) of women. This view is shared by twenty-one per cent of the Finns Party and Left Alliance supporters (23% and 14% respectively); 17% (22%) of the SDP; 9% (17%) of the Coalition Party; eight per cent (14%) of the Green Party; and 6% (5%) of the Centre Party supporters agree. *(Figures 15 and 16)*

## **General conscription enjoys strong support**

Eight out of ten or 81% (79% in 2016) support the current conscription system in Finland; 81% (80 %) of men and 80% (79 %) of women. The highest support for this comes from those older than 50 years of age, 88% (90%); of those younger than 25 years of age, 77% (76 %) support the current conscription system; 76% (68%) of the 35 to 49 years of age; and of the 25 to 34 years of age 71% (69%) agree.

Ninety-seven per cent (92% in 2016) of the supporters of the Centre Party support the current conscription system; 84% (76% and 74% respectively) of the supporters of the Coalition Party and of the Finns Party; 77% (89%) of the SDP; and 67% (59% and 67% respectively) of the supporters of the Green Party and of the Left Alliance agree.

To reduce selectively the number of those receiving military training is supported by 9% (11% in 2016) of the respondents; 10% of men and 11% of women. Of the SDP supporters 17% (7%) agree, as do 16% (22%) of the supporters of the Left Alliance; 13% (19%) of the supporters of the Green Party; 8% (16%) of the Coalition Party; 7% (11%) of the Finns Party; and 2% (2%) of the supporters of the Centre Party share this view.

Nine per cent (9% in 2016) of the respondents would discontinue general conscription altogether and institute fully professional armed forces; 8% (10%) of men and 9% (8%) of women agree. Four percent (3%) of those over 50 years of age share this view; 12% (13%) of those under 25; and 14% (11% and 16%) of those 25 to 49 years of age agree. Eighteen percent (19%) of the Green Party supporters are in favour of this model; 16% (10%) of the Left Alliance; 8% (7% and 15% respectively) of the Coalition Party and of the Finns Party; and 6% (4%) of the supporters of the SDP agree while none of the supporters of the Centre Party do (0%). (*Figures 17 and 18*)

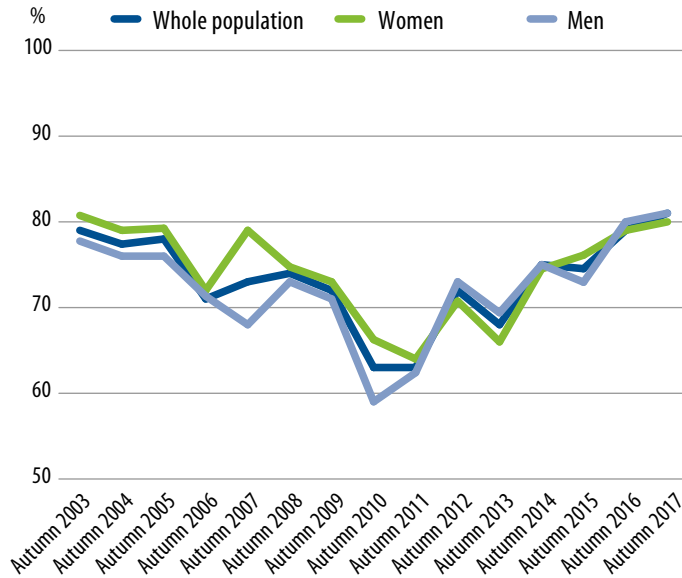
Figure 18A, support for the current system among men and women in 2003-2017.

Figure 18B, support for the current system among young people under the age of 25 and among the 25 to 34 years of age in 2003-2017.

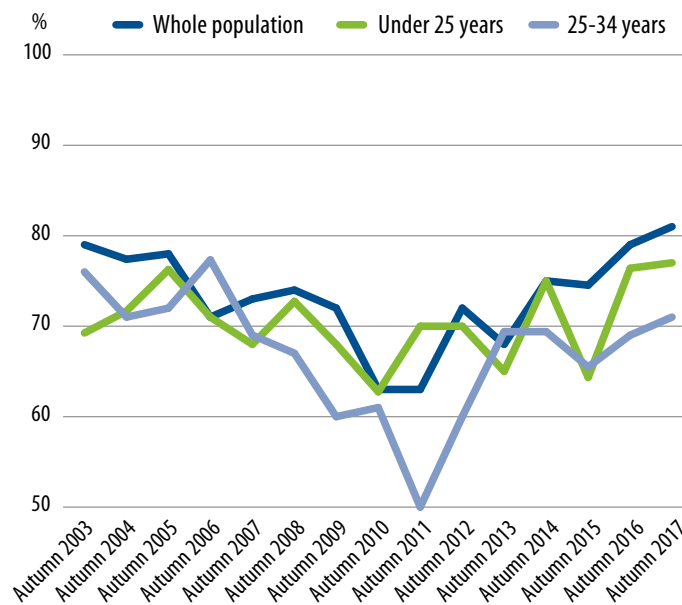
**Figure 18A ja 18B. General conscription**

*"Based on a general, compulsory military service for men, Finnish military defence provides military training for as many of the same age group as possible, thus producing a large reserve personnel. Should the current system be retained or should we change over to a selective conscript service where only a part of the same age group receives military training? Or should we change over to a professional army?"*

**Figure 18A. Retain the current system**



**Figure 18B. Retain the current system**



## Conscription is seen as the basis for Finland's defence system

The ABDI asked last year, for the first time, what Finland's defence system should be based on; the alternatives are as follows: 1) a present-kind of system where men are subject to general conscription and women can serve on a voluntary basis; 2) general conscription for men and women alike; 3) voluntary military service for men and women, and 4) fully professional armed forces.

Two thirds or 65% (69% in 2016) support the current conscription system in Finland; 63% (69%) of men and 66% (68%) of women. Of those over 50 years of age, 70% (75%) think this way; of the 35 to 49 years of age 65% (68%); of those younger than 25 years of age 57% (65%); and of the 25 to 34 years of age 56% (55%) agree. Eighty-seven percent (83%) of the supporters of the Centre Party; 73 % (78%) of the Coalition Party; 68% (65%) of the Finns Party; 61% (79%) of the SDP; 55% (56%) of the Left Alliance; and 41% (47%) of the supporters of the Green Party share this view.

Sixteen percent (11% in 2016) of the respondents support general conscription for men and women alike; 18% (11%) of men and 15% (11%) of women. Twenty-eight percent (14%) of the supporters of the Green Party; 17% (18%) of the Left Alliance; 16% (9%) of the Coalition Party; 15% (12%) of the SDP; 14% (8%) of the Finns Party; and 8% (7%) of the Centre Party supporters agree.

Eleven percent (14% in 2016) of the respondents are in favour of general conscription for men and women alike; 10% (13%) of men and 11% (15%) of women. Of the Green Party supporters 22% (28%) think this way and 17% (6%) of the SDP supporters agree; 12% (21%) of the Left Alliance; 6% (8%) of the Coalition Party; 5% (14%) of the Finns Party; and 2% (6%) of the Centre Party supporters agree.

Seven percent (6% in 2017) support fully professional armed forces; 8% (6%) of men and 7% (6%) of women. (*Figure 19*)

## Support for increasing defence appropriations and keeping the current level

Nearly half, 47%, of the respondents think that defence appropriations should be increased (47% in 2016); 51% (53%) of men and 44% (40%) of women. Older age groups are more favourable towards increasing defence appropriations than younger ones. Of those over 50 years of age, 51% (56%) support an increase as do 48% (43%) of the 35 to 49 years of age; 38% (37%) of the 25 to 34 years of age; and 42% (38%) of those under 25 years of age share this view.

Of the Centre Party and Coalition Party supporters, 60% (47% and 64% in 2016) are in favour of an increase; 55% (59%) of the Finns Party; 41% (53%) of the SDP; 32% (28%) of the Green Party; and 28% (33%) of the Left Alliance supporters agree.

Forty percent (41% in 2016) are in favour of keeping defence appropriations on the current level; 41% (45%) of women and 38% (36%) of men.

Of the Left Alliance supporters, 53% (45%) think they should be kept on the current level, as do 48% (46%) of the Green Party supporters; 42% (43%) of the SDP; 37% (48%) of the Centre Party; 35% (26%) of the Finns Party; and 34% (30%) of the Coalition Party supporters agree.

Eight percent (9% in 2016) support cutting defence appropriations; 9% (9%) of men and 7% (8%) of women. Of the Left Alliance supporters 17% (18%) think this way, as do 13% (3% and 22%) of the SDP and Green Party supporters; 6% (15%) of the Finns Party; 5% (5%) of the Coalition Party; and 3% (1%) of the Centre Party supporters agree. (*Figures 20 and 21*)

## The will to defend the nation remains unchanged

Seven out of ten or 72% think that Finns should defend themselves by military means in all situations even if the outcome seemed uncertain (71% in 2016). Seventy-nine percent of men (79%) and 66% of women (64%) share this view.

Eighty-two percent (84% in 2016) of the Finns Party supporters answered in the affirmative as did 80% (81%) of the Coalition Party supporters; 73% (79%) of the Centre Party; 68% (77%) of the SDP; 67% (68%) of the Left Alliance; and 65% (52%) of the Green Party supporters agree.

One in five, 22% (21% in 2016) think that Finns should not defend themselves with military means in all situations; 25% (25%) of women and 19% (16%) of men. Younger age groups answer in the negative more often than older age groups. Of those younger than 25 years of age, 29% (27%) answered in the negative as did 28% (31%) of the 25 to 34 years of age; 23% (19%) of the 35 to 49 years of age; and 17% (16%) of those older than 50 years of age.

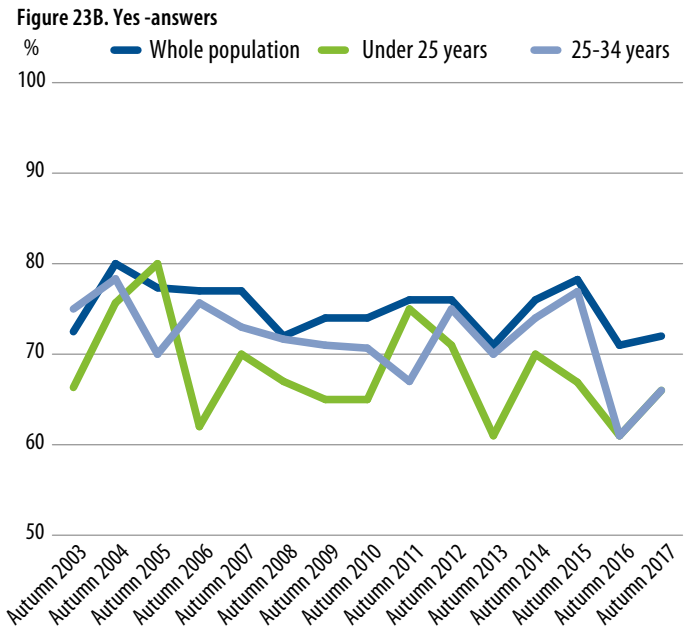
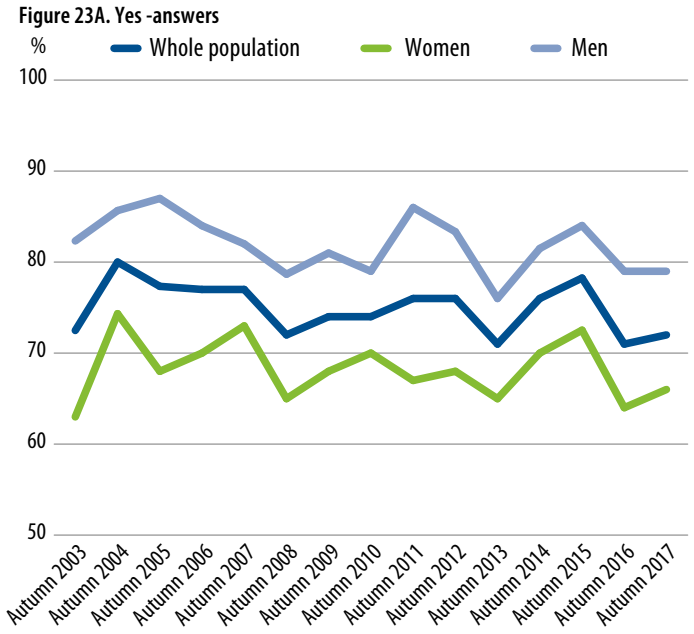
Of the Green Party supporters, 28% (39% in 2016) answer in the negative as do 25% (16%) of the SDP supporters; 24% (15% and 24%) of the Centre Party and Left Alliance; 18% (14%) of the Coalition Party; and 15% (9%) of the Finns Party supporters agree. (*Figures 22 and 23*)

Figure 23A, the will to defend the country among men and women in 2003-2017.

Figure 23B, the will to defend the country for the youngest age group in 2003-2017.

**Figure 23A ja 23 B. The will to defend the nation**

*"If Finland were attacked, should Finns, in your opinion, take up arms to defend themselves in all situations, even if the outcome seemed uncertain?"*



## Independence is the most important reason for defending Finland by military means

In the 2017 survey the ABDI asked half of the respondents to give reasons, in their own words, why Finland should be defended with military means. The other half chose reasons from given alternatives. The list included territorial integrity, Finnish democracy, Finnish education and welfare system, Finnishness, Finland's independence, equality, freedom of religion, no reason. The respondent was allowed to choose no more than three the most important reasons.

Finland's independence was given as the most important factor for willingness to defend the country (83%); number two was territorial integrity (60%) and number three was Finnish democracy (43%). These were followed by Finnish education and welfare system, and equality (both 25%), Finnishness (22%), freedom of religion (12%), and no reason (1%).

The previous time for polling the question was in 2007. As there were more alternatives in 2007 the results are not directly comparable. It can be noted, however, that the reasons given this year and ten years ago are highly similar. (Figure 24)

The most important reasons, given in own words, were Finland's independence (216), own country, home (127), Finnish democracy, freedom, equality (72).

A total of 417 respondents answered, in their own words, why Finland should be defended with military means in all situations even if the outcome looked uncertain.

## The will to defend the nation is strong at the personal level

Eighty-seven percent (87% in January 2016) answer in the affirmative to the question, 'Would you be ready to take part in national defence duties to the best of your abilities and skills?' Ninety percent % of men (91%) and 84% of women (83%) agree.

Ninety-four percent (88% in January 2016) of the Green Party supporters answered in the affirmative as did 93% (93%) of the Finns Party supporters; 92% (93%) of the Coalition Party; 88% (84%) of the SDP; 83% (89%) of the Centre Party; and 75% (79%) of the Left Alliance supporters agree.



Ten percent (11% in January 2016) of the respondents answer in the negative to the question; 13% (14%) of women and 8% (8%) of men.

Of the Left Alliance supporters, 23% (19% in January 2016) answer in the negative, as do 15% (8%) of the Centre Party supporters; 10% (15%) of the SDP; 7% (6%) of the Finns Party; 6% (7%) of the Coalition Party; and 4% (11%) of the Green Party supporters agree. (*Figures 25 and 26*)

## Support for Finland's military cooperation

The question about Finland's military cooperation with the Nordic countries, the EU and NATO has been asked in the ABDI surveys since 2012 while the question about cooperation with Sweden was included in 2014, and Finland's military cooperation with the United States in 2016.

Ninety-four percent (94% in 2016) of the respondents take a positive view both on military cooperation with Sweden and on military cooperation with all the Nordic countries.

Eighty-nine percent take a positive view on military cooperation in the European Union (87% in 2016). Sixty-one percent (60%) of the respondents take a positive view on military cooperation with NATO while 32% (33%) are opposed to it.

Fifty-nine percent (64% in 2016) of the respondents take a positive view on military cooperation with the United States while slightly more than a third, 35% (30%), are opposed to it. (*Figures 27-32*)

## Compared to men, women envisage the future as more insecure

Six out of ten, 60% (59% in 2016) believe that Finland and Finns will live in a more insecure world for the next five years; sixty-eight percent of women (66%) and 52% of men (53%) feel this way.

One out of four or 25% (27% in 2016) see no difference to the present situation; 29% (29%) of men and 20% (24%) of women think this way.

Fourteen percent (13% in 2016) of the respondents believe in a more secure future; 18% (17%) of men and 10% (10%) of women. (Figures 33 and 34)

## The global refugee situation and international terrorism cause the greatest concern

Since 2004 the ABDI has asked whether a number of phenomena and factors pose much, some, little or no concern at all about the future. This year the list includes 19 different factors, two of which are new: development in the European Union and development in the United States.

These factors pose much or some concern:

The world's refugee situation 83% (85% in 2016);

International terrorism 81% (75% in 2016);

Climate change 75% (71% in 2016);

Politically extremist movements 72% (74% in 2016);

The employment situation in Finland 71% (84% in 2016);

Racism 69% (70% in 2016);

Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction 68% (64% in 2016);

Social inequality in Finland 67% (69% in 2016);

Economic outlook in Europe 65% (75% in 2016);

Religious extremist movements 64% (62% in 2016);

The situation in Syria 64% (73% in 2016);

Security situation in the Baltic Sea area 64% (66% in 2016);

Development in the United States 63% (Included for the first time);

Threats, in other words cyber threats against information networks 63% (60%)

Development in Russia 62% (72% in 2016);

The number of asylum seekers in Finland 62% (61% in 2016);

The growing numbers of migrants in Finland 61% (61% in 2016);

Development in the European Union 61% (61% in 2016) (Included for the first time);

The situation in Turkey 49% (57% in 2016);

The situation in Ukraine 43% (59% in 2016);

(Figures 35-39)

## Preparedness for different threats

The ABDI asked ten years ago, for the first time, about preparing for different threats. The current list includes 12 different threats and the respondents assess the level of preparedness; the percentage indicates how well Finland is prepared for a specific threat:

Contagious diseases, epidemics, well prepared for, 84% (84% in 2016).

Disasters and major accidents, well prepared for, 80% (80% in 2016).

Various environmental threats (floods, oil spills, transport of hazardous substances), well prepared for, 79% (80% in 2016).

Armed attack, well prepared for, 76% (70% in 2016).

The availability of energy, well prepared for, 72% (65% in 2016).

Climate change, well prepared for, 61% (57% in 2016); poorly prepared for, 34% (38%).

Political pressure from abroad, well prepared for, 55% (52% in 2016); poorly prepared for, 33% (39%).

Terrorism, well prepared for, 53% (59% in 2016); poorly prepared for, 45% (37%).

Cyber threats against information networks, well prepared for, 50% (51% in 2016). Poorly prepared for, 42% (42%).

Economic pressure from abroad, well prepared for, 49% (44% in 2016); poorly prepared for, 38% (46%).

International crime, well prepared for, 49% (51% in 2016); poorly prepared for, 46% (45%).

Economic crises, well prepared for, 42% (34% in 2016); poorly prepared for, 52% (61%).

*(Figures 41, 42 and 43)*

## Preparedness for acts of terrorism against Finland is seen as the key issue

The question lists ten different threat scenarios for which Finland should primarily prepare for, according to the respondents, in the next decade. The respondents chose threat scenarios which they regarded as the most important, the second most important and the third most important.

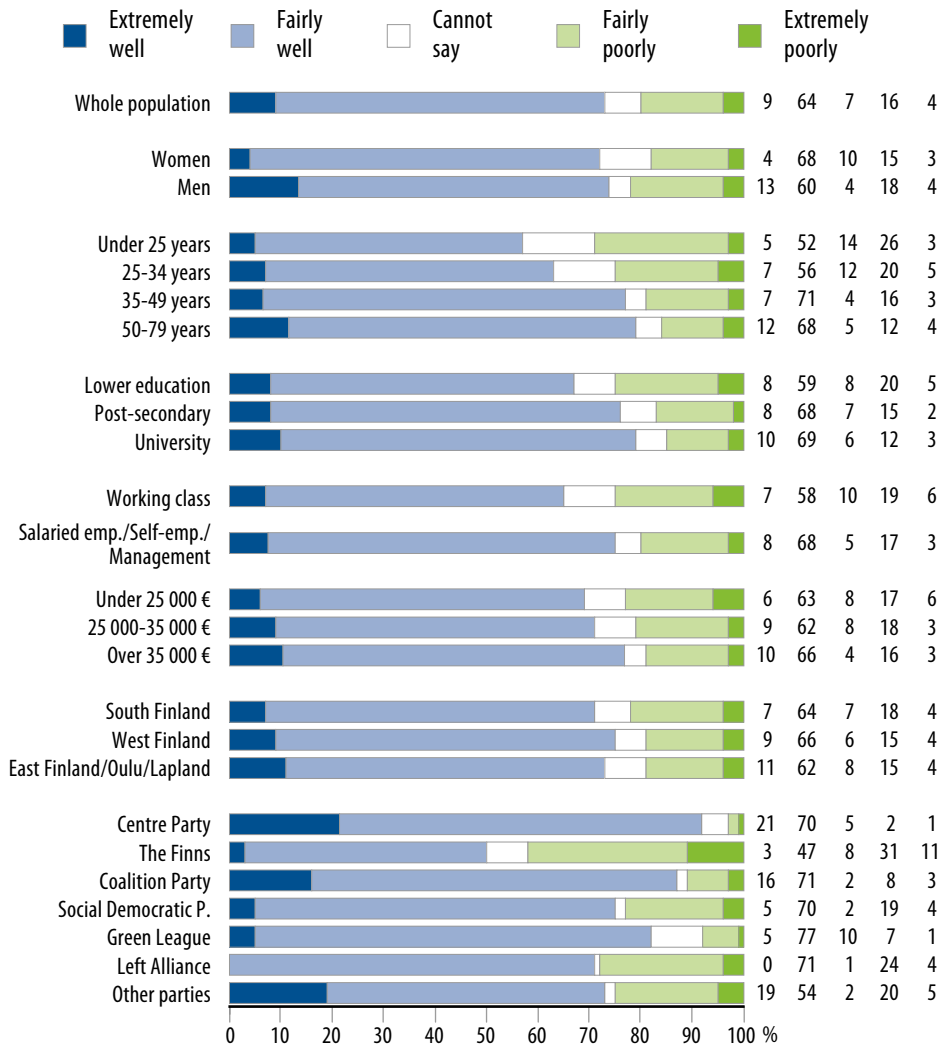
### The comments

- A terrorist act against Finland (54%)
- Growth in international crime (42%)
- The deep, global crisis faced by the international economy's (32%)
- Environmental catastrophe caused by global warming (29%)
- Causing damage to data transmission system with the aim to paralyse society (29%)
- A regional crisis near Finland, caused by social problems or an environmental catastrophe (25%)
- An armed conflict in Finland's neighbourhood (24%)
- Nuclear catastrophe in Finland or in its neighbourhood (22%)
- An armed attack against Finland (17%)
- Russia's military measures against Finland (17%)

*(Figures 44 and 45)*

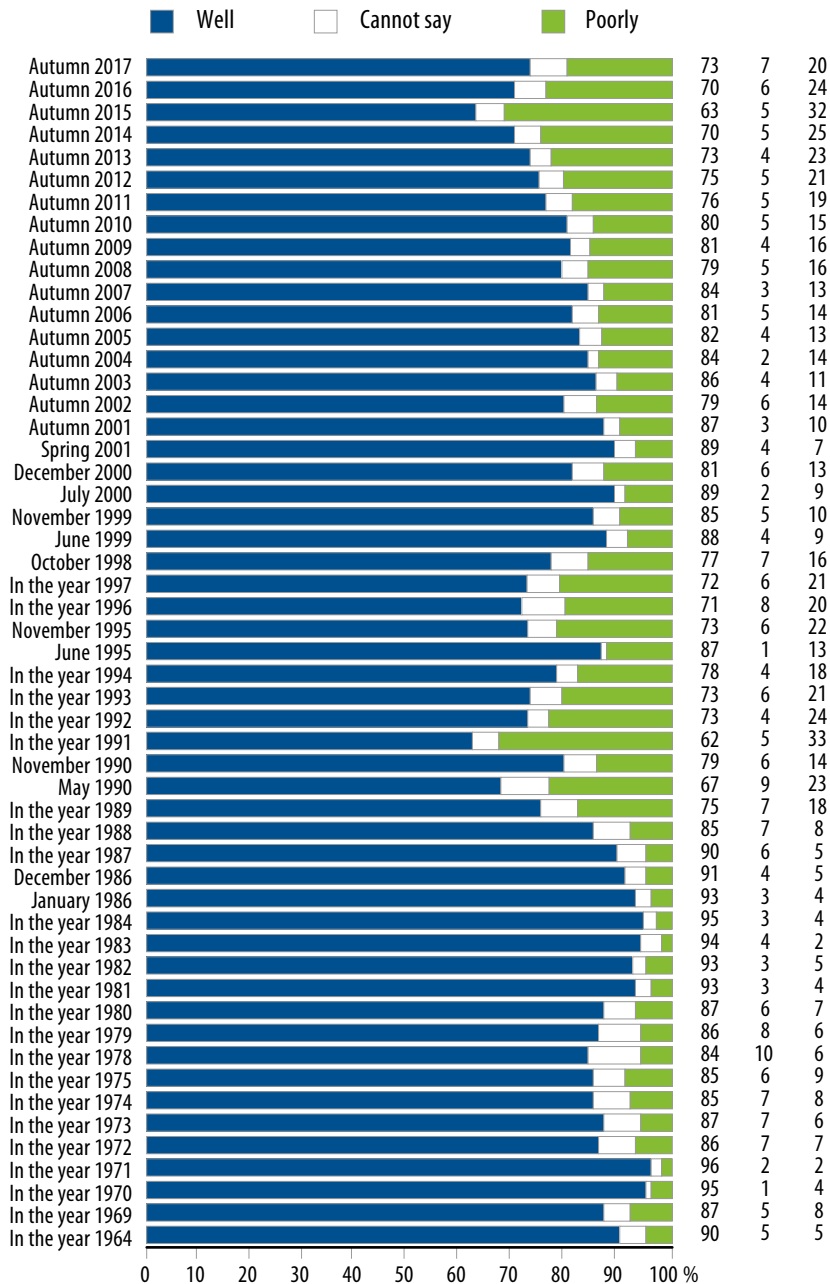
**Figure 1. The conduct of Finnish foreign policy**

*"In your opinion, how well or how poorly has Finnish foreign policy been conducted in recent years?"*



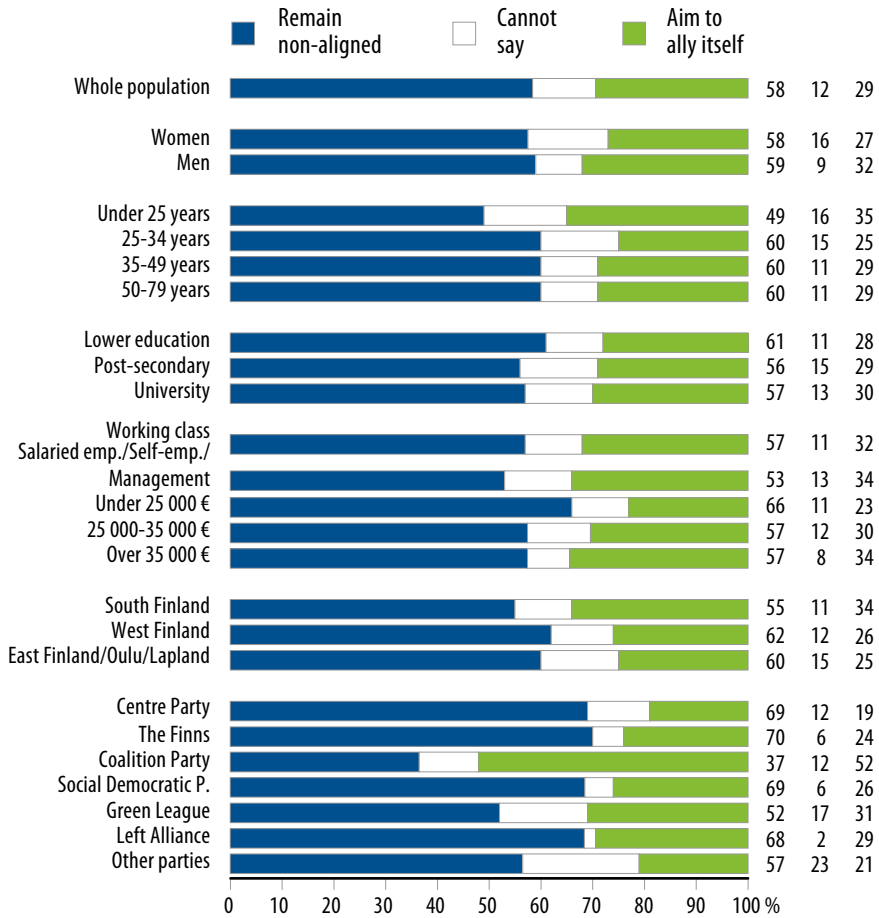
**Figure 2. The conduct of Finnish foreign policy**

*"In your opinion, how well or how poorly has Finnish foreign policy been conducted in recent years?"*



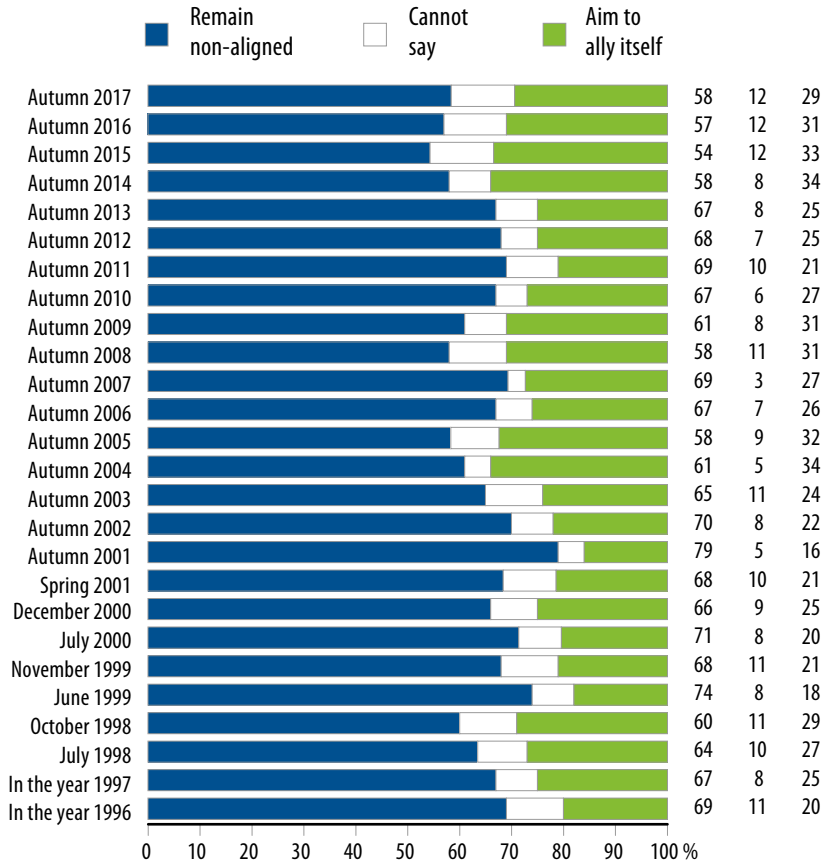
**Figure 3. Military alignment or non-alignment**

*"In your opinion, should Finland remain militarily non-aligned or should Finland aim to ally itself militarily?"*



**Figure 4. Military alignment or non-alignment**

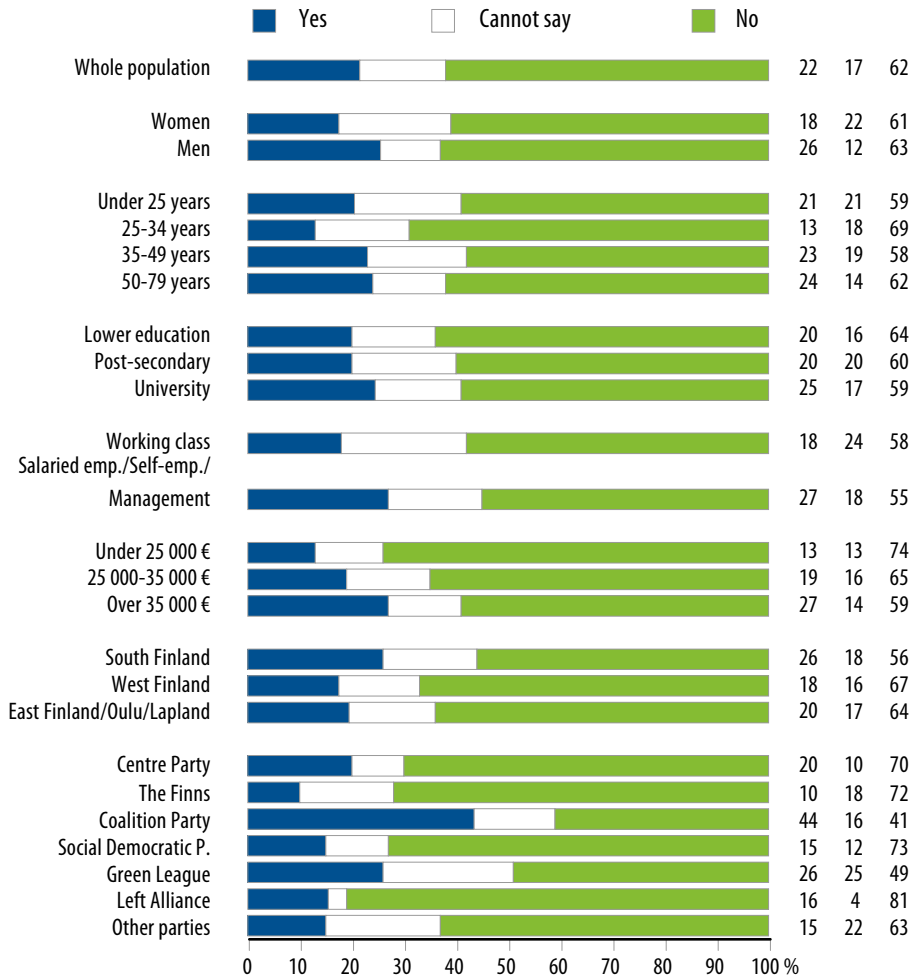
*"In your opinion, should Finland remain militarily non-aligned or should Finland aim to ally itself militarily?"*





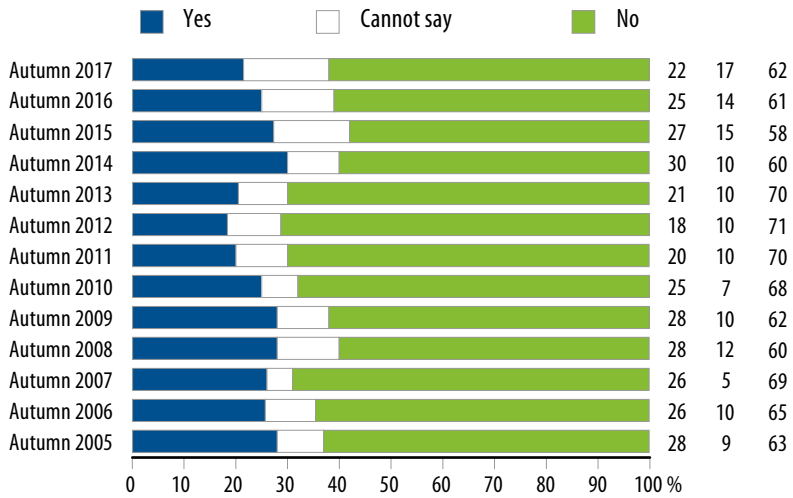
**Figure 5. Nato membership**

*"In your opinion, should Finland seek membership in Nato?"*



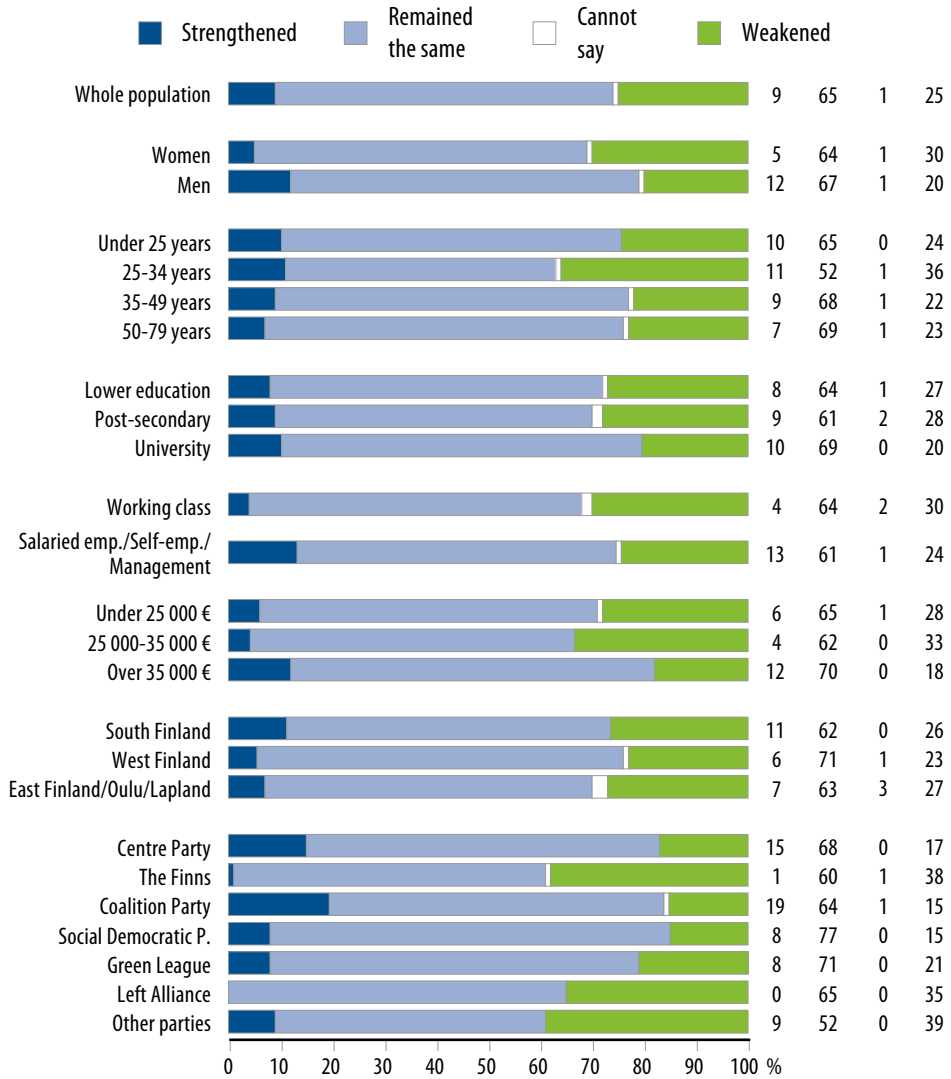
**Figure 6. Nato membership**

*"In your opinion, should Finland seek membership in Nato?"*



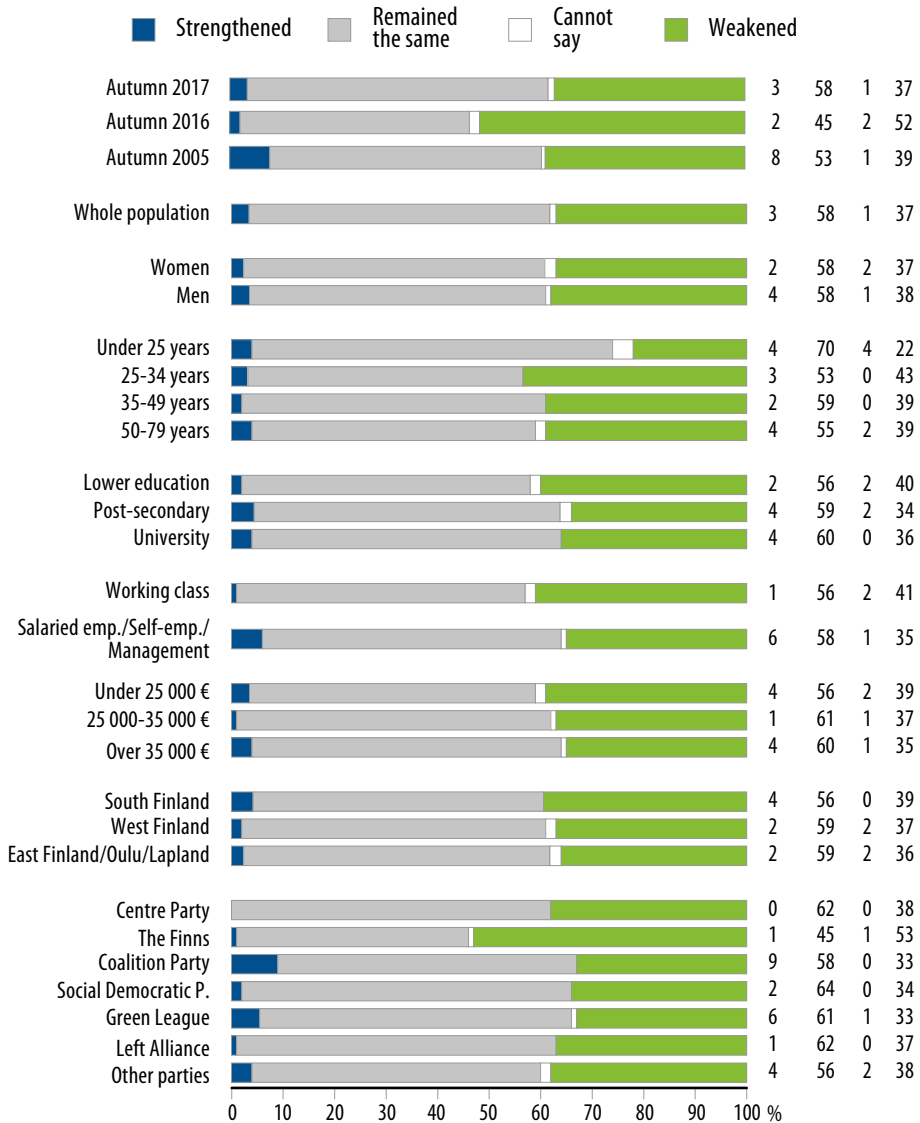
**Figure 7. Confidence in Finland's future**

*"Describe the confidence you feel about Finland's future. Has it increased, decreased or remained the same?"*



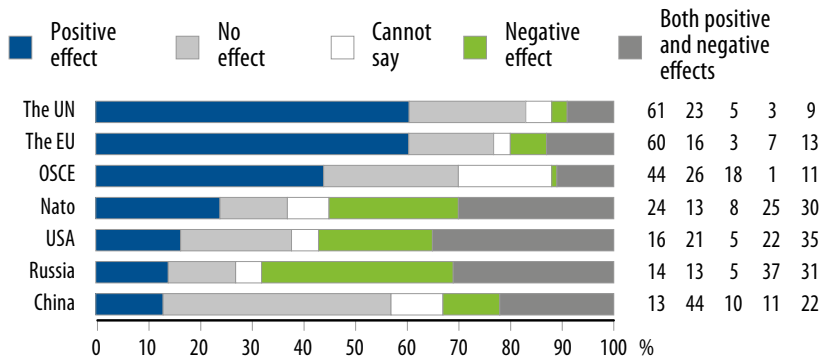
### Figure 8. Confidence in the future of the European Union

*"What kind of confidence do you have in the future of the European Union? In the last two years, has your confidence been strengthened, weakened or has it remained the same?"*



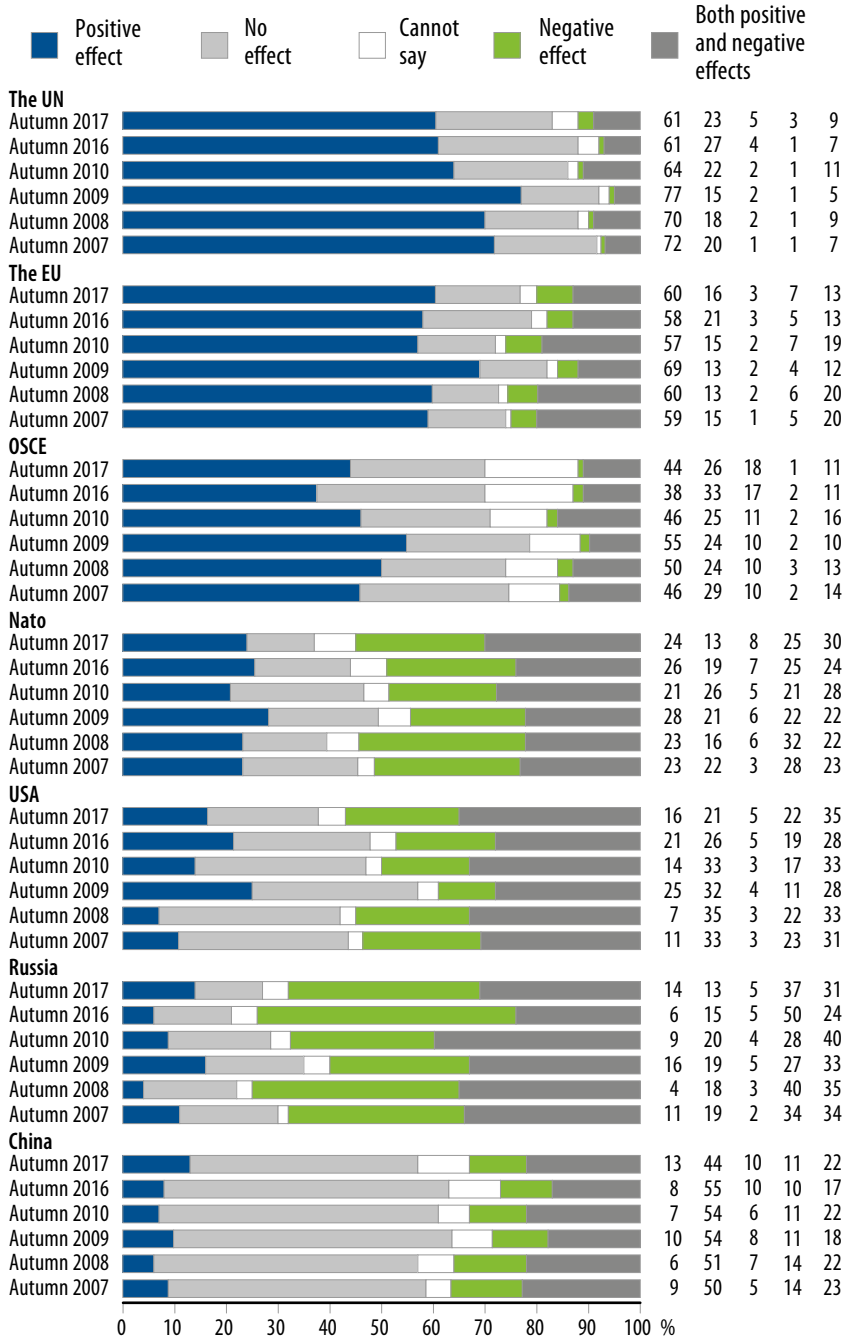
**Figure 9. The impact of various factors on Finland's security**

*"How do you assess the impact of the following factors on Finland's security?"*



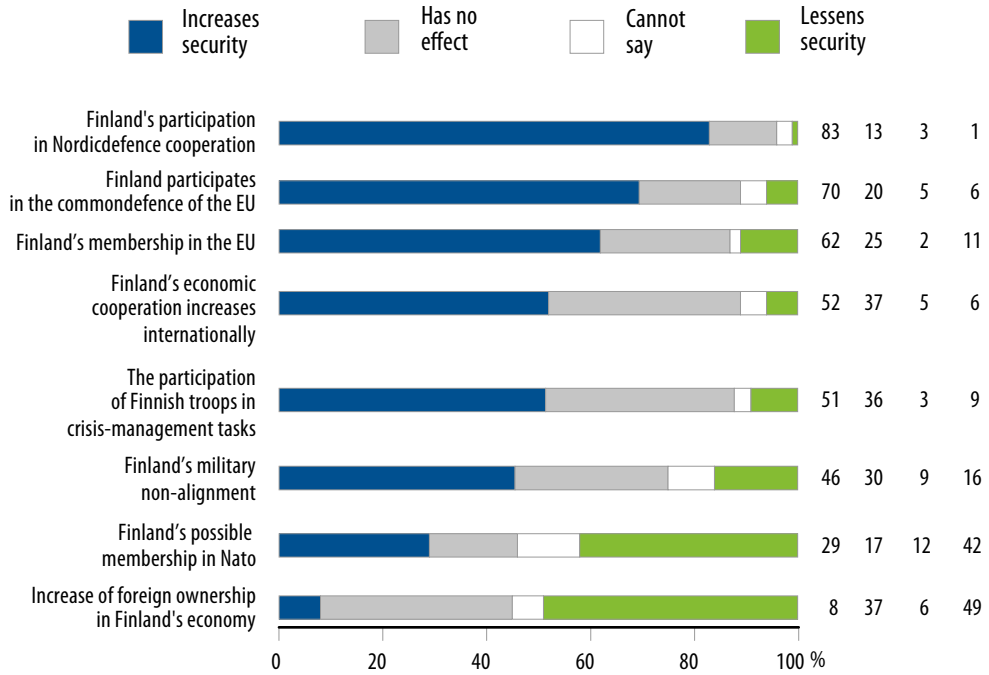
**Figure 10. The impact of various factors on Finland's security**

"How do you assess the impact of the following factors on Finland's security?"



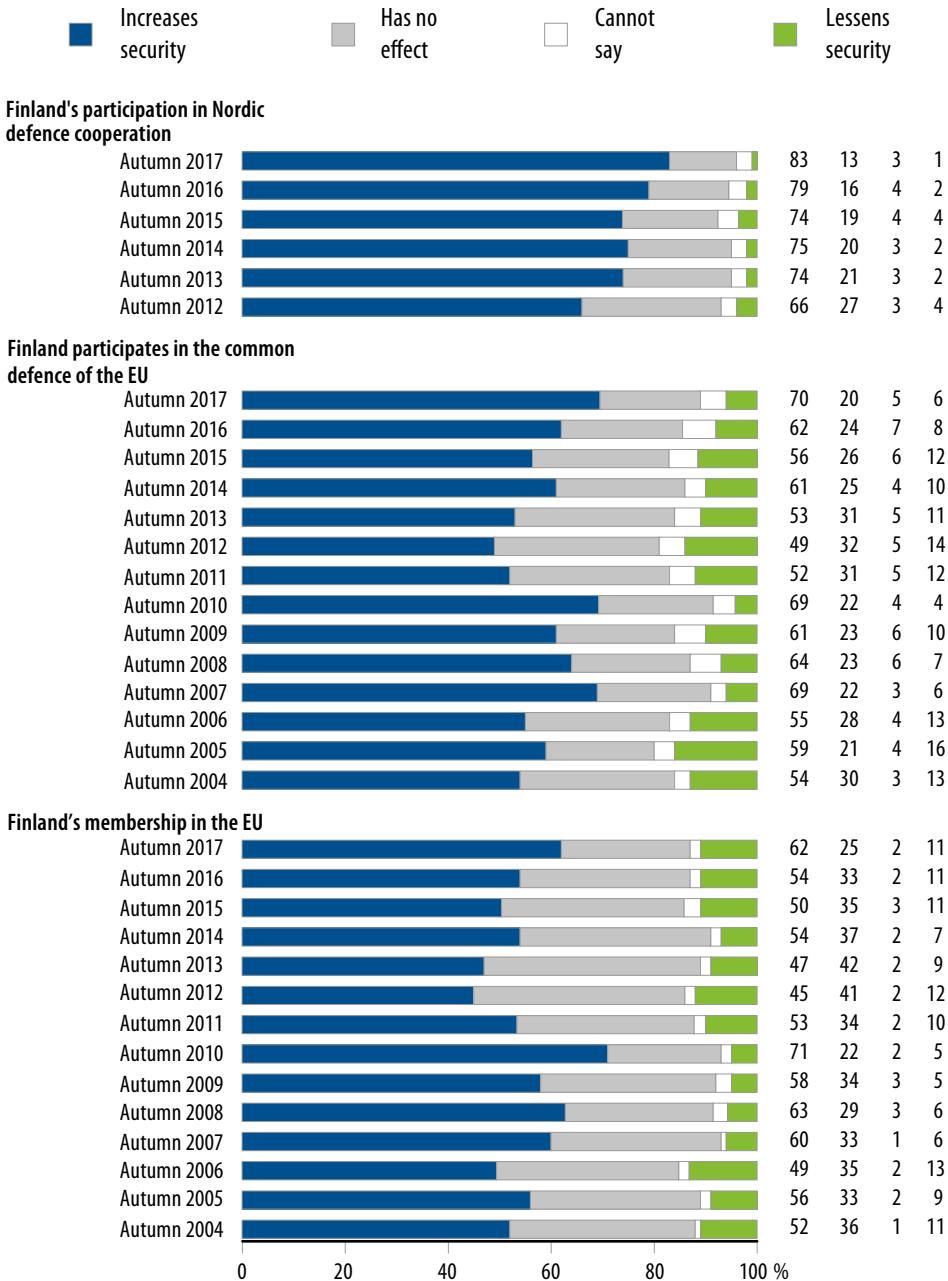
**Figure 11. Factors affecting security**

*"How do you assess the following phenomena and factors? How do they affect the security of Finland and Finns?"*



**Figure 12. Factors affecting security (I)**

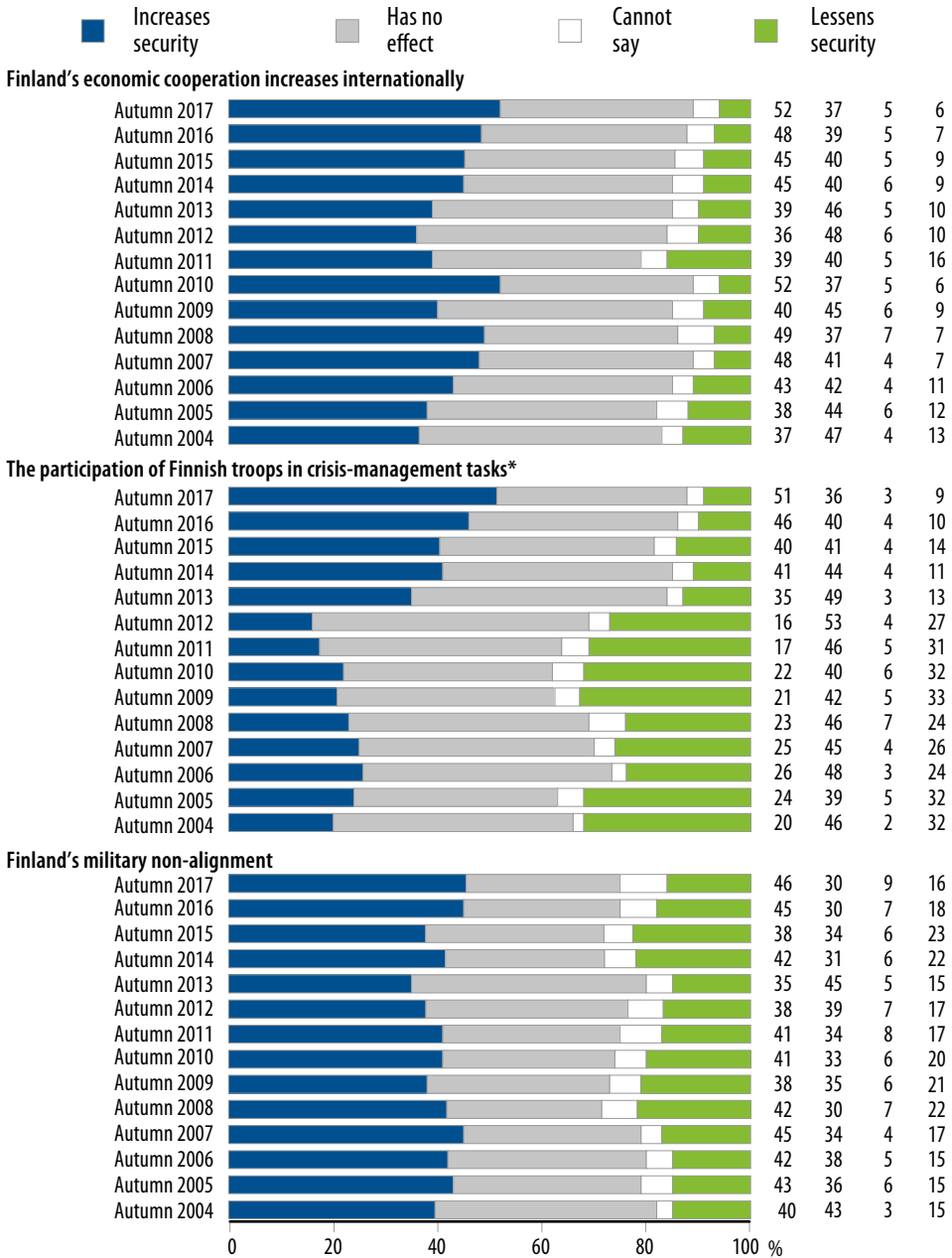
*"How do you assess the following phenomena and factors? How do they affect the security of Finland and Finns?"*





**Figure 13. Factors affecting security (II)**

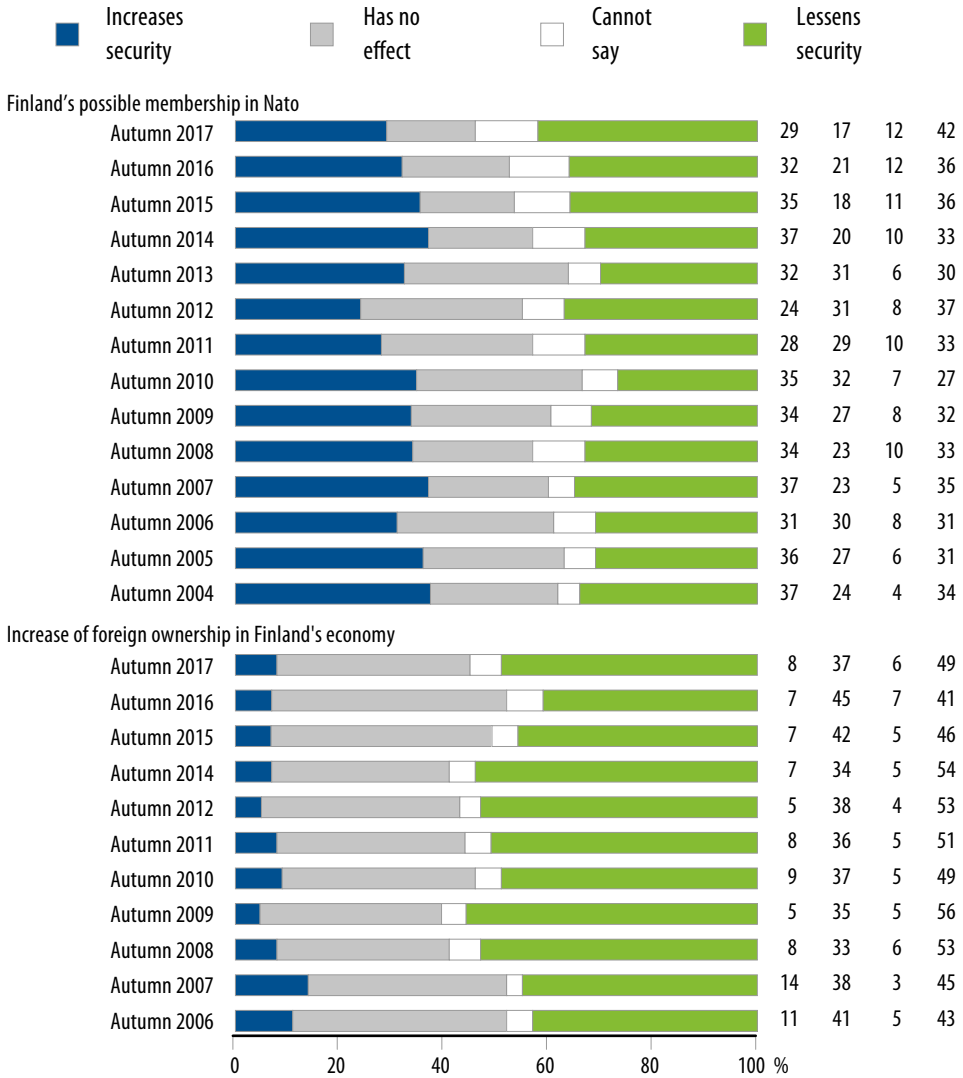
*"How do you assess the following phenomena and factors? How do they affect the security of Finland and Finns?"*



\*) 2004-2012 The participation of Finnish troops in crisismanagement tasks in war zones

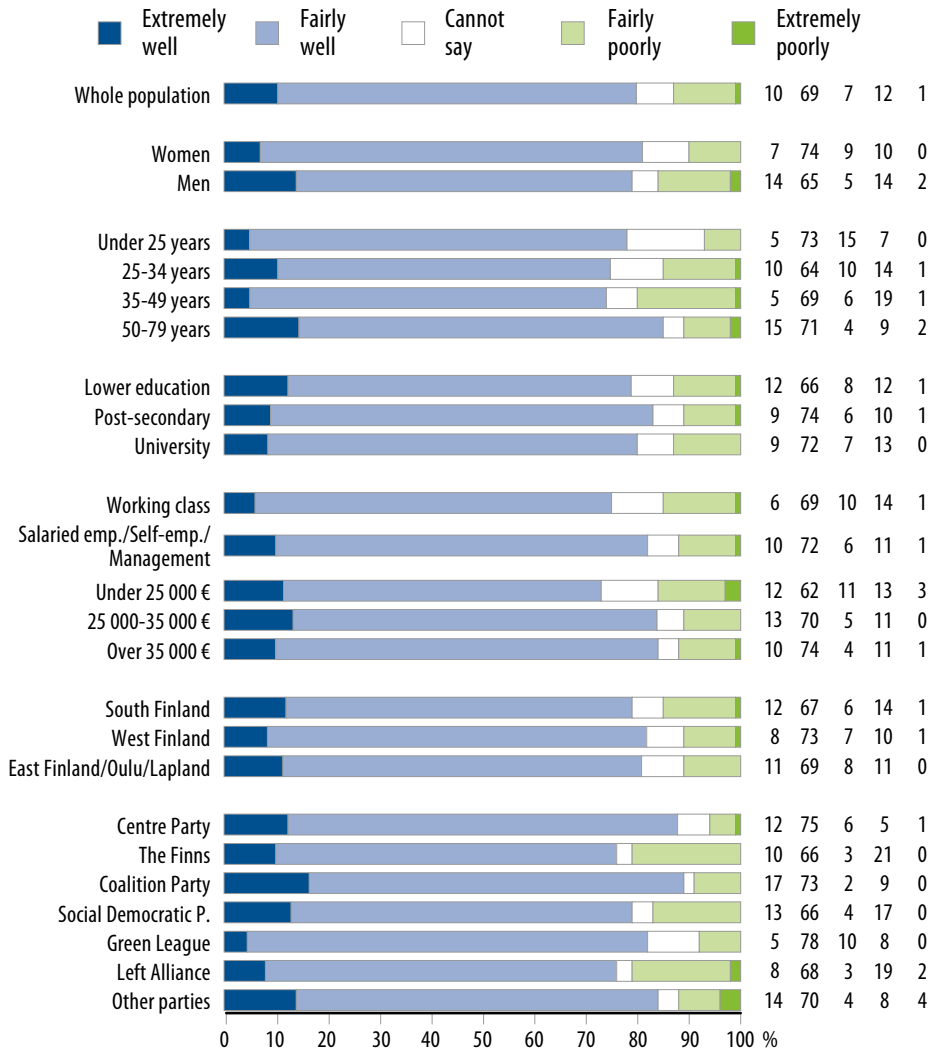
**Figure 14. Factors affecting security (III)**

*"How do you assess the following phenomena and factors? How do they affect the security of Finland and Finns?"*



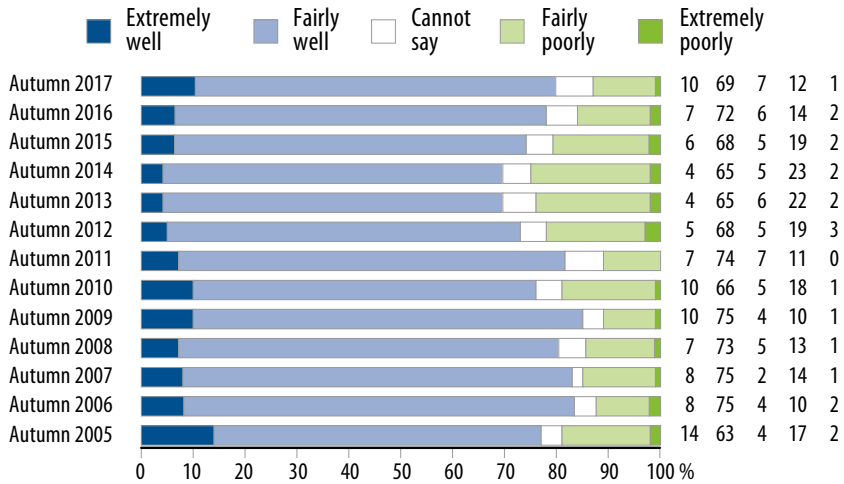
**Figure 15. The conduct of defence policy in Finland**

*"In your opinion, how well or how poorly has Finland's defence policy been conducted in recent years?"*



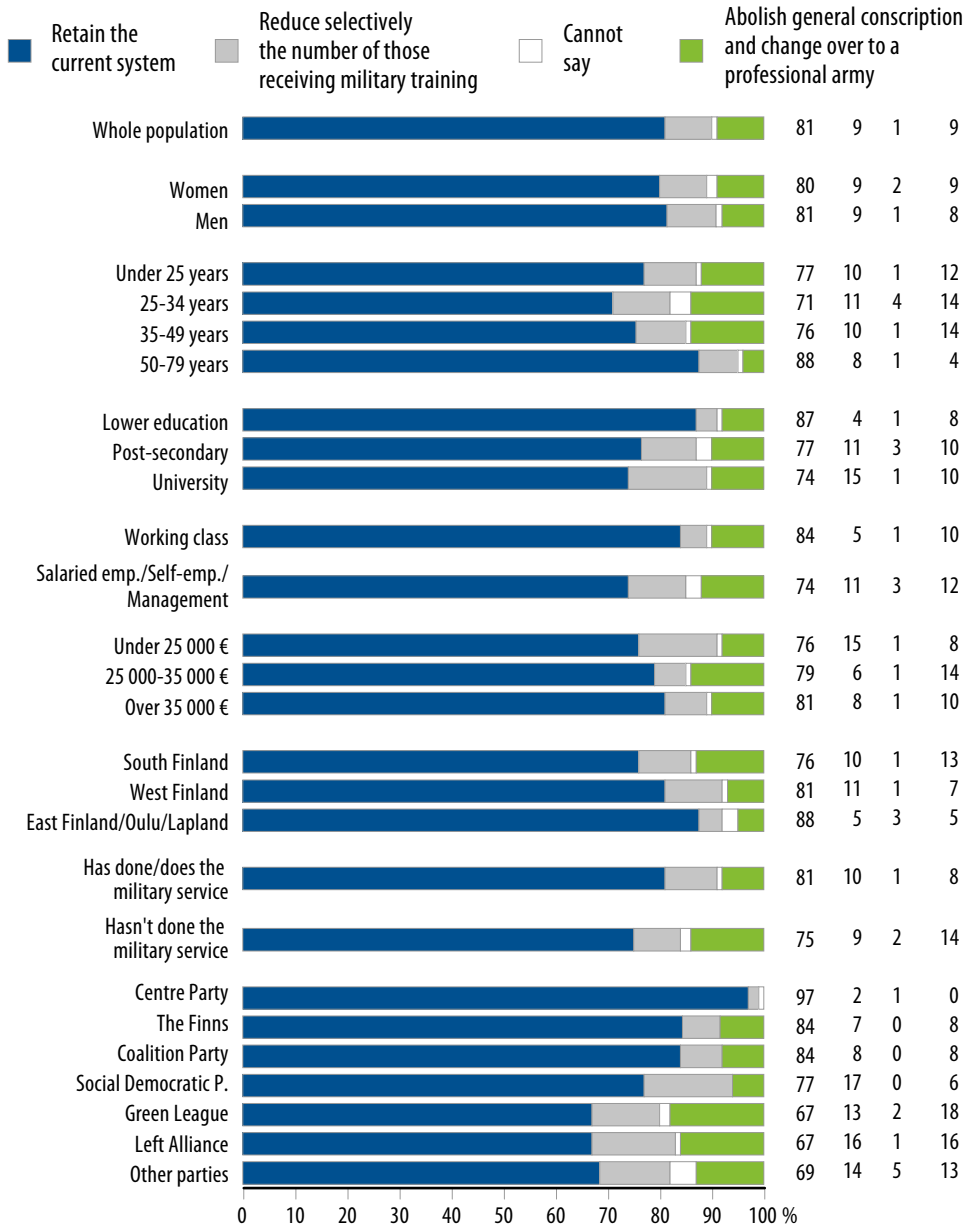
**Figure 16. The conduct of defence policy in Finland**

*"In your opinion, how well or how poorly has Finland's defence policy been conducted in recent years?"*



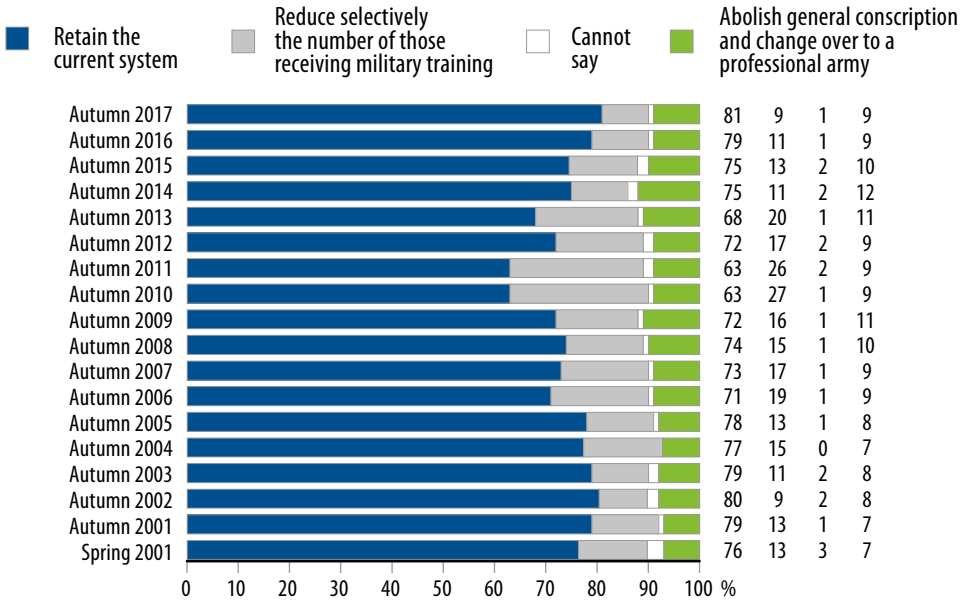
**Figure 17. General conscription**

*"Based on a general, compulsory military service for men, Finnish military defence provides military training for as many of the same age group as possible, thus producing a large reserve personnel. Should the current system be retained or should we change over to a selective conscript service where only a part of the same age group receives military training? Or should we change over to a professional army?"*



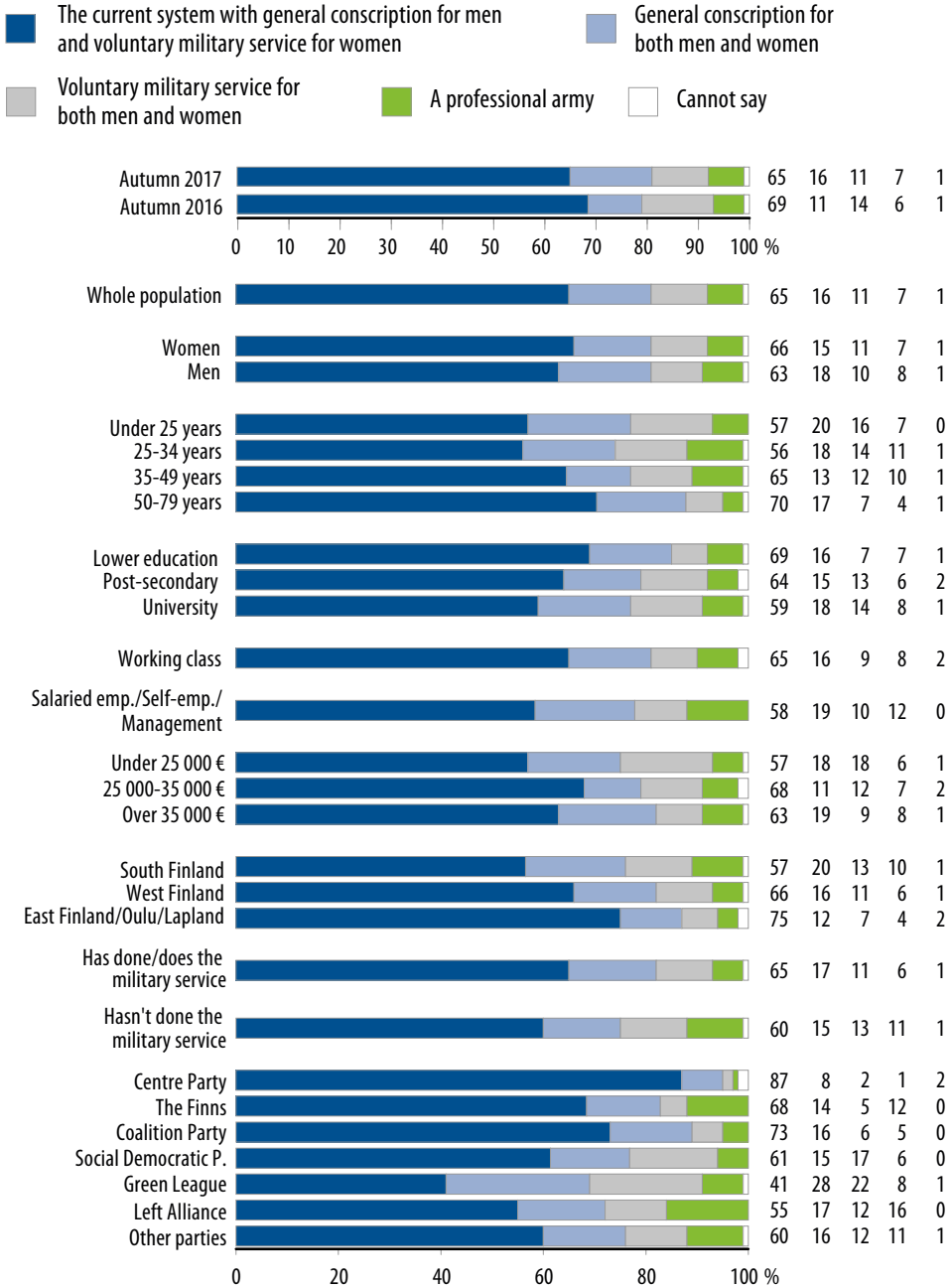
**Figure 18. General conscription**

*"Based on a general, compulsory military service for men, Finnish military defence provides military training for as many of the same age group as possible, thus producing a large reserve personnel. Should the current system be retained or should we change over to a selective conscript service where only a part of the same age group receives military training? Or should we change over to a professional army?"*



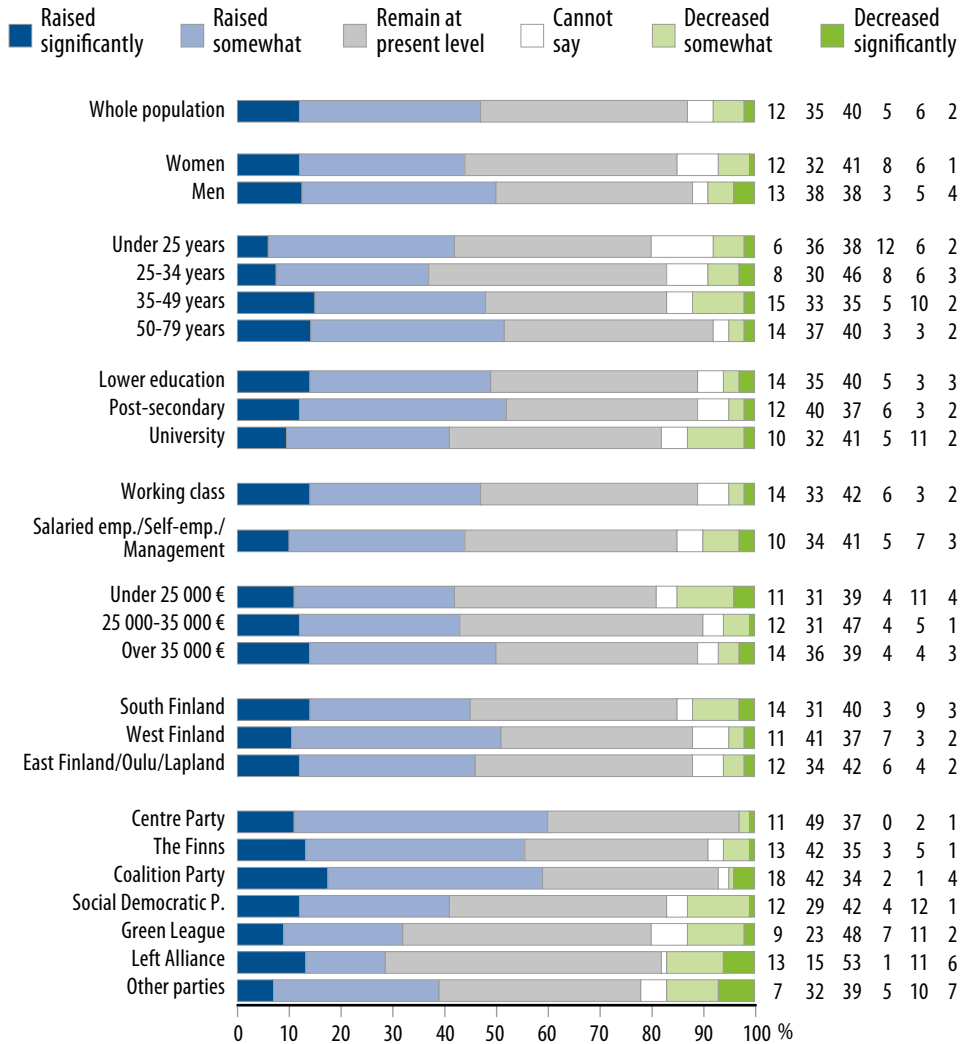
**Figure 19. Finland's defence system**

"In your view, should Finland's defence system be based on... "



**Figure 20. Defence appropriations**

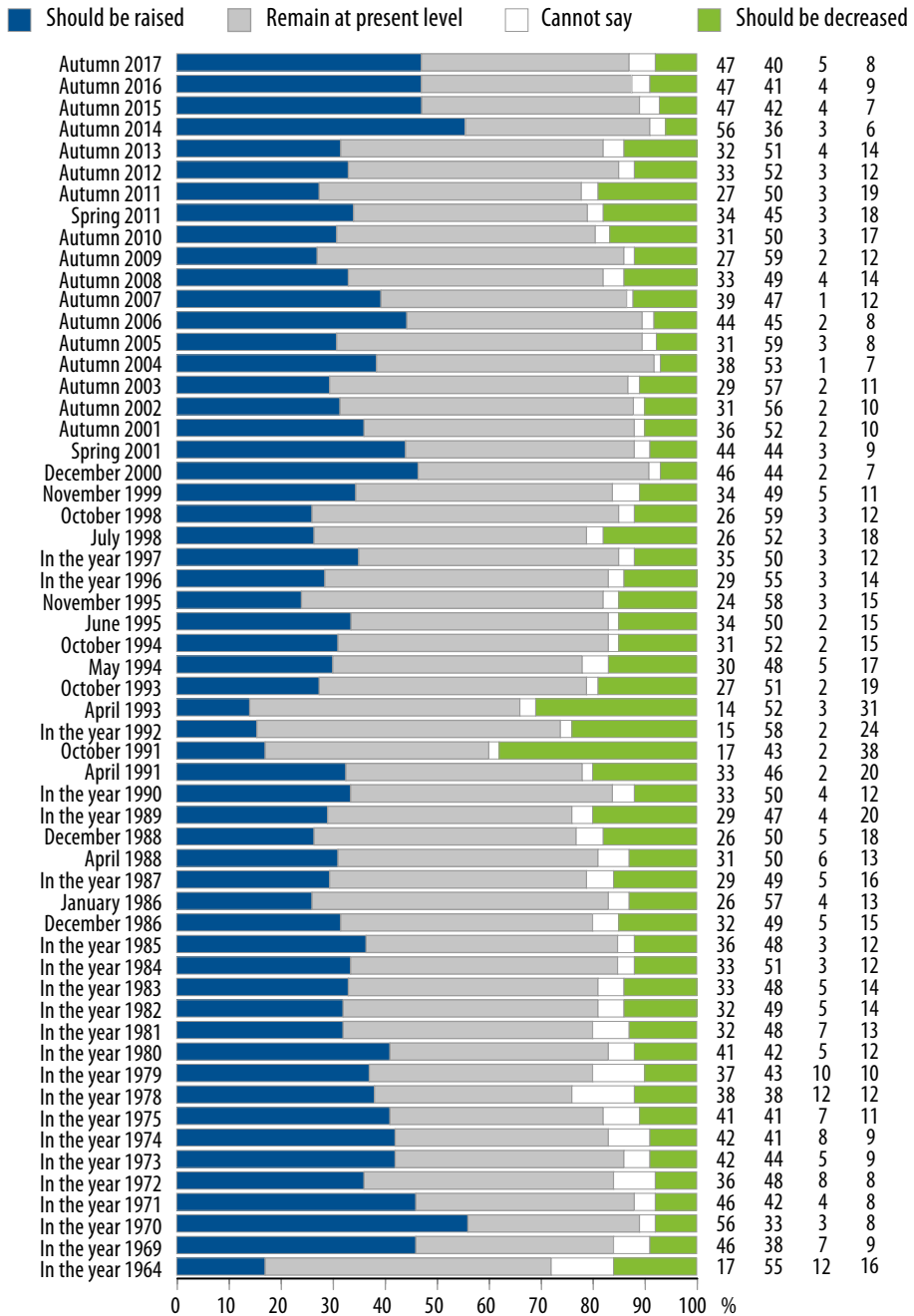
*"What is your opinion on funds allocated to the Defence Forces?"*





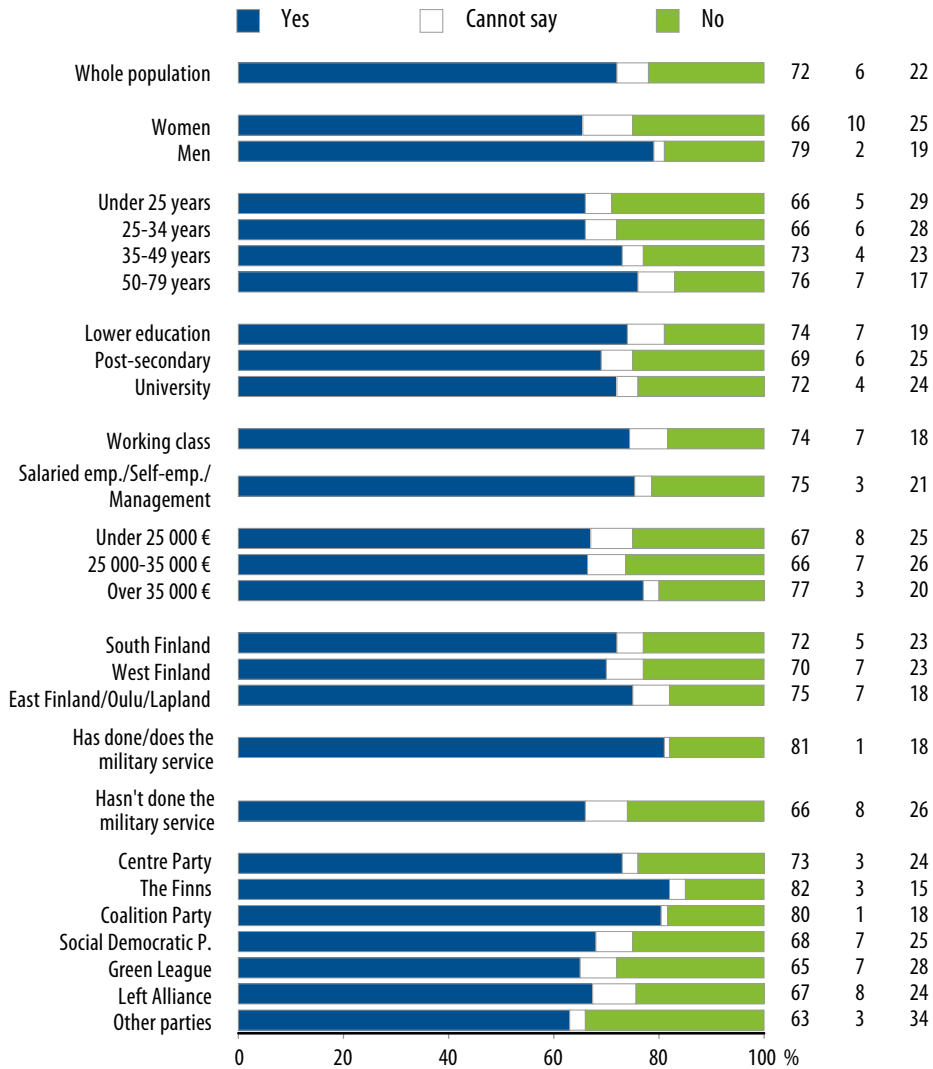
**Figure 21. Defence appropriations**

*"What is your opinion on funds allocated to the Defence Forces?"*



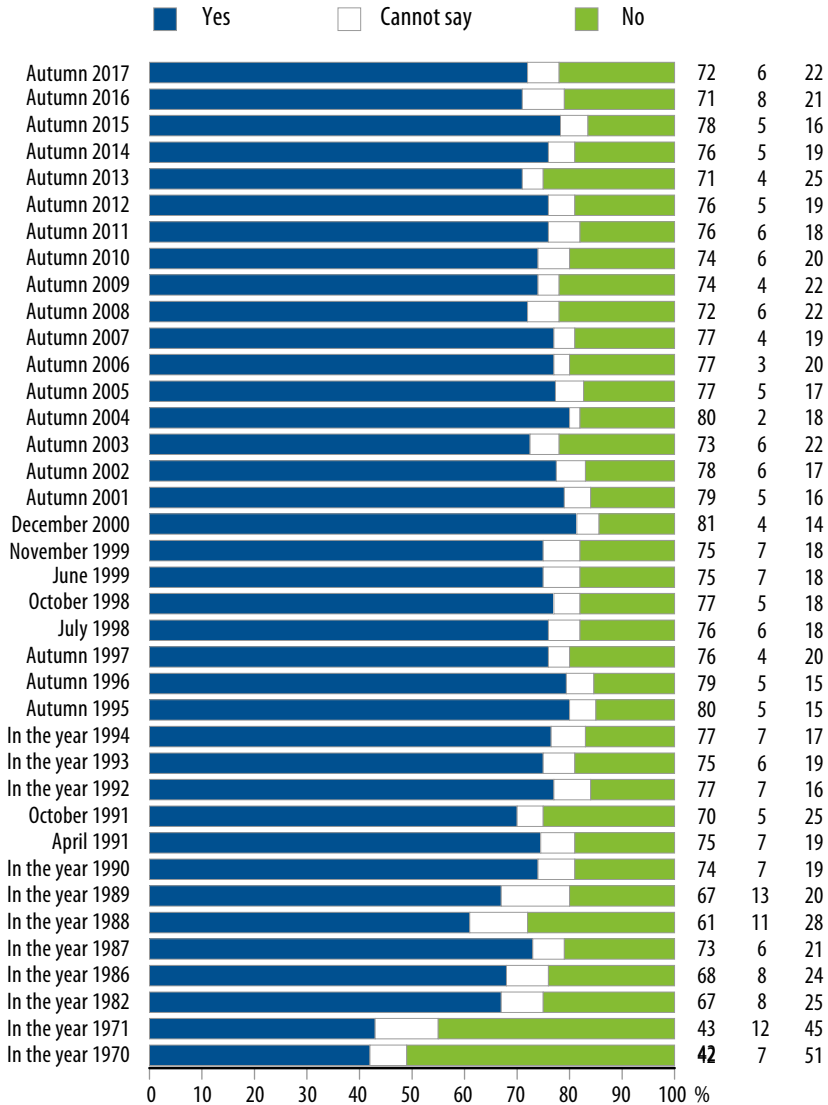
**Figure 22. The will to defend the nation**

*"If Finland were attacked, should Finns, in your opinion, take up arms to defend themselves in all situations, even if the outcome seemed uncertain?"*



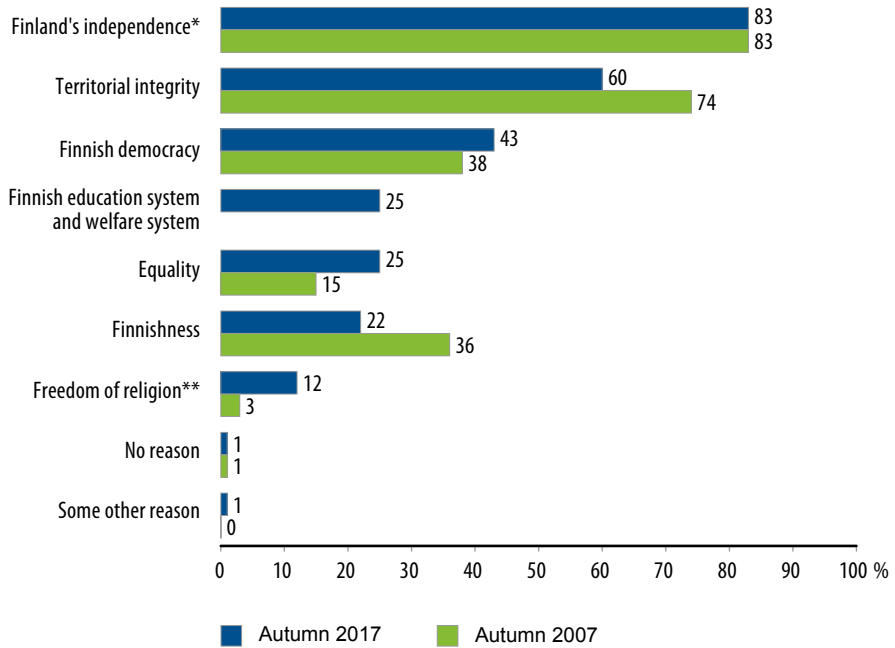
**Figure 23. The will to defend the nation**

*"If Finland were attacked, should Finns, in your opinion, take up arms to defend themselves in all situations, even if the outcome seemed uncertain?"*



**Figure 24. Why should Finland be defended**

*"Which of the following reasons are, in your view, so important that they justify armed defence of Finland, if necessary? Please state three the most important reasons"*

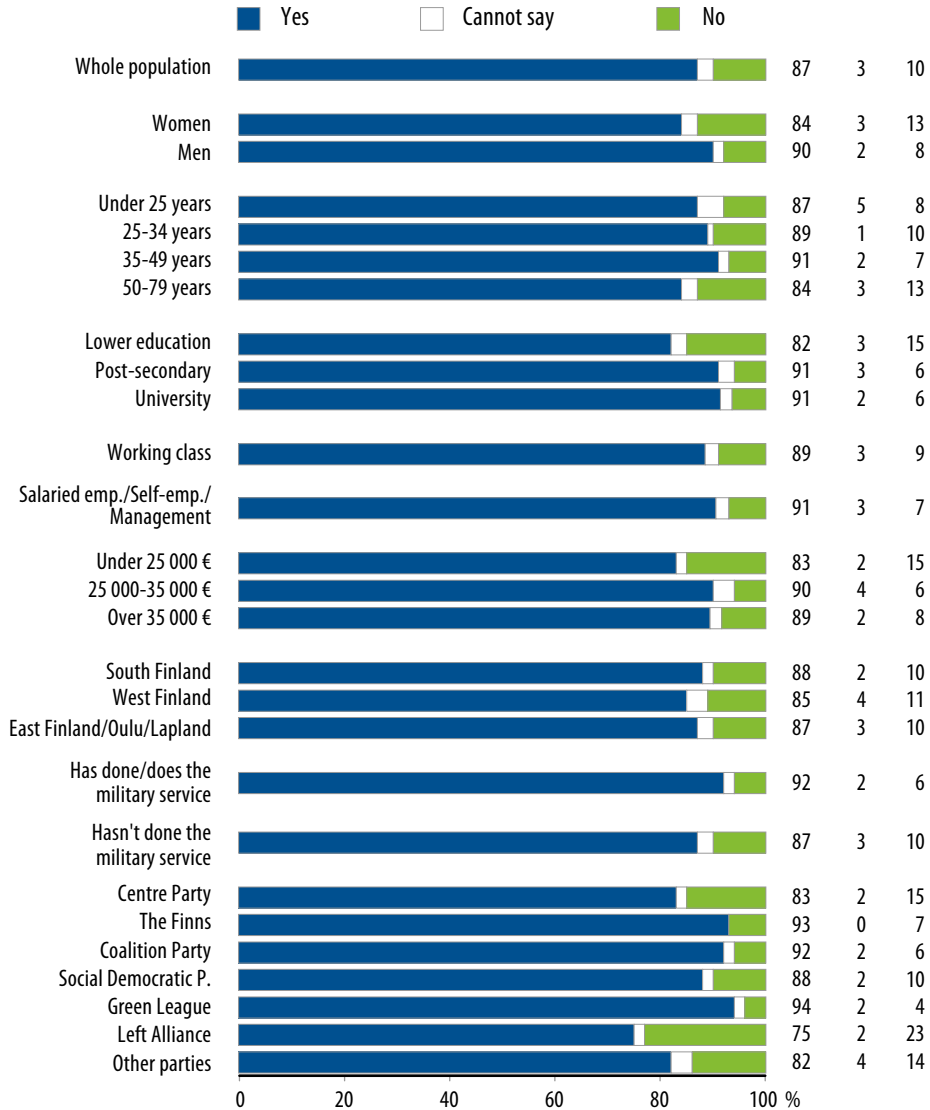


\*) 2007 Finnish independence and sovereignty

\*\*\*) 2007 Religion

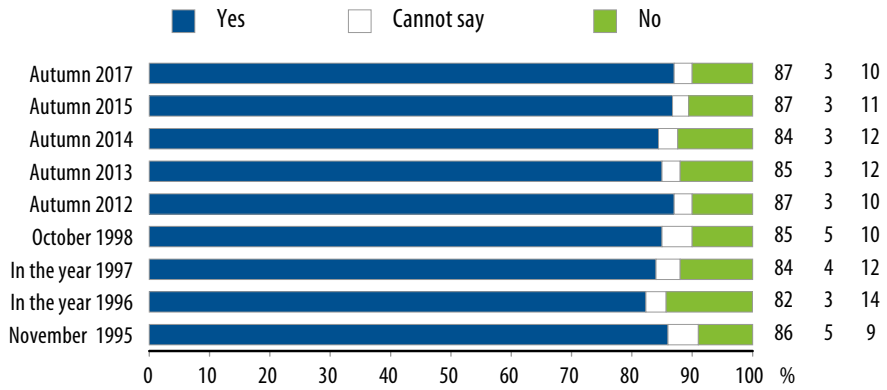
**Figure 25. The will to defend the country (personal level)**

*"If Finland is attacked, would you personally be ready to take part in national defence tasks according to your competences and skills?"*



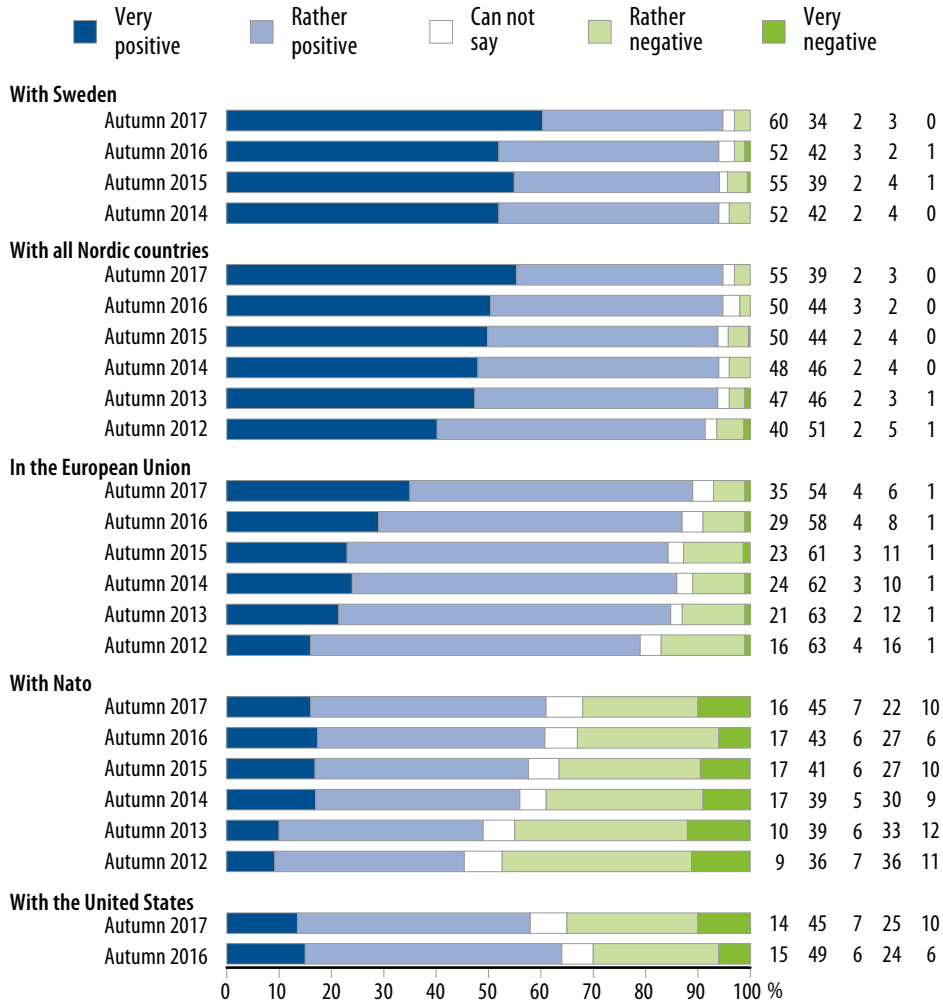
**Figure 26. The will to defend the country (personal level)**

*"If Finland is attacked, would you personally be ready to take part in national defence tasks according to your competences and skills?"*



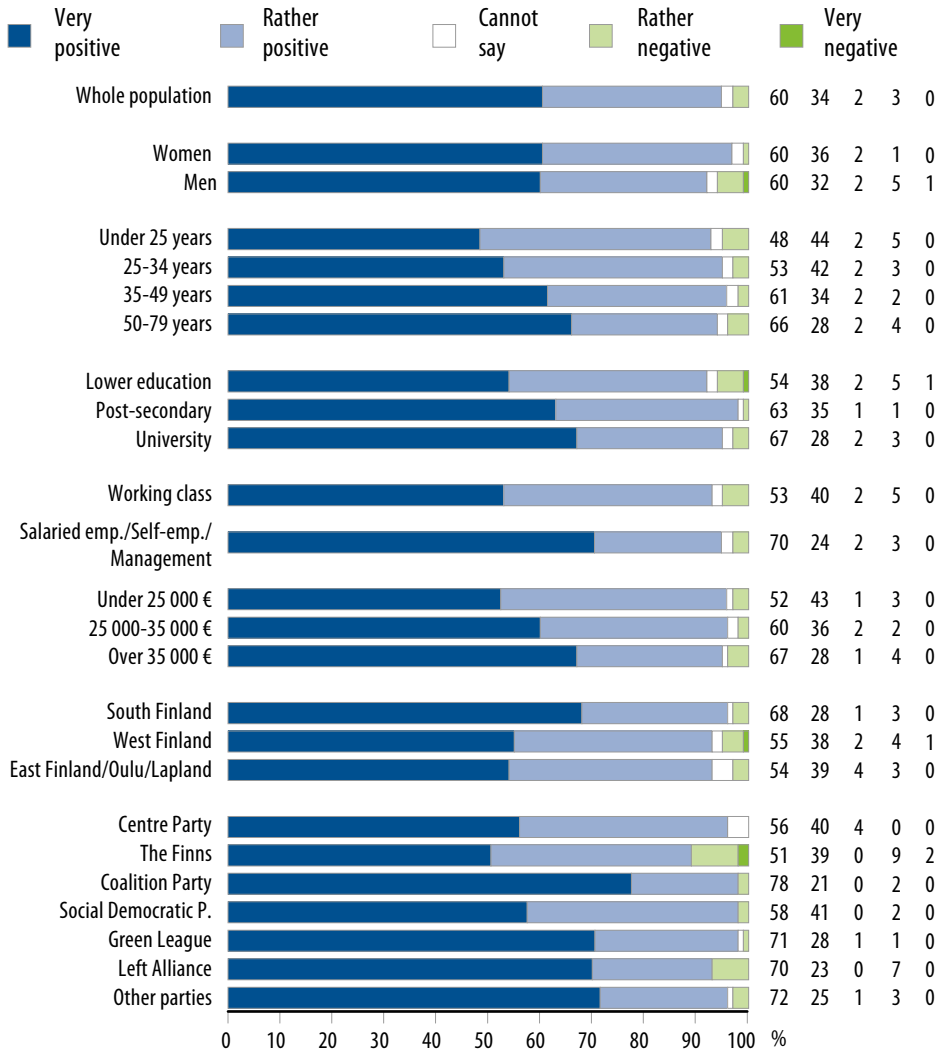
**Figure 27. Military cooperation**

*"Finland conducts military cooperation with Sweden, other Nordic countries, Nato and the European Union. What is your view on cooperation?"*



**Figure 28. Military cooperation with Sweden**

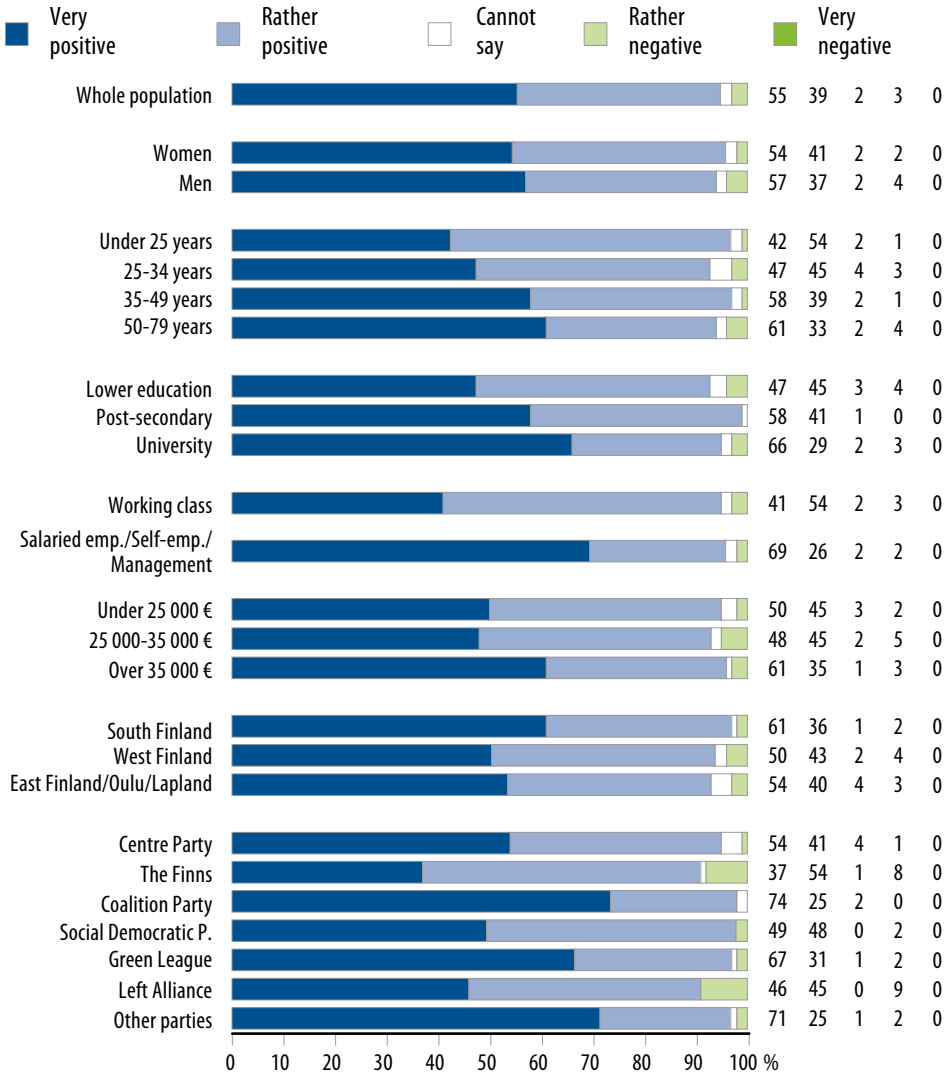
*"Finland conducts military cooperation with Sweden. What is your view on cooperation?"*





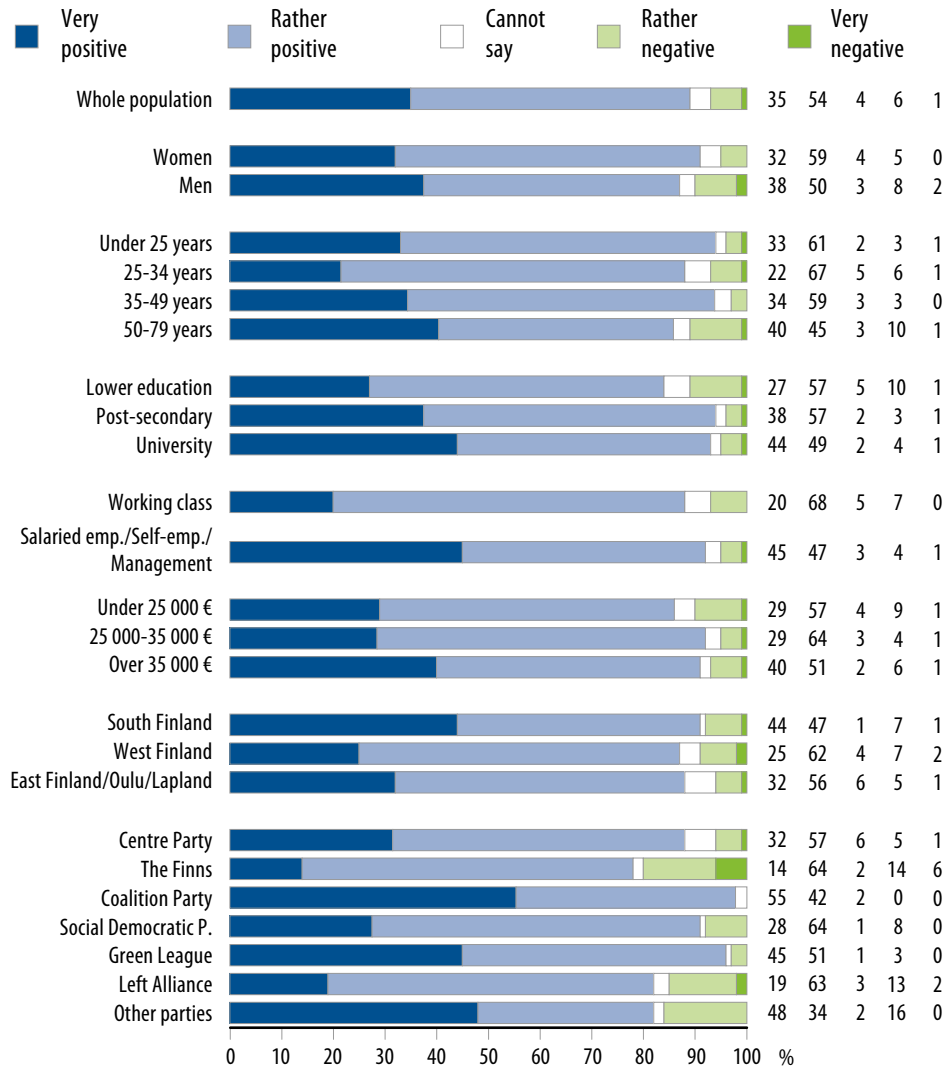
**Figure 29. Military cooperation with all Nordic countries**

"Finland conducts military cooperation with all Nordic countries. What is your view on cooperation?"



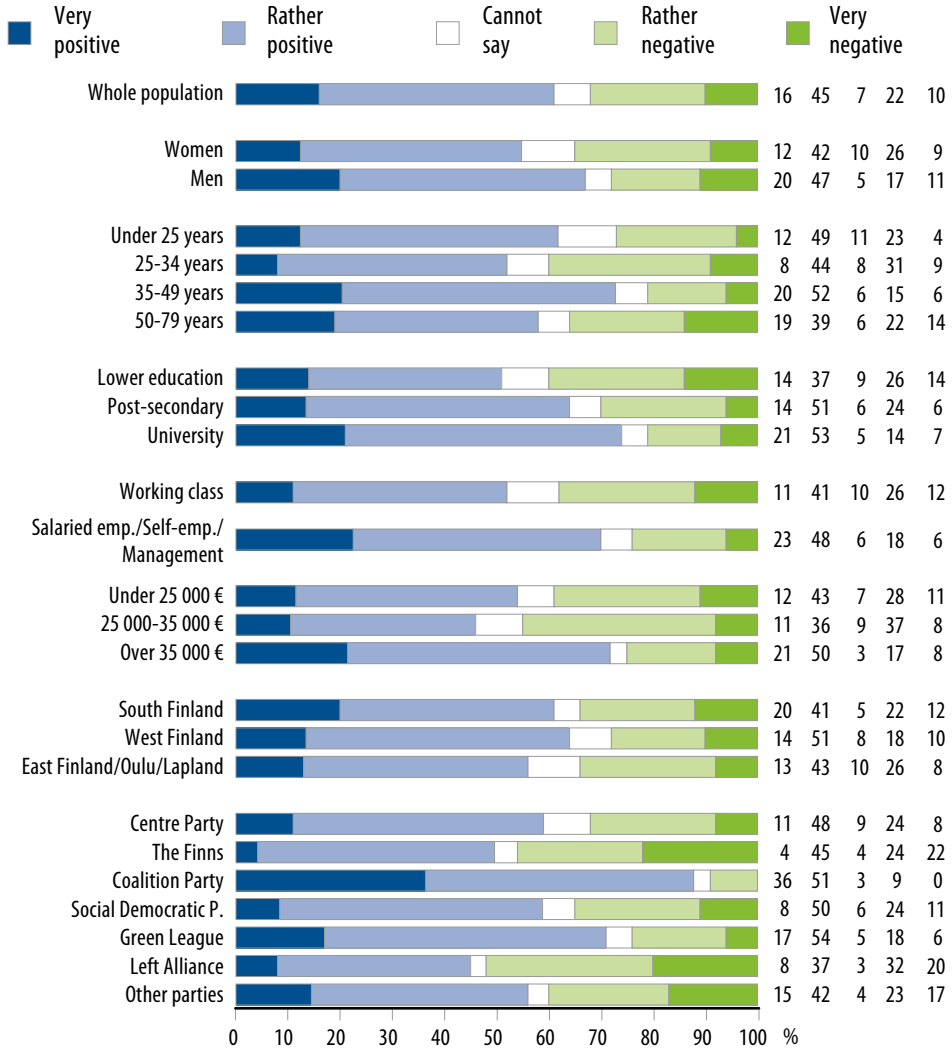
### Figure 30. Military cooperation in the European Union

"Finland conducts military cooperation with the European union. What is your view on cooperation?"



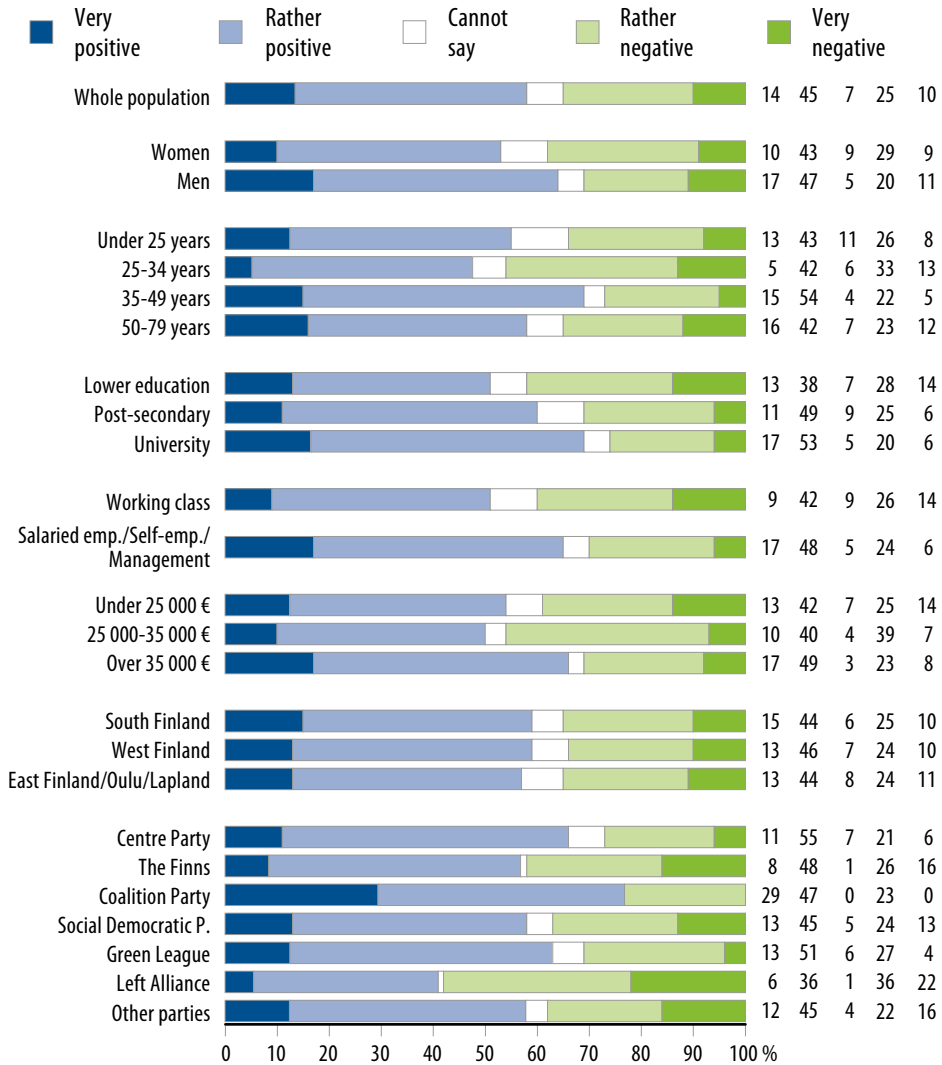
**Figure 31. Military cooperation with Nato**

*"Finland conducts military cooperation with Nato. What is your view on cooperation?"*



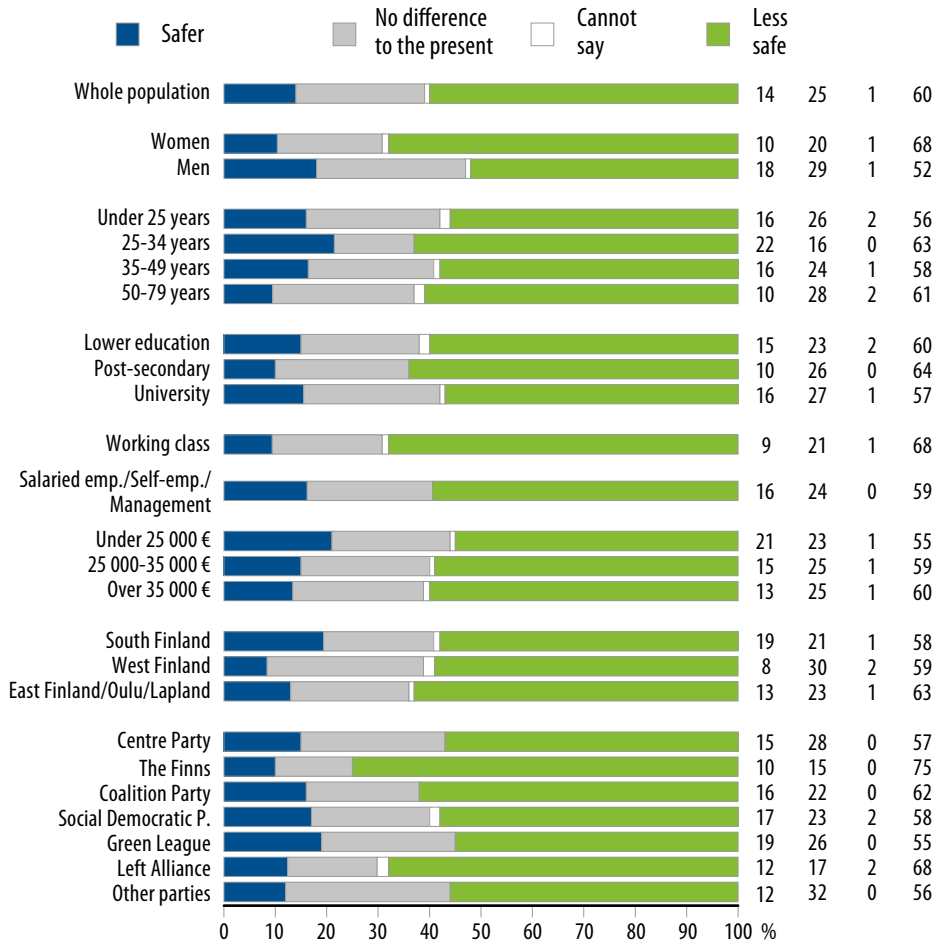
### Figure 32. Military cooperation with the United States

"Finland conducts military cooperation with the United States. What is your view on cooperation?"



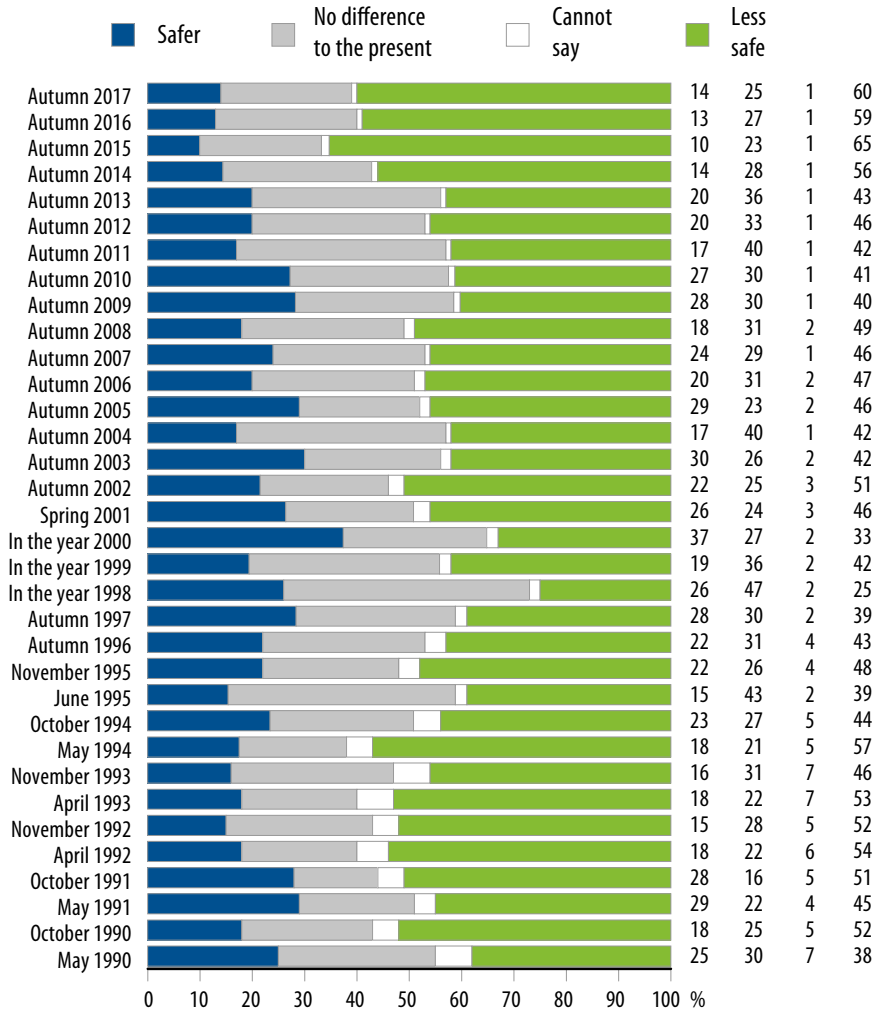
**Figure 33. A more secure or more insecure future**

*"Considering the present world situation as a whole, do you believe that during the next five years Finland and Finns will live in a safer or in a less safe world compared to the present?"*



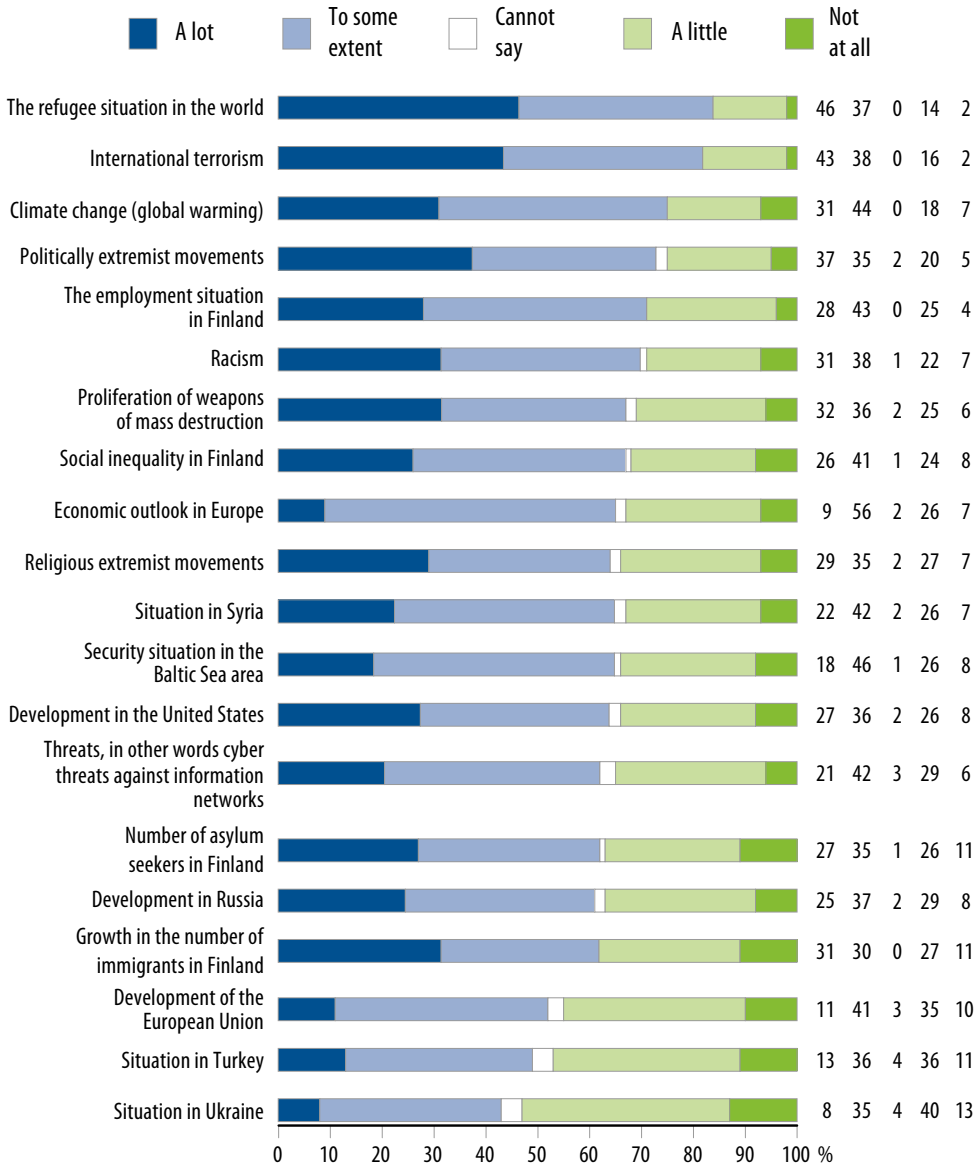
**Figure 34. A more secure or more insecure future**

*"Considering the present world situation as a whole, do you believe that during the next five years Finland and Finns will live in a safer or in a less safe world compared to the present?"*



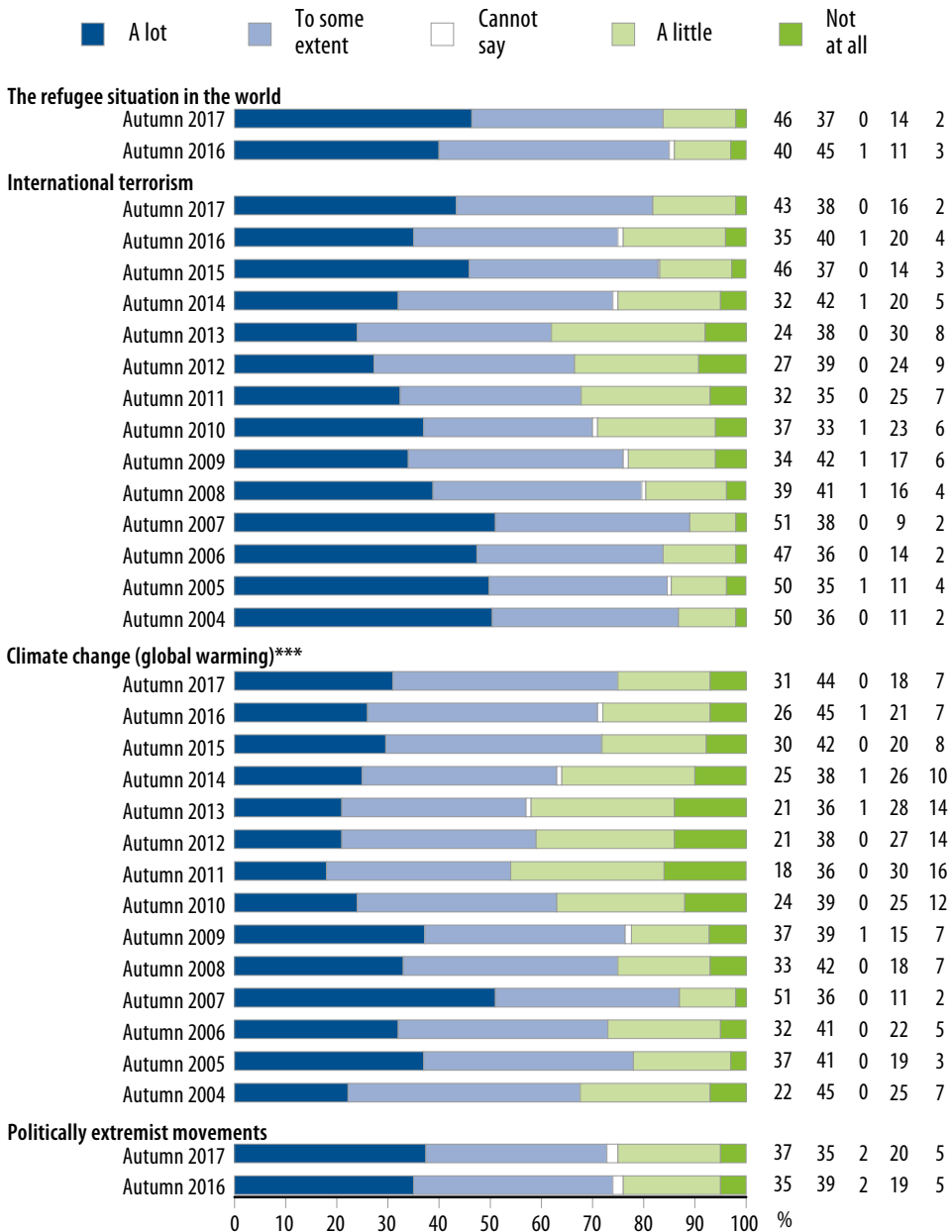
**Figure 35. Factors causing concern among the citizens**

*"How would you assess the following phenomena and actors? To what extent do they make you worry about the future?"*



**Figure 36. Factors causing concern among the citizens (I)**

"How would you assess the following phenomena and actors? To what extent do they make you worry about the future?"

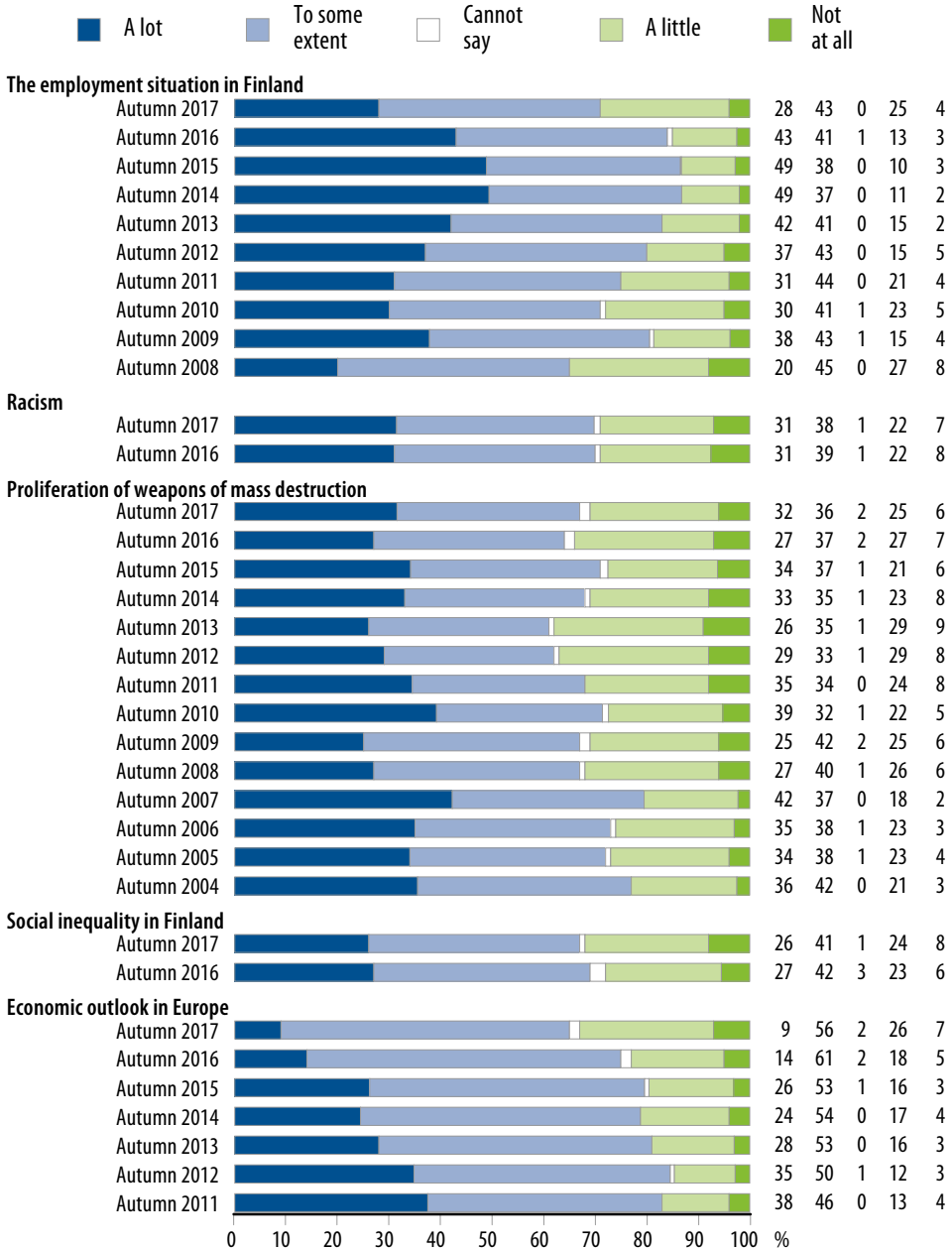


\*\*\*) 2004-2015 Global warming



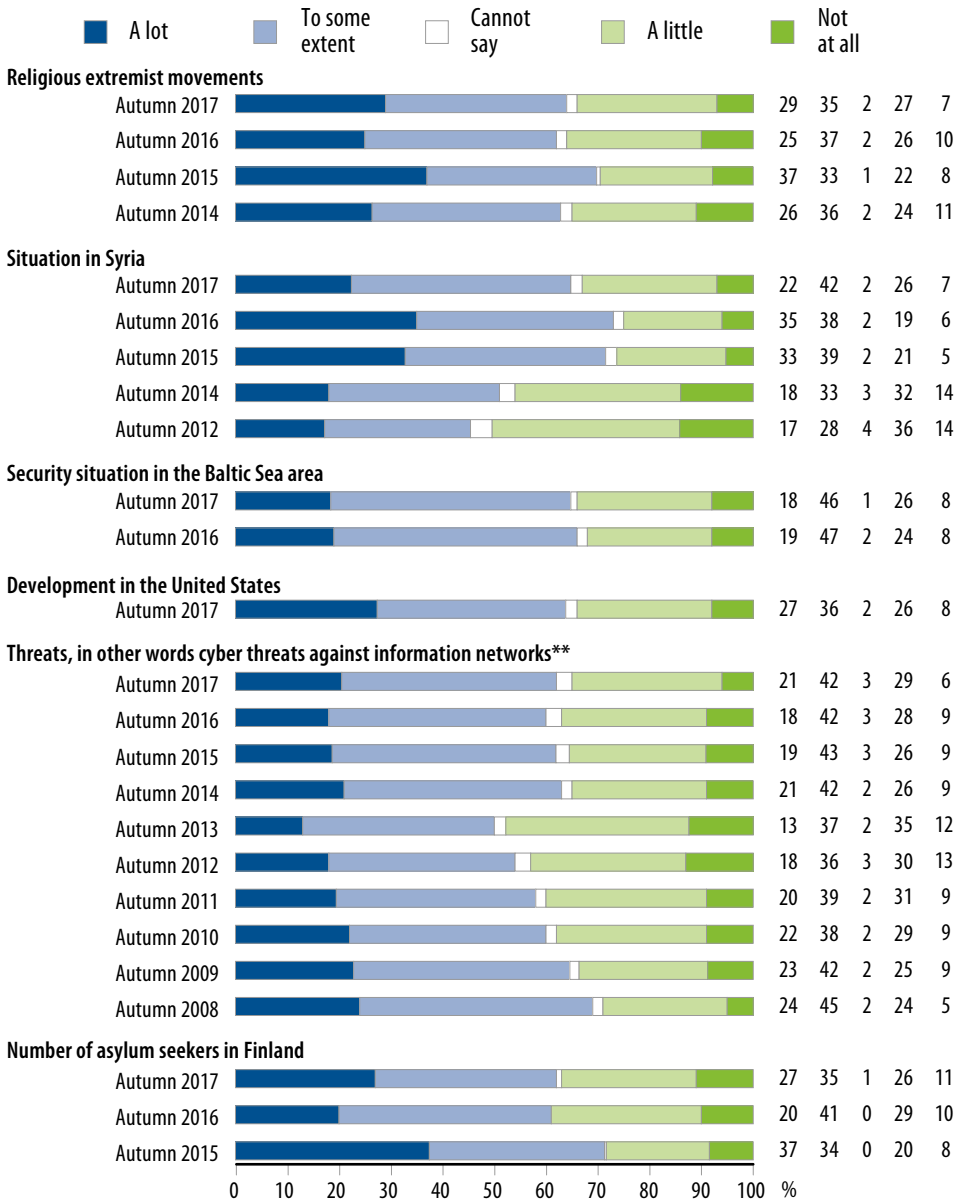
**Figure 37. Factors causing concern among the citizens (II)**

"How would you assess the following phenomena and actors? To what extent do they make you worry about the future?"



**Figure 38. Factors causing concern among the citizens (III)**

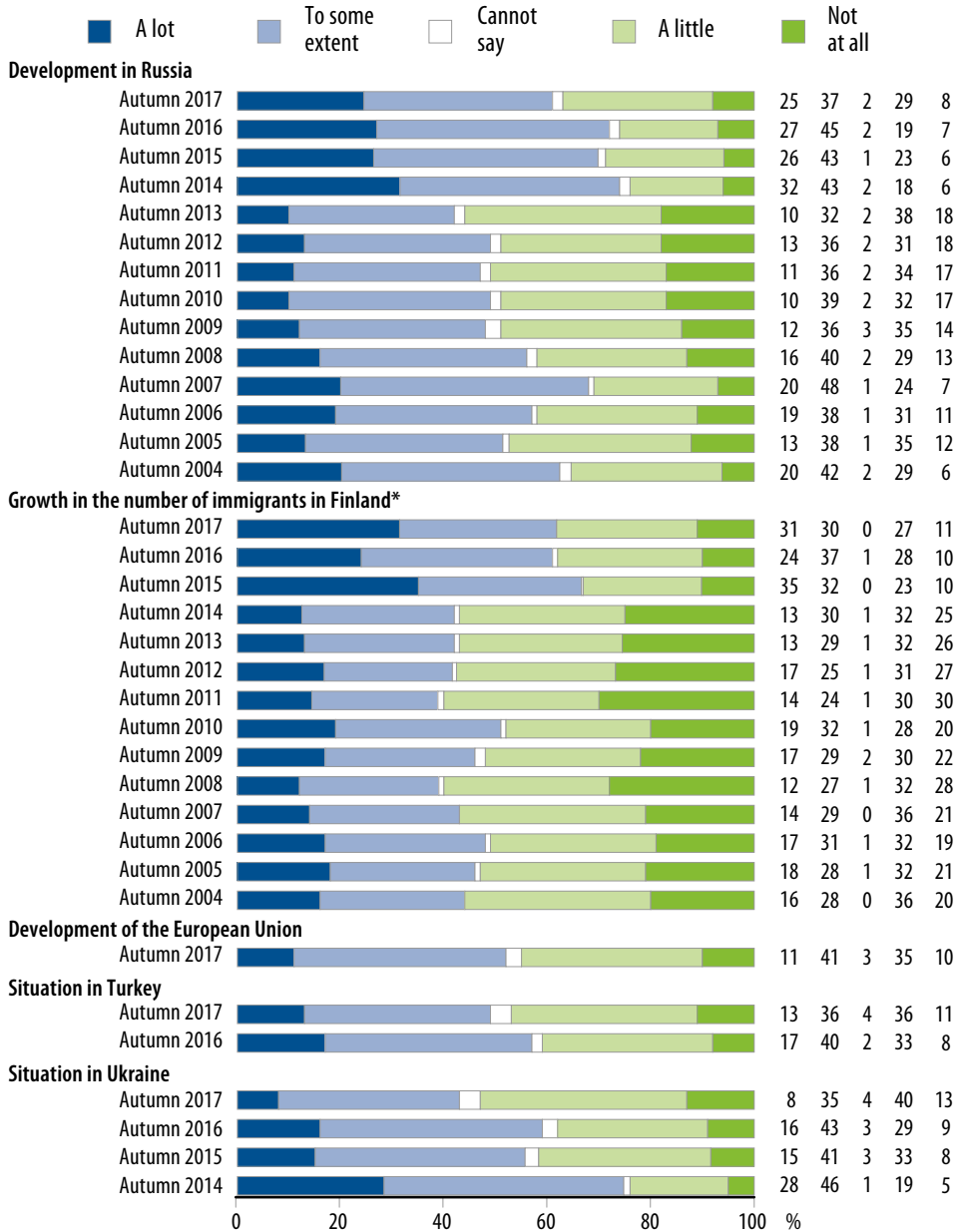
"How would you assess the following phenomena and actors? To what extent do they make you worry about the future?"



\*\* ) 2008-2012 Cyber threats against information networks

**Figure 39. Factors causing concern among the citizens (IV)**

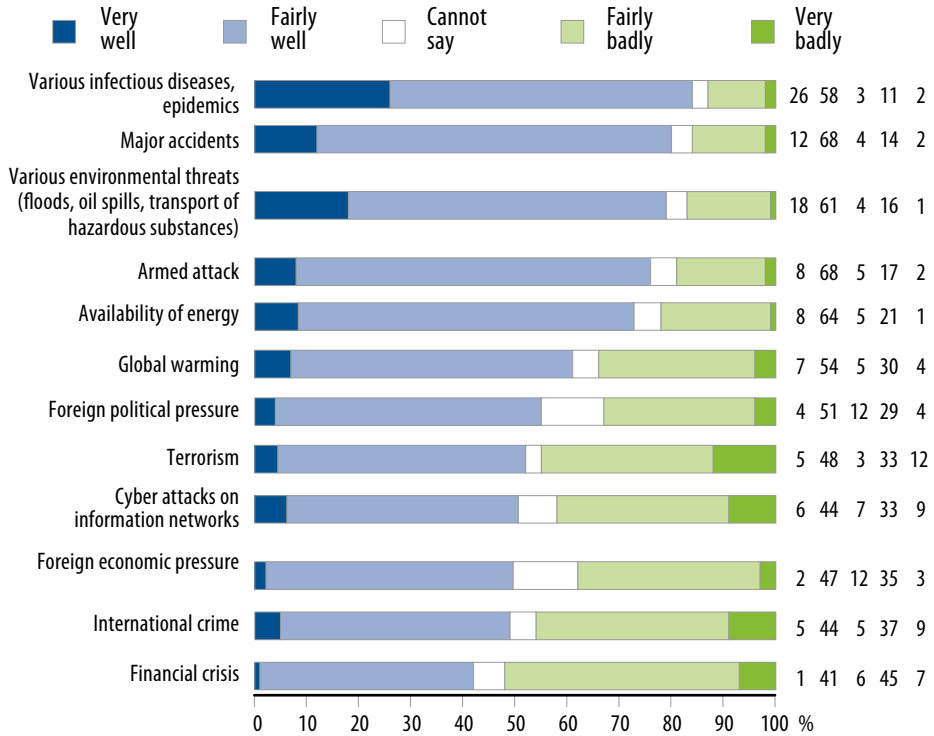
*"How would you assess the following phenomena and actors? To what extent do they make you worry about the future?"*



\*) 2013 The number of immigrants in Finland

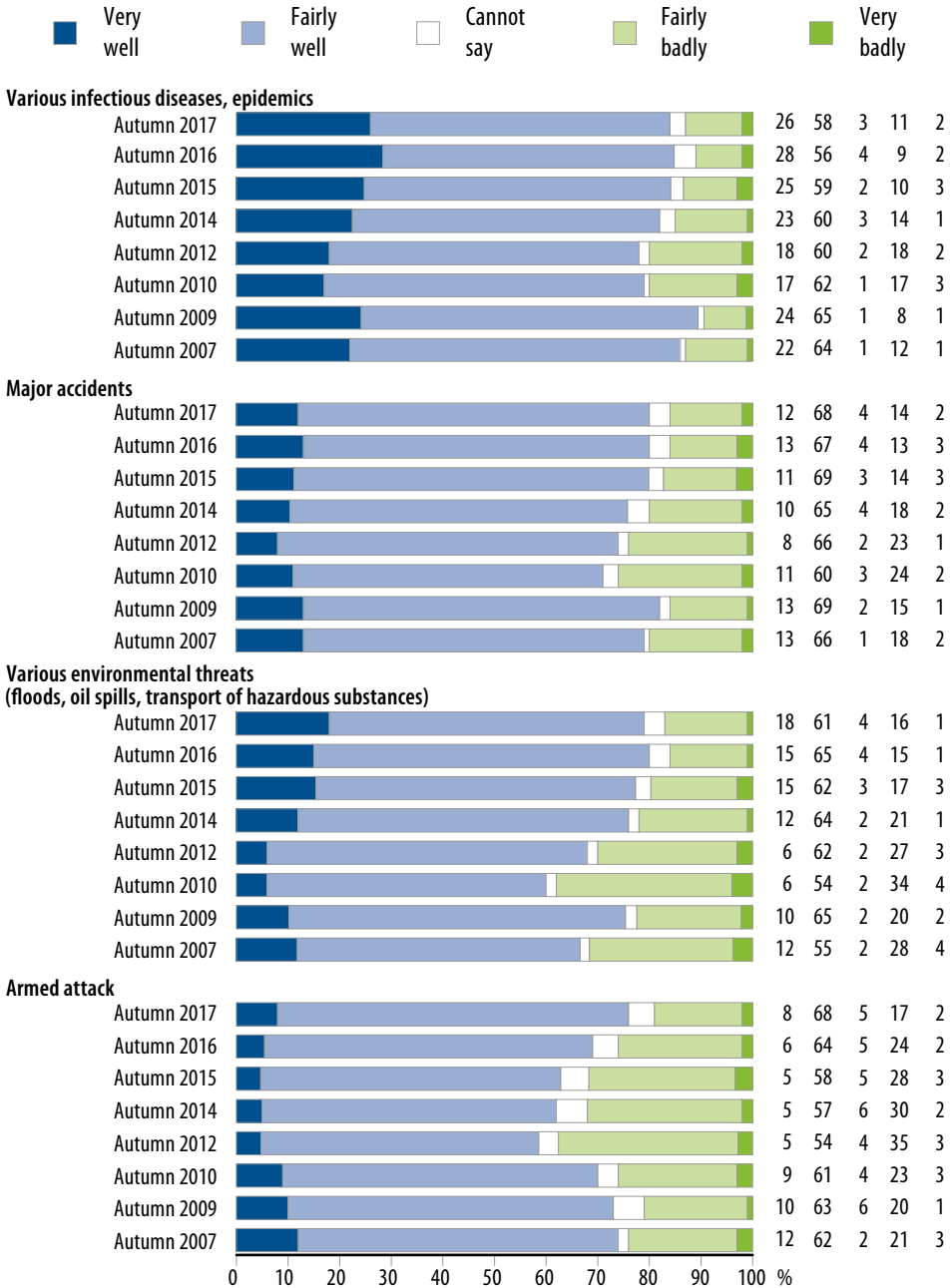
**Figure 40. Preparedness for various threats**

*"How well do you think Finland has prepared for the following security threats?"*



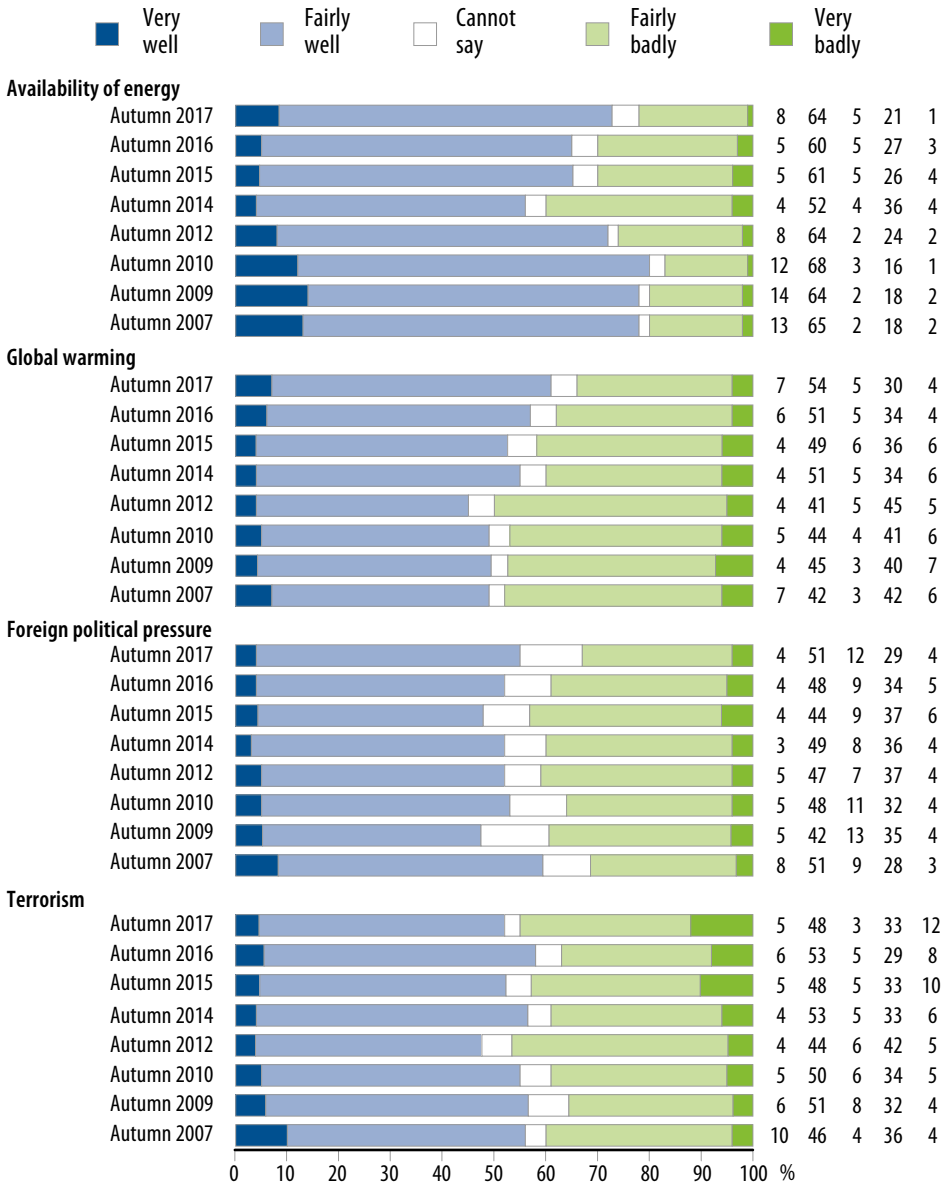
**Figure 41. Preparedness for various threats (I)**

"How well do you think Finland has prepared for the following security threats?"



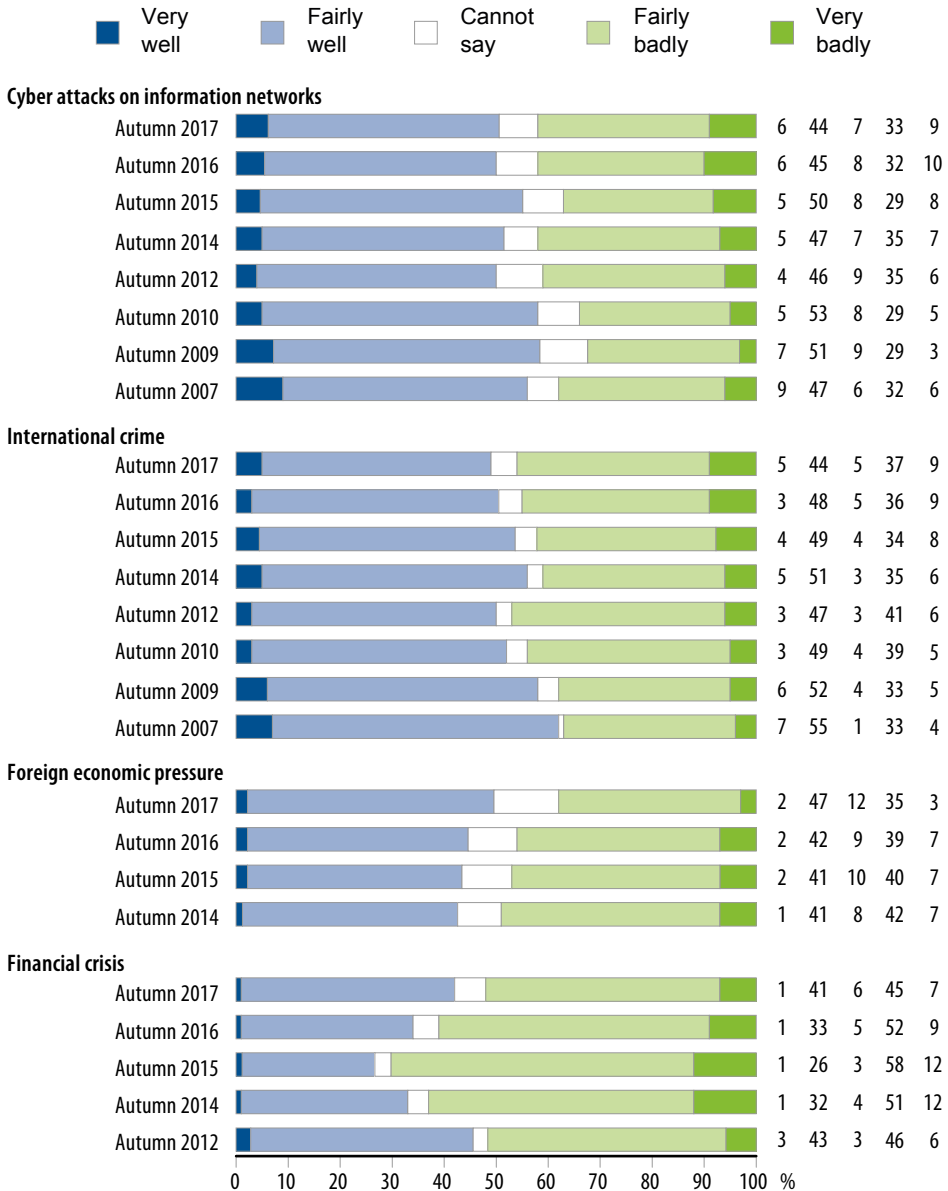
**Figure 42. Preparedness for various threats (II)**

*"How well do you think Finland has prepared for the following security threats?"*



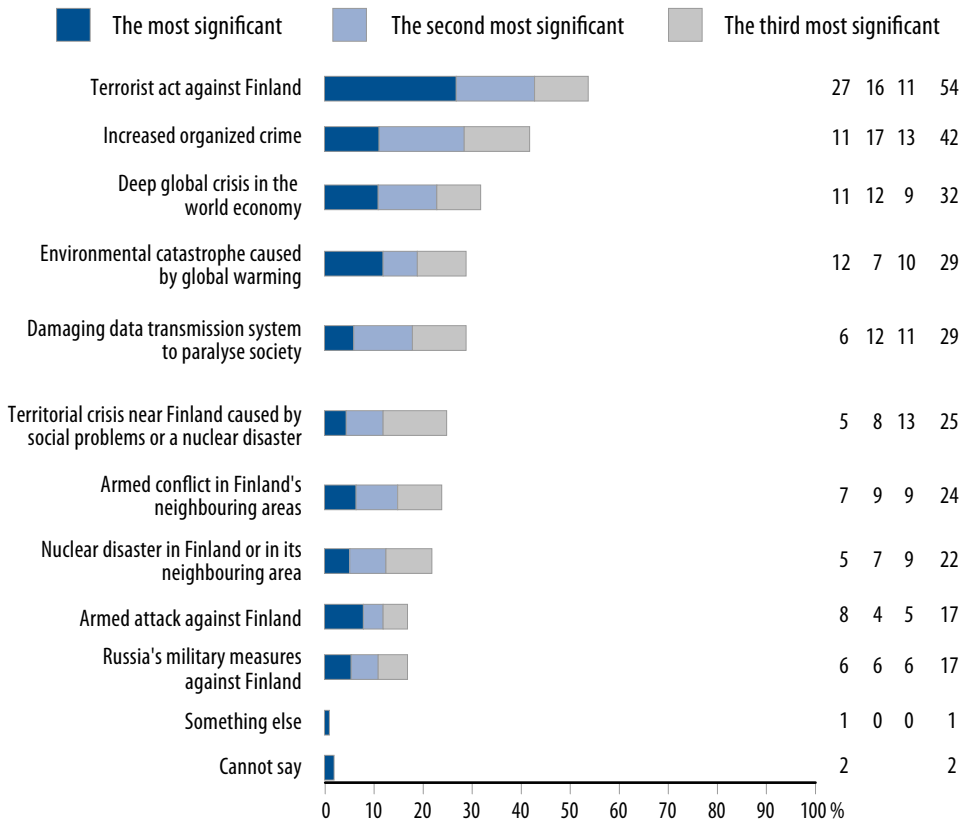
**Figure 43. Preparedness for various threats (III)**

*"How well do you think Finland has prepared for the following security threats?"*



### Figure 44. Threat scenarios

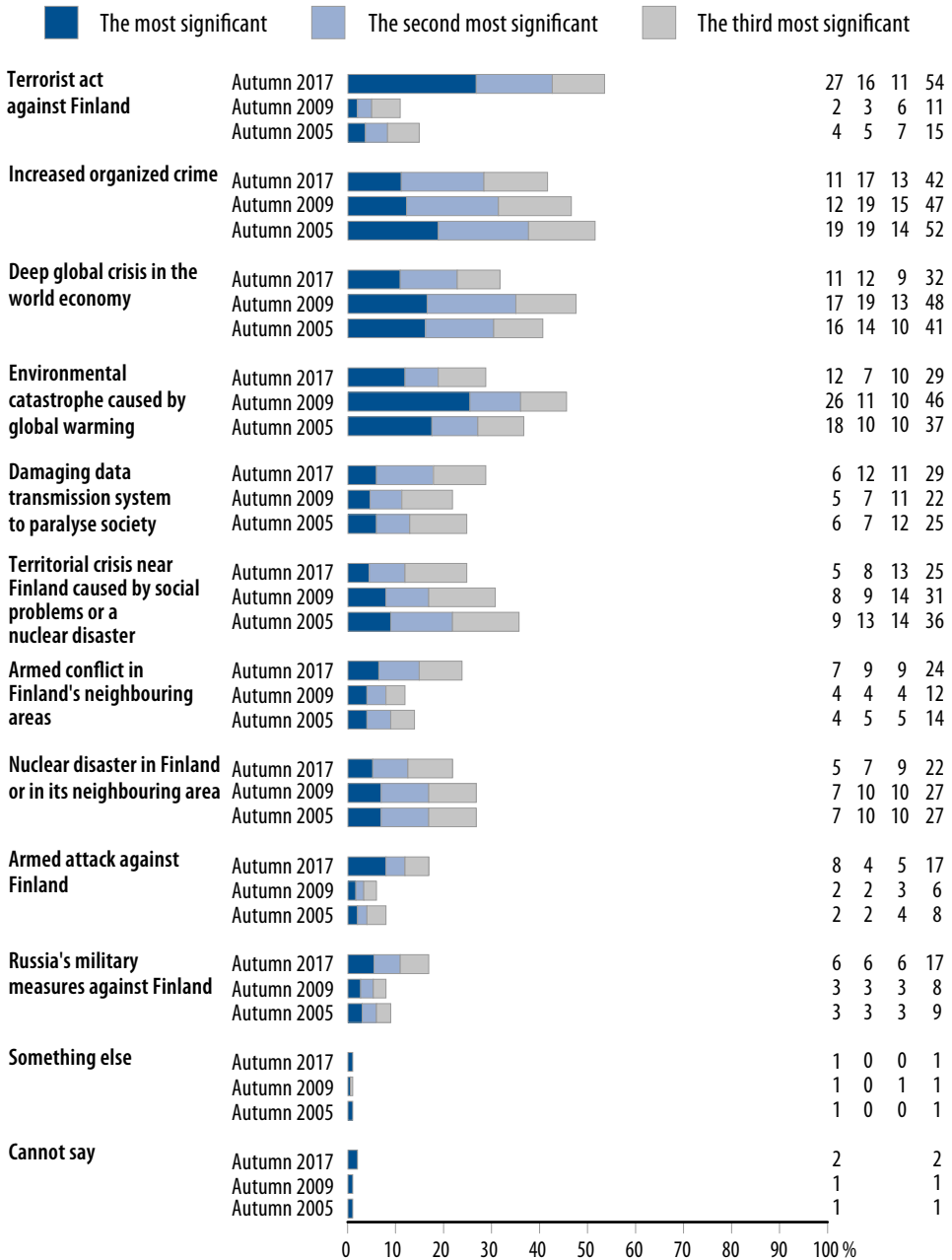
*"In your view, what kind of threats should Finland in the first place prepare for in the next decade?"*





**Figure 45. Threat scenarios**

*"In your view, what kind of threats should Finland in the first place prepare for in the next decade?"*



2005 and 2009 response options were: The most probable, The second most probable, The third most probable

## The Research Branch of ABDI in 2015–2019

Chair	Harriet Lonka, PhD
Deputy Chair	Jan Koskimies, Parliamentary Secretary, until 29.9.2017 Unto Vesa, Researcher Emeritus, as of 23.10.2017
Members	Soili Haverinen, Doctoral Student of Theology Anna Jungner - Nordgren, Public Relations Secretary Johanna Kelhu, Parliamentary Secretary, MSocSc Mikko Kinnunen, Director of Unit Marko Kivelä, Director, Public Relations and International Affairs Unit Antti Koskela, Expert in Economic Affairs Esko Kurvinen, CEO Anni Lahtinen, Secretary General Juha Mäenpää, Vocational Special Needs Teacher Timo Perälä, Senior Inspector Jussi Salonranta, Analyst Jenna Simula, Parliamentary Assistant, BBA Heli Viiri, Doctor of Agriculture and Forestry, Special Researcher
Branch-specific Experts	Teija Mankkinen, DSocSc, Head of Research and Development Teemu Tallberg, PhD, Professor of Military Sociology

## Chairs of the ABDI

Chair	Sofia Vikman, MP
Deputy Chair	Petteri Leino, Special Adviser to the Minister of Defence
Deputy Chair	Markku Pakkanen, MP

## Secretariat of the ABDI

Heli Santala, Secretary General  
Markus Kinkku, Assistant Secretary General



Advisory Board for Defence Information, ABDI (MTS in Finnish), is a permanent parliamentary committee set up by the Government. Administratively it is in the Ministry of Defence.

ABDI conduct surveys on the opinions and attitudes of Finns regarding security policy and factors affecting them.

## MTS

Ministry of Defence

BP 31

00131 HELSINKI

[www.defmin.fi/abdi](http://www.defmin.fi/abdi)