

## **The Advisory Board for Defence Information (ABDI)**

### **ACTION PLAN 2024**

**Approved by the Work Branch on 15 December 2023**

#### **GENERAL**

The Advisory Board for Defence Information (ABDI) acts as a parliamentary forum that organises and promotes dialogue on security policy, national defence and preparedness for crises and emergencies among NGOs, decision-makers, authorities, the media and experts. The ABDI monitors general preparedness for crises and emergencies in society and studies the related needs with a special focus on communications. While helping NGOs and the media to develop their expertise and competences in security policy, national defence and preparedness, the ABDI studies the public spirit of citizens in connection with security policy, national defence and crisis awareness and assists authorities in preparing to conduct research on crises and emergencies. Together with Sweden and Norway, the ABDI is active in Nordic cooperation and considers its role and activities important as a security policy forum, bringing together actors from widely different circles. The ABDI follows actively current discussions on security policy and crisis communications and builds its seminars as well as education activities on this basis.

On 7 September 2023, the Government set up the current Advisory Board, which will be responsible for activities until the term of the new Advisory Board, begins. It will be appointed after the next parliamentary elections. The ABDI is chaired by MP *Jarno Limnell* (Coalition Party) and the vice-chairs are MP Assistant *Marika Sorja* (Finns Party) and MP *Tuula Väättäinen* (SDP).

The Advisory Board may appoint a Work Branch and expert divisions from among its members and appoint a chairperson and a necessary number of members to them. In addition to the Work Branch, there are three sub-committees in the planning committee during the current term: the Education and Organisation Branch, the Media Branch and the Research Branch.

#### **RESEARCH**

Based on the decree given in 1975, the ABDI is tasked to commission and publish studies regarding public opinions on security policy and national defence and the psychological crisis resilience of the citizens. An opinion survey will be commissioned in 2024.

The ABDI follows opinion polls carried out in Sweden, Norway and Finland in the areas of security and defence policy and national defence.

#### **SEMINARS**

The ABDI organises thematic seminars for decision-makers and representatives of the media, organisations and administration, the purpose of which is to provide background information on some topical issues, particularly with regard to security policy, national defence and crisis preparedness.

The ABDI will organise a traditional seminar for journalists at the end of the year in Helsinki.

Regional events organised by the ABDI will be open public events. In addition to expert speeches, the ABDI will hold a panel discussion on foreign and security policy, inviting participants who represent parties in Parliament from the electoral district in question. Two regional events will be organised in the spring and two in the autumn.

## **EDUCATION**

The ABDI will continue to cooperate with the organisers of the national defence courses and it will suggest media representatives and researchers who could be invited to attend. The Chair of the ABDI is a full member in the Advisory Board for National Defence Education while the Secretary General is a deputy member.

The ABDI will also continue to cooperate with the Defence Command's Public Information Division to organise basic courses in communications. In recent years, the course has been organised once a year. The Defence Command is responsible for the training. The ABDI recruits persons who have not completed military service for the course. The next recruitment of course participants is expected to start in spring 2024. The Defence Command recruits reservists for the course in accordance with its needs.

## **INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

The ABDI will continue its close Nordic cooperation, especially with Folk och Försvar in Sweden and Folk og Forsvar in Norway, with Folk & Sikkerhed in Denmark participating at least in the conference.

The next Nordic conference will be held in Sweden on 13 to 15 May 2024 with the theme Joint Nordic defence. A preparatory meeting is to be held on 1 February 2024 in Stockholm.

In addition to Nordic conferences, the ABDI has traditionally made one visit abroad during its term. These will continue to be part of the Work Branch's activities.

The ABDI's international cooperation has traditionally focused on Nordic cooperation. The goal is to launch other forms of cooperation with, for example, NATO. For this purpose, the Work Branch will visit Brussels in early 2024.

## **FINANCES**

The appropriation allocated for the ABDI in 2024 is EUR xxx. The Work Branch will decide on how the appropriation will be used for different functions.

## **THE OFFICE OF THE ABDI**

Located on the second floor of the Ministry of Defence at Eteläinen Makasiinikatu 8, the office adjoined the Communications Unit in early 2017.

MSocSc *Heli Santala* acts as Secretary General while MPolSc *Markus Kinkku* acts as General Secretary.

Communication Assistant *Jaana Riihimaa* is tasked to handle payment transactions.