

Sweden Re-Activates Conscription

Defense-aerospace

The security environment in Europe and in Sweden's vicinity has deteriorated and the all-volunteer recruitment hasn't provided the Armed Forces with enough trained personnel. The re-activating of the conscription is needed for military readiness.

Trained personnel are fundamental for building military capability. In 2016, the Armed Forces lacked 1,000 active squad leaders, soldiers and sailors as well as 7,000 reservists.

Recruitment to the Armed Forces will be both voluntary and conscription. Individual motivation, interest and will should to be considered as much as possible.

The Armed Forces is planning for 4,000 recruits annually in basic military training in 2018 and 2019.

The modern conscription is gender neutral and will include both women and men.

Background – A robust manning system of the military defence

The 2015 commission inquiry on "The manning system of the Military Workforces," presented the Official Report the 28th of September 2016 - A robust manning system of the military defence.

In 2010 Sweden suspended the conscription system in favour of a recruitment system on voluntary terms.

At the end of 2016 the Swedish armed forces were missing about 1,000 full time serving squad leaders, soldiers and sailors and about 7,000 of the part time serving squad leaders, soldiers and sailors it needs. The goal and ambition was to have approximately 6,600 full time serving and 10,000 part-time serving squad leaders, soldiers and sailors in the Swedish Armed Forces.

The report has assessed that present the deteriorating security situation and problems connected to the manning of military forces by volunteers is a motive for the government to decide on the reactivation of enrolment and conscription. This includes both women and men.

Enrolment should be made possible from the 1st of July 2017 and basic military training with compulsory service from the 1st of January 2018.

Proposed changes of the current manning system shall, according to the commission directive, be financed by existing budget for the military forces from 2016 - 2020.

During 2018 and 2019, 4,000 recruits shall undergo basic military training. During 2020 it shall increase to 5 000.

During the next period (2021-2025), the Report has calculated the yearly need for personnel to 6 000 in year 2021, and 8 000 yearly from 2022 till 2025.

The 2015 Commission Inquiry On “The Manning System of the Military Workforces Presents the Official Report”

The manning system of the armed forces is ultimately intended to man all units with an adequate [number] of soldiers and personnel that are trained under conditions that make it possible to meet the demands of the Swedish defence and security policy.

The commission inquiry has – six years after Sweden suspended the conscription system in favour of a recruitment system on voluntary terms – scrutinized the planning of the voluntary recruitment and instead used the outcome of previous yearly recruitments when drafting this report. The Armed Forces assessed the need for 4.000 recruits to undergo basic military training per year in order to man all units of the armed forces 2010-2015. During this period, it has been possible to engage an average of 2.500 recruits per year.

At the beginning of 2016 the armed forces were missing about the 800 full serving squad leaders, soldiers and sailors and about 6.600 of the partly serving squad leaders, soldiers and sailors it needs. The availability of professional officers will already in 2020 be less numerous than needed. With current yearly intake of an average of 2.500 recruits to undergo basic military training, the reserve of military personnel will almost cease to exist during the next period (2021-2025).

When the legislation regarding the conscription system was made inactive in 2010, the Swedish Parliament made it possible for the government to reactivate the legislation if it was necessary due to a deteriorating security situation or if the supply of personnel to the Swedish total defence no longer can be assured by voluntary recruitments. The Parliamentary Defence Committee brought forward that the Committee expects the government and Military forces to plan for a swift reactivation of basic military training and rehearsal training of individuals who has been conscripts or undergone civilian service.

The report has assessed that present the deteriorating security situation and problems connected to the manning of military forces by volunteers is a motive for the government to decide on the reactivation of enrolment and conscription. Enrolment should be made possible from July 1, 2017 and basic military training with compulsory service from January 1, 2018.

The military service is gender neutral since 2010. If enrolment and conscription are reactivated, both men and women will have to undergo an entrance assessment made by the Swedish Defence Recruitment Agency. The individuals who is assessed as fit and motivated, is called up for enrolment. The supply of personnel for the military defence system is proposed to maintain the opportunity to apply for admission to enrol on voluntary terms. The total need of personnel should be managed by conscription.

Proposed changes of the current manning system shall, according to the commission directive, be financed by existing budget for the military forces from 2016 till 2020. Related to planning of 4.000 persons ready to start basic military training, and the actual number of 2.500 volunteers, will be below strength in about 1.000 persons in 2017, even compared to calculated demands of 4.000 people.

The Report suggests that the surplus budget in 2017 shall finance the added number of 1.000 people up to suggested 5.000 from 2020. During the next period (2021-2025), the Report has calculated the yearly need for personnel to 6.000 in year 2021, and 8.000 yearly from 2022 till 2025. According to the Report, these numbers of yearly additional persons, fitted for basic military training, will form a robust manning of the defence forces. However, this will cause a demand for supplementary budgetary means.

A reserve of at least 23.000 military trained individuals is proposed. These individuals shall be placed for military service in eventual times of war.

The actual average of the full time serving squad leaders, soldiers and sailors stay in service for four years. Contracts can be signed for twelve years. The report suggests an introduction of incentives intended to both recruit motivated individuals to voluntary apply for admission to enrol and to retain personnel. The proposed incentive is related to granting economic support for studies. The economic support is based on the number of years in service. The incentive is further aimed at facilitating a new career after an employment in the Swedish Armed Forces.

The report puts forward that military units manned by conscripts can, after necessary political decisions, be put into operation within the framework of the Swedish Declaration of Solidarity provided the operation comprise the defence of Sweden.