

The Issues

The main purpose of this Chapter is to present an overview of issues that affect human security in Latvia. This Chapter examines people's evaluations of their own security situation and links these perceptions to objective indicators that are relevant to security. These indicators have been drawn up according to seven realms of human security laid out in the global *UNDP Human Development Report 1994*: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security (see Box 2.1).

The **Report's** analysis of these seven realms of security is based on empirical data drawn from the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia and from recent studies carried out by various research and government institutions in Latvia. (For additional data, see the *Review of Latvia's Main Human Development Indicators* and the *Statistical Appendix* at the end of this **Report**.) Objective indicators of human security are derived through statistical data and measures of living standards, such as income levels, crime rates, political participation, etc. Subjective indicators of human security are derived primarily from the **UNDP Latvia Survey on Human Security 2002**, which was commissioned for this **Report**. (For more details on the **Survey**, see the Methodology section of this **Report**.) These indicators have been referenced to determine how people evaluate security and perceived risks in their own particular circumstances. Throughout the course of this Chapter, the authors present an interpretation of how the subjective and objective dimensions of human security are interconnected.

Concerns expressed by individuals in Latvia about human security may vary according to current events. The **Survey** for this **Report** was carried out in September 2002, at the height of a parliamentary election campaign. Campaign issues were based on some of the topics people worry about most, such as economic security and the spread of narcotics. On the whole, individuals did not express concern about terrorism, war and other events that had not occurred in Latvia's immediate vicinity.¹

¹ Respondents were polled prior to the October, 2002 terrorist attack in Moscow, when Chechen militants held 700 hostages in the Maria Theatre Hall. Terrorism was not cited as one of the three issues of greatest concern. However, a poll of a group of students one month later in November, 2002 listed terrorism/war/strained political relations as the second most highly rated insecurity factor. Studies in America show that even eight months after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, two-thirds of Americans were still thinking about this event several times per week ("The Science of Anxiety," *Time*, June 10, 2002).

Overview of risk perceptions

Perceived personal risks

The most intensely perceived personal risks felt by **Survey** respondents fall into three categories:

- Health security (fear of falling ill, inadequate health care);
- Economic security (inability to pay for medical care, insufficient and irregular income);
- Personal security (traffic and other accidents).

A more detailed breakdown of these risks is shown in Box 2.2.

While the threats of physical and emotional abuse ranked last, they can be considered high since one-fifth of the respondents reported fearing emotional abuse and one-seventh to having experienced physical abuse. It must be noted that such issues are not usually admitted to in open questionnaires of this nature. The part of the **Survey** that was answered in private provided more telling indications about the intense trauma that abuse can cause.

Perceived general risks

The top ranking general risks cited by the **Survey's** respondents in September 2002 were:

- the spread of narcotics (91% of respondents);
- organized crime in Latvia (88%);
- the spread of HIV/AIDS (88%);
- various economic issues;
- various ecological issues.

A great deal of anxiety was expressed about the prospect of price increases, the existence of hazardous waste dumps and the clear-cutting of forests in Latvia. A more detailed breakdown of these risks is shown in Box 2.3.

Box 2.1

Realms of human security

Health security

% of GDP provided to the national health care system

Subjective assessment of one's health status

Accessibility of health care

Subjective assessment of the quality of medical care

Economic security

Sufficient, predictable income

Predictable employment

Social insurance coverage

Satisfaction with one's level of income

Income disparity

Competitiveness

Personal security

Fear of violence

Level of crime, including abuse

Self-destructive activities

Motor vehicle accidents

Efficiency of institutions

Environmental security

Pollution level in Latvia

General level of concern about environmental problems

Government capacity to solve environmental problems

Readiness to invest time and/or resources in maintaining the environment

Seven realms of human security

Food security

Physical accessibility of basic foodstuffs

Quality of nutrition

Share of household budget spent on food

Community security

Family stability

Level of involvement in communities, social networks

Political security

Basic human rights and freedoms

Trust in the government

Government capacity

Involvement in politics

Perception of corruption

UNDP 2003, based on the Human Security Indices Methodology developed by Vitosha Research, Sofia, 2002

Human security is usually undermined by a combination of several factors. None of the above threats in and of itself would likely cause a person to suffer severe psychological consequences. However, people who feel insecure about one particular issue may then feel a heightened concern about others. The following section of this Chapter provides an analysis of various issues of concern in the context of the seven realms of human security listed in Box 2.1 above.

Health security

It is not surprising that different health-related issues topped the list of human security concerns in Latvia. Both men and women fear:

- 1) being unable to pay for their medical care in the case of illness (83%);
- 2) not receiving an adequate standard of medical care (83%);
- 3) falling seriously ill (83%).

Along with the general unease of an existential nature concerning health – everyone’s health is destined to wane eventually, and we shall all die sooner or later – the fears expressed underscore that Latvia’s health care system is perceived not to provide affordable, high quality medical care. The “rules of the game” for the State financing of health services are unclear. The country’s health statistics reveal an eleven-year gap in life expectancy between men (65 years) and women (76 years). Men in Latvia rank 112th worldwide in terms of male life expectancy. (*Statistikas aktualitātes*, 2002. For more health-related statistics, see the *Review of Latvia’s Main Human Development Indicators* in the Appendix.) Health security issues are often also economic issues, and those with lower incomes generally have lower levels of health security (see Box 2.4).

In 1948 the World Health Organization defined health as: a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (<http://www.who.int/en/>). Health is a major determinant of quality of life and human security. Individual health is affected by heredity, environmental factors, behaviour and lifestyle. Economic and social problems affecting society as a whole are also a serious threat to health security.

In general, those countries that invest proportionately more into health care and education have better health indicators and higher average life expectancies than those countries that invest less. Health care is still inadequately funded in Latvia. In 2001 only 4.8%

of the country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was spent on health care, which is one of the lowest rates in Europe.

The health-related expenses that patients are having to pay for out of pocket continues to increase, limiting health security options for the poor. The **Survey** revealed that less than one-third of respondents have insured their health, only 45% have had themselves vaccinated and less than 40% participate in sports. All of these activities entail expenses.

About 39% of health-related expenses were reported to be paid out of pocket, according to the World Health Organization. This is a high proportion in comparison to Latvia’s neighbouring countries (24% in Lithuania and 21.2% in Estonia), and quite high in comparison to other European nations (15.7% in Denmark and 11.3% in Germany). This is the out-of-pocket amount officially reported, and does not reflect the common practice of paying medical personnel under-the-table bonuses for health services. Thus, in a country like Latvia, with its large income disparities, considerable out-of-pocket and hidden payments for health services, and low government spending on health care, affordable health care is least accessible to those with limited income.

Respondents’ assessments of their own physical, emotional, and social health reflect a great deal of concern by individuals about falling ill. The UNDP Human Security Interview analysis of 56 respondents shows that many were worried about those health problems that cannot be cured or are difficult to treat – cancer, coronary heart disease and alcoholism. These subjective evaluations are only partly linked to people’s actual state of health. **Survey** respondents on average rated their health as 6.6 on a scale from 1 to 10 (with one indicating the worst level of health). The most significant factor to affect people’s self-assessment of their health was socio-economic status.

Self-assessments of economic well-being are closely tied to self-assessments of health. Those who rate their economic situation as favourable also tend to rate their health as good or very good. In contrast, those who indicate that they have no money or have barely enough money for food feel far less healthy. In general, the unemployed questioned for the **Survey** rated their health as poorer than the employed, with only 3% of those working assigning a value of 1 or 2, while 14% of the unemployed did so. Subjective self-assessments of health are markedly influenced by age – the older the respondent, the poorer the assessment. A third fac-

Box 2.2

Perception of threats to security at the personal level

Potential Threats	Percentage expressing concern*			Degree of concern**			Rank
	Men	Women	All	Men	Women	All	
Inability to pay for medical care in the case of illness	78	87	83	3.14	3.39	3.28	1
Not receiving an adequate standard of medical care in the case of illness	80	86	83	3.15	3.37	3.27	2
Becoming seriously ill	78	88	83	3.10	3.39	3.26	3
Not receiving a large enough retirement pension to live on	72	78	75	2.98	3.15	3.08	4
Being unable to support oneself	67	78	73	2.93	3.20	3.08	4
Being involved in an accident	72	82	77	2.95	3.19	3.08	4
Inability to pay one's rent or other household bills	65	79	72	2.87	3.17	3.03	5
Becoming the victim of aggressive and unsafe driving practices	71	83	77	2.84	3.15	3.01	6
Being attacked on the street	62	80	72	2.73	3.13	2.94	7
Being subject to theft	64	74	70	2.72	3.00	2.87	8
Contracting deer tick encephalitis	60	72	67	2.67	2.98	2.84	9
Losing one's job / being unable to find work	60	62	61	2.66	2.70	2.68	10
Inability to pay for one's children's or one's own education	55	61	58	2.64	2.71	2.68	10
Falling victim to organized crime	54	60	58	2.48	2.71	2.61	11
Being sexually assaulted	12	43	28	2.48	2.71	2.61	11
Not having a place to live	48	60	54	2.39	2.72	2.57	12
Contracting HIV/AIDS	51	56	54	2.46	2.64	2.55	13
Not having enough to eat / starving	45	58	52	2.37	2.68	2.53	14
Becoming a victim of a terrorist attack	42	57	50	2.36	2.65	2.52	15
Being left on one's own	48	54	51	2.40	2.57	2.49	16

Inability to compete in the job market	46	52	50	2.35	2.45	2.40	17
Being emotionally abused by civil servants	42	47	45	2.26	2.35	2.31	18
Needing to bribe someone in order to obtain a service	38	47	42	2.16	2.38	2.27	19
Losing the understanding and support of one's family and friends	36	46	42	2.16	2.33	2.25	20
Being left on one's own with dependent children	31	45	38	2.03	2.32	2.19	21
Being emotionally abused by police officers	38	37	37	2.19	2.16	2.17	22
Losing the understanding and support of one's colleagues	28	37	33	2.00	2.12	2.06	23
Being emotionally abused at work	16	30	24	1.73	1.94	1.84	24
Being in conflict with relatives or others over property issues	22	25	23	1.80	1.82	1.81	25
Losing one's savings in the bank	25	24	24	1.81	1.80	1.80	26
Being emotionally abused in the family	14	23	19	1.58	1.77	1.68	27
Being physically abused at home	11	18	14	1.42	1.62	1.53	28
Average degree of concern about all perceived threats				2.49	2.40	2.62	

* Percentage of respondents noting that they are either slightly afraid or very afraid of the threat.

** Respondents were asked to rate their level of concern about each threat as follows:

1 – not at all afraid 2 – mostly not afraid 3 – slightly afraid 4 – very afraid.

The number represents the average value for all respondents.

UNDP Latvia Survey on Human Security 2002

tor influencing self-assessments of health is education – the lower the level of education, the lower the health rating. Family circumstances also affect self-assessments of health, although not as significantly as age. The widowed and the divorced showed lower self-assessments than people living alone or in common-law relationships.

According to the Latvian Public Health Strategy adopted in 2001, increases in disease are associated with high-risk living conditions such as poverty, along with such accompanying risk factors as poor quality food, a sedentary lifestyle and the use of alco-

hol and tobacco (Latvian Ministry of Welfare, 2001). The incidence of illnesses brought on by the neglect of one's own health is also on the rise. This points to careless attitudes toward health, as well as to economic and other barriers that prevent people from seeking out health care services (Latvian Health Statistics Department, 2002). Over half of the people surveyed in Latvia believe it unfair that those with higher incomes are able to pay for better healthcare (Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the University of Latvia, 1999). It is hoped that by bringing Latvia's Public Health Strategy into effect, better community health will be promoted and the country's overall

Box 2.3

Perception of general threats

Existing and potential threats capable of contributing to feelings of insecurity	Percentage expressing concern*			Degree of concern*			Rank
	Men	Women	All	Men	Women	All	
The spread of narcotics	88	93	91	3.46	3.63	3.55	1
Organized crime in Latvia	84	91	88	3.34	3.52	3.44	2
The spread of HIV/AIDS in Latvia	85	90	88	3.30	3.49	3.40	3
Rapid price increases	80	88	84	3.20	3.43	3.32	4
Hazardous waste dumps in Latvia	84	90	87	3.22	3.40	3.31	5
Clear-cutting of forests in Latvia	83	88	86	3.21	3.32	3.27	6
Environmental pollution in Latvia	82	91	87	3.13	3.37	3.26	7
The spread of HIV/AIDS worldwide	78	85	82	3.12	3.35	3.24	8
High amount of preservatives in food	73	87	81	3.02	3.30	3.17	9
Food poisoning	72	83	78	3.00	3.25	3.14	10
Environmental pollution worldwide	74	83	79	2.94	3.14	3.05	11
The abandonment of farmland in Latvia	73	79	76	2.97	3.08	3.03	12
An environmental disaster in Latvia	64	81	73	2.79	3.17	2.99	13
Foreign producers forcing local producers out of the Latvian market	64	76	70	2.79	3.04	2.92	14
Foreigners buying up land in Latvia	62	72	67	2.76	2.97	2.87	15
The devaluation of the lat	61	69	65	2.75	2.96	2.86	16
Exodus from rural areas	62	71	67	2.72	2.91	2.82	17
Global warming	56	75	66	2.59	2.93	2.77	18
Latvian producers losing their market share in other countries	61	67	64	2.70	2.81	2.76	19
Nuclear threats	50	65	58	2.48	2.91	2.71	20

Threats to the survival of one's own language and culture	54	63	59	2.55	2.67	2.66	21
Population decline	53	65	59	2.53	2.75	2.65	22
Influx of refugees in Latvia	54	61	58	2.53	2.69	2.61	23
Terrorism in Latvia	41	60	51	2.24	2.72	2.50	24
Limitations on democracy and freedom of speech in Latvia	43	56	50	2.35	2.59	2.48	25
Manifestations of international terrorism in Latvia	40	58	50	2.23	2.67	2.47	26
Partial loss of Latvia's sovereignty	42	54	48	2.27	2.52	2.40	27
Internal unrest	38	55	47	2.17	2.58	2.39	28
Armed conflict in Latvia	37	56	47	2.14	2.59	2.38	29
Ethnic conflict in Latvia	37	50	44	2.18	2.46	2.33	30
The occupation of Latvia	34	47	41	2.10	2.45	2.29	31
Average degree of concern about all perceived threats				2.74	2.99	2.88	

* See notes for Box 2.2

UNDP Latvia Survey on Human Security 2002

health situation will improve. Latvia's Public Health Strategy is based on the World Health Organization's European regional strategy *Health for All in the 21st Century*. (See Chapter 6 for more details.)

To a large extent, respondents' fears about being unable to afford medical services depend on their economic status and on the availability of information about relief programs for lower income groups.

The overall lack of information about available health services and the widespread perception of being unable to pay for them often leads to fatal results. Tuberculosis is much more prevalent among poor people in Latvia. The 1990s marked a dramatic increase in incidences of tuberculosis, which peaked in 1998. Unfortunately, the trend of belatedly seeking medical attention for tuberculosis continues. The

result is a high mortality rate for tuberculosis patients – 30% die within a year of being diagnosed. The incidence of tuberculosis in Latvia is eight times higher than in Finland, 1.2 times higher than in Lithuania and 1.5 times higher than in Estonia. The number of people with this disease could be reduced if people sought medical attention in the early phase of their illness (see Box 2.5).

HIV/AIDS infections are a case in which a sense of insecurity, coupled with an effective public information campaign, may reduce the risks people face through an increase in preventative measures taken by individuals themselves. In spite of a levelling off in the number of new HIV cases in 2002, more than half of the **Survey's** respondents were concerned about becoming HIV positive. HIV/AIDS is a relatively new phenomenon in Latvia. The first HIV-positive indi-

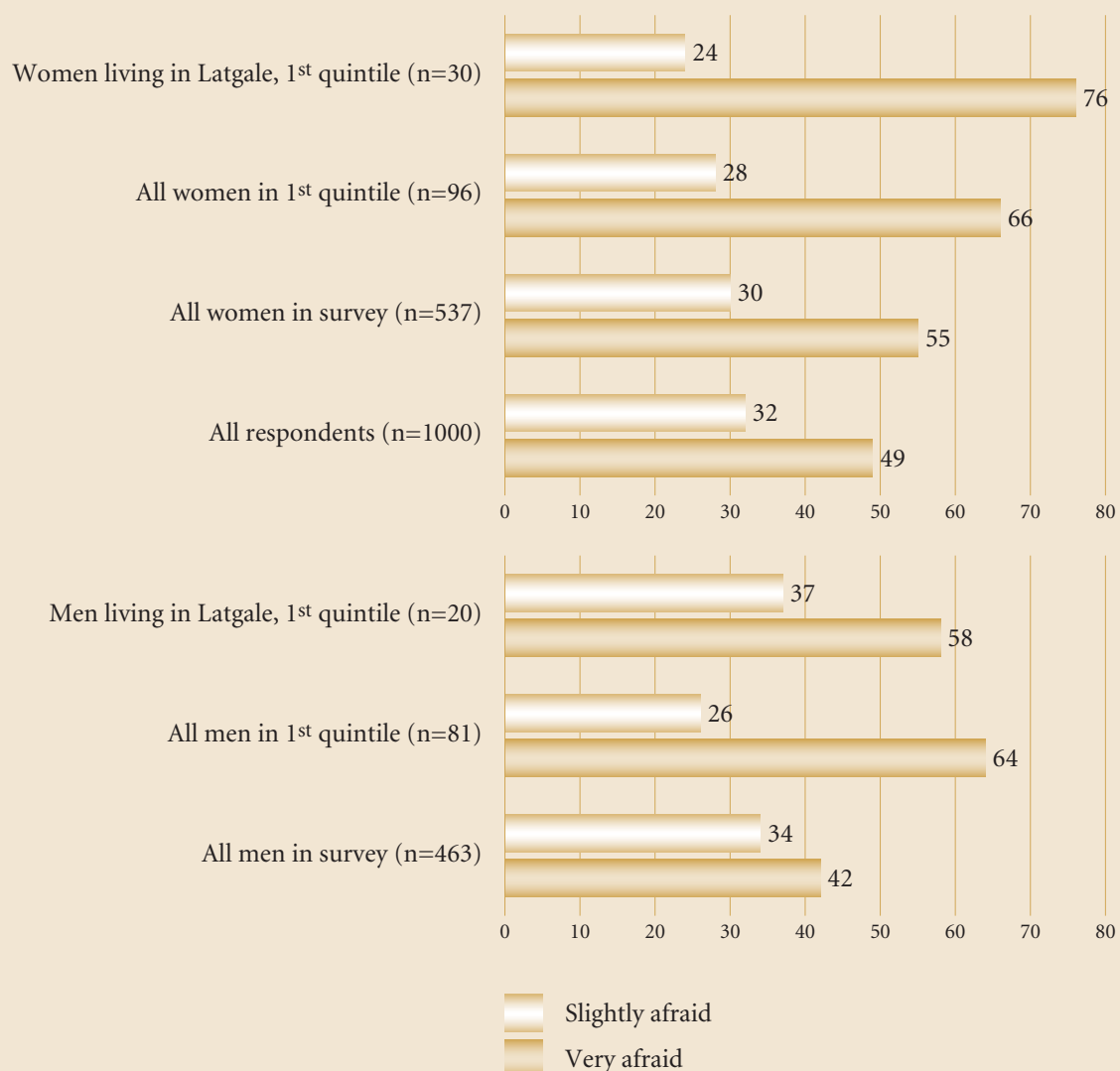
vidual was registered in 1987, and the first death due to AIDS occurred in 1990. According to the Latvian Health Department, 806 new cases of HIV and 42 new cases of AIDS were registered in 2001 (Health Statistics Department, 2002). The majority (1624) of Latvia's 2163 HIV-positive individuals were infected while using intravenous drugs with shared needles.

In Latvia the problem of alcohol abuse continues to be a major health hazard, and the use of other addictive narcotic substances is rapidly increasing.

Frequently people use intoxicating substances as a means of coping with insecurity. However, alcohol or drug use often intensifies the problem. The biochemical effects of these substances on the human central nervous system and the additional social problems caused by addiction directly increase people's rates of anxiety and depression, thereby creating both direct and indirect health hazards. The most frequent cause of traffic accidents in Latvia is drunken driving. Perpetrators of violence within the family are also often under the influence of alcohol.

Box 2.4

Fear of not being able to pay for medical care (%)

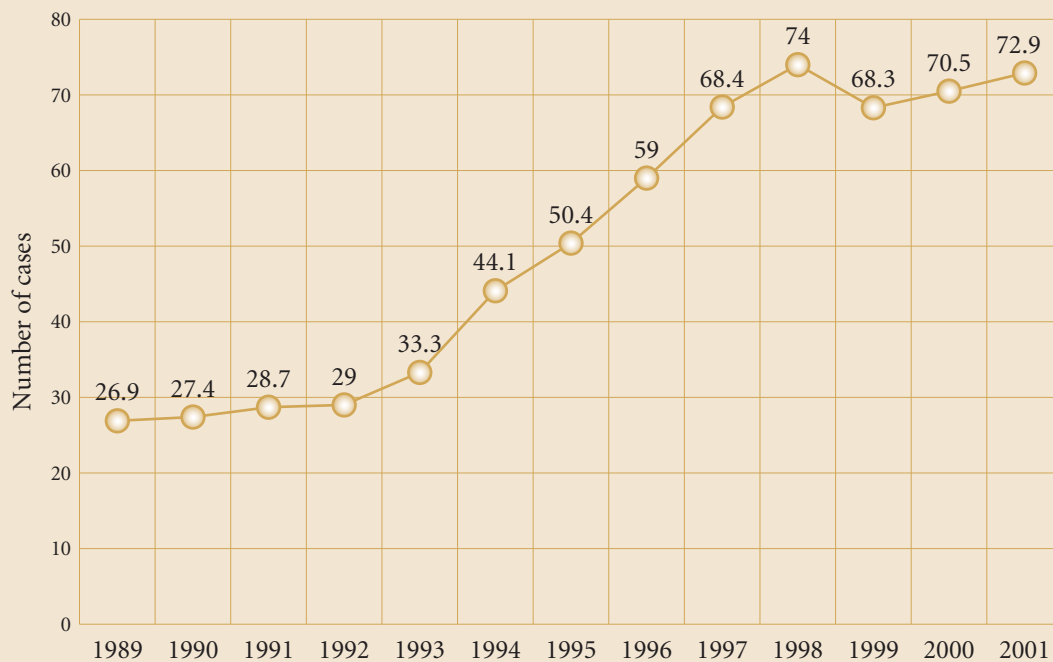


1st quintile = those whose income amounts to 2 to 40 lats per family member per month
 n = number of respondents

UNDP Latvia Survey on Human Security 2002

Box 2.5

Incidence of tuberculosis in Latvia per 100,000 inhabitants from 1989 to 2001



National Centre for Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, 2002

It is difficult to establish the number of people suffering from alcohol or drug dependence. Centres for the treatment of addiction usually treat only the most severe cases, and many addicts do not admit to their problem. Over one-fourth (28%) of **Survey** respondents indicated that they sometimes (24%) or quite frequently (4%) consume too much alcohol. In this study, the excessive use of alcohol was noted least frequently by inhabitants of Riga, but most frequently by villagers in the region of Vidzeme and people living in the countryside.

The above illustrates that individual health care is not the sole responsibility of the public health system and is not founded only on the availability of financial resources. Individuals in Latvia could do more on their own to prevent the onset of illnesses. Unhealthy eating habits, a sedentary life style, excessive alcohol use, smoking, and a disregard for traffic regulations all threaten human health and adversely affect an individual's sense of security. These factors can be influenced by the individual himself or herself, and do not require a large financial outlay.

Economic security

If a passer-by were approached on the street and asked what creates a sense of insecurity for him or her, there is a strong probability that the answer would be related to personal financial considerations. For example, a 43-year old teacher, when asked what makes her feel insecure, replied: "The last days before the payment of my monthly salary, when I have no money left." (*UNDP Interview Analysis, 2002*)

In Latvia, where politicians often point to the rapid growth of Latvia's GDP as evidence of the country's development, economic security is the most pervasive human security concern. The individual's economic status directly determines his or her ability to obtain adequate food, shelter, health care and education. The reduction of unemployment, the creation of new employment opportunities, and the need to increase income levels are matters of ongoing concern for 42% of **Survey** respondents.

When asked to reveal the three issues that they worry about most, **Survey** respondents overwhelmingly cited personal economic considerations, especially the fear of losing their jobs, insufficient income,

and the lack of a secure economic base during their old age. Economic issues were followed by health issues, while risks related to social ills (drug abuse, alcoholism, and prostitution) grouped third.

Human security usually increases along with one's standard of living. Individuals with higher standards of living generally feel more in control of their lives and place more trust in the future. Latvia has experienced steady GDP growth during the last few years. Latvia's GDP grew by 6.6% in 2002 and by 5.7% in 2001. GDP growth, however, reflects more the potential for economic security than the actual security of each individual. A better measure of economic security is a combination of GDP per capita and income distribution. Unfortunately, Latvia's performance according to this indicator is not as strong as that of other Central and Eastern European countries. Among the next ten EU member countries (including Malta and Cyprus), Latvia ranks ninth according to GDP per capita.

Income sufficiency

Sufficient income, complemented by predictable employment for those of working age, forms the foundation of economic security. Moreover, the

perception of sufficiency is important and varies among social environments.












Although the trend has been for reported salaries to increase in Latvia compared with previous years, it is still premature to speak of a real increase in prosperity for the population as a whole. In 2001 the net income for the employed increased by 6.1%, but the annual rate of inflation was 3.5%. Many people still feel unable to adequately support themselves on their income.

According to Central Statistical Bureau calculations, the minimum required subsistence income in 2002 was 88.70 lats per person per month. According to this criterion, 83% of the Latvian population lived below the subsistence level. In 2002 the average disposable income per family member was 74.60 lats. The minimum wage in 2002 was 70 lats, while the average old age pension was 62 lats (see Box 2.6).

One continuing and pervasive problem is that of the shadow economy in Latvia, which is estimated at 18-20% of the country's GDP. According to the *Working Life Barometer of the Baltic Countries 2002* (Ministry of Labour of the Republic of Finland, 2003), a large number of employers do not sign formal employment contracts with their employees in

Box 2.6

Selected income indicators (Ls/month)

Year	Minimum required subsistence income per person	Average disposable income per family member	Minimum wage	Average old-age pension
2002	88.70 	74.60 	70 	62 
2001	86.93 	–	50 	58 
2000	84.47 	69.19 	50 	58 

UNDP Latvia Survey on Human Security 2002

Box 2.7

Economic development and sense of insecurity

	GDP per capita (EU 15=100) in 2001	Unemployment rate (% of economically active population) in 2001	Sense of insecurity Average value	
			General risks	Personal risks
Riga	37.3	6.8	1.11	1.46
Kurzeme	27.7	9.7	1.18	1.52
Zemgale	16.4	10.8	1.16	1.49
Vidzeme	16.2	9.2	1.15	1.50
Latgale	14.6	19.4	1.04	1.46

The average value scale ranges from 0 (insecurity) to 3 (security)

UNDP Latvia Survey on Human Security 2002

order to avoid paying taxes. About 10% of the *Barometer's* respondents said that they had not signed any documents establishing the terms of their employment, and only one-third had signed employment contracts listing a defined period of employment. Over one-fifth of employed respondents indicated that they receive some form of payment under the table.

In the short term, the reception of untaxed income increases people's ability to cover their immediate expenses and to satisfy their basic needs – a prerequisite for a sense of security in other realms. However, in the long term those who have not paid taxes receive less and fewer social guarantees from the State, as well as smaller old-age pensions. Moreover, tax evasion undermines the government's ability to finance social expenditures.

The fear of living in poverty on meagre retirement pensions is the fourth most cited personal concern in the **Survey**. To increase long-term economic human security, Latvia must move quickly and reduce the proportion of hidden income. According to the *Working Life Barometer*, the proportion of hidden income in Latvia is double that of hidden income in Estonia and Lithuania (Ministry of Labour of the Republic of Finland, 2003).

If perceptions of threats are compared by regions in Latvia and regional economic indicators (income per capita, unemployment) are also considered, then there is a correlation (albeit not particularly strong) between economic development and people's sense of insecurity. Box 2.7 shows that the perception of insecurity is strongest in Latgale, the region in Latvia with the lowest income per capita and highest rate of unemployment. However, economic polarization is growing not only between Latgale and other regions in Latvia, but all across the nation. Most of Latvia's economic growth is occurring within its main urban centres, and the income gap between the cities and the countryside is increasing. (See the *Review of Latvia's Main Human Development Indicators* in this **Report's** Appendix.)

Since people's sense of economic security is based more on their personal experience than on macro-economics, an assessment of the level of economic security in Latvia must include an overview of individual income levels, as well as the rate of regular and predictable employment, the rate of reduction (or lack thereof) in income disparities, and people's sense of satisfaction with their income.

People's sense of insecurity grows when they fear receiving insufficient income, i.e. living below the subsistence level, being unable to pay their house-

Box 2.8

Household income per person after taxes (Ls)

	1 st quintile*		2 nd quintile		3 rd quintile		4 th quintile		5 th quintile	
	2000	2002	2000	2002	2000	2002	2000	2002	2000	2002
Quintiles defined	1-29	2-40	29-45	40-54	45-60	54-68	60-83	68-100	83-250	100-800
Average income	18.7	28.1	36.0	47.8	52.0	59.8	68.4	79.6	158.5	157.7
Median	18.7	30.0	35.0	50.0	50.0	60.0	66.7	80.0	106.7	120.0

* Quintile = one-fifth of all households participating in the study, grouped in ascending order according to income per person per month.

Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 2003

hold bills, and not receiving an adequate old-age pension. These are some of the most significant worries cited by **Survey** respondents.

Income disparities are steadily rising in Latvia. In 2002, the top 20% of the country's inhabitants reported earning an average of 157.70 lats per month after taxes. The average reported earnings of the lowest 20% amounted to only 28.10 lats, which is about one-third of the minimum required subsistence income (see Box 2.8).

Household income levels vary among different socio-economic groups. Entrepreneurs and the self-employed are generally better off. Those engaged in salaried work receive close to average incomes, but incomes in farming households, for senior citizens and those without a regular source of income are for the most part below average. Demographic factors also affect household income levels. Married couples without children have the highest income levels, while single-parent households with children under 16 have the lowest (see Box 2.9).

Most Latvian residents are aware of the income disparities in their country and believe them to be too large. In the social inequality study carried out by the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the University of Latvia in 1999, 96% of respondents concurred with this view. Three-quarters of respondents saw it as the government's responsibility to reduce income disparities in the country.

Employment stability

Fear related to employment stability was reflected in UNDP interviews. As one person stated: "Insecurity is caused by such worries as: will I manage to keep my job, and the same old problem of money." Many people feel insecure because they have encountered difficulties in seeking out new employment and in maintaining existing positions. This is due in part to continuing changes in Latvia's labour market. The reduction in Latvia's unemployment rate can be attributed more to a decline in the number of Latvia's inhabitants, a general aging of the population, and an increase in full-time (day section) university attendance than to a rise in productivity.

According to official data available on October 1, 2002, of the 90,988 people who were registered as unemployed, over one-quarter (23,801) had been unable to find work for over a year. Ongoing unemployment is particularly debilitating. In some circumstances it can lead to self-destructive behaviour, with sometimes fatal consequences (see Box 2.10).

The importance of salaried work as a source of economic security is characteristic of "work societies," in which the quality of life is perceived to be determined by the income received from one's work. If work is not sufficiently available, then many households face the prospect of living in poverty. Employment in "work societies" is a highly rated commodity and a legitimate way of providing for one's family. People identify themselves with their work and their

profession. If they are not able to integrate into the working world, then their self-esteem and sense of security may be seriously reduced.

Latvia has a preponderance of low-paying jobs. Generally, employment conditions are better in the cities than in the countryside, and men have higher quality positions than women. Higher levels of education generally guarantee higher quality employment (higher wages, better work conditions, flexible working hours, etc.), while lower quality employment is more readily available to people with incomplete or lower levels of education.

At the same time, the actively employed are showing an increasing tendency to work more hours and to combine several jobs. The ambitious and entrepreneurial generally have stable careers and new opportunities at work, but also experience a concomitant increase in stress. Employment in many cases is neither long-term nor guaranteed, as it was under the Soviet regime, and often becomes fragmented. Since the recovery of Latvia's independence, risk has become part and parcel of the labour market.

Global economic processes are also a source of insecurity. The Survey reveals that most people in Latvia recognize the socio-economic risks emanating from global conditions and feel threatened, yet do not believe that they themselves or united with others, can prevent or mitigate these threats (see Box 2.11).

Latvia's long-term ability to compete in the world market and its population's long-term security is affected by many variable factors, which make it impossible to provide an accurate assessment of such perceptions. The *Global Competitiveness Report 2002-2003* issued by a World Economic Forum working group ranked countries according to their growth competitiveness and microeconomic competitiveness. Latvia was ranked 44th on the Growth Competitiveness Index, which is based on indicators of technological development, government policy and the macroeconomic environment. Latvia's neighbour Estonia was ranked 26th, Lithuania 36th, Finland 2nd, Sweden 5th, and Russia 64th. This study of Latvia's long-term capacity for growth competitiveness revealed several weaknesses, including in government policy (52nd) (World Economic Forum, 2002).

Box 2.9

Disposable income per month (Ls)

	Average per household member		Average per consumer unit*	
	1999	2000	1999	2000
All	64.73	69.19	81.67	87.08
Households consisting of:				
One person	81.65	86.24	81.65	86.24
One adult and children under 16	53.36	53.42	72.14	71.73
Married couple without children	80.37	78.03	94.55	91.79
Married couple with children under 16	60.49	64.26	85.50	90.10

* To convert into consumer units, the equivalency scale of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development rates the first adult member of a household as 1.0 consumer units, each additional adult as 0.7 units, and children under 14 as 0.5 consumer units.

Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 2003

The economic security level of businesses and many of Latvia's inhabitants is largely dependent on economic events outside of Latvia. As in many other small countries, exports comprise a large proportion of Latvia's GDP.

Because Latvia has few natural resources and precious little mineral and fossil fuel resources, the Latvian economy is dominated by the service sector, which by the end of 2001 had come to constitute 70.4% of the total added value of the Latvian economy. The growing importance of the service sector shows that the foundation of Latvia's long-term human security lies in human resource develop-

ment, which is increasingly dependent upon individual initiative.

Latvia's employed must consider that in the future, as globalization and regionalization increase competition, work is likely to become more fragmented. Steady employment might become more threatened. In a country with "work society" values – where most people live their entire lives in one town, or at most, migrate to Riga – an understanding of changes in employment patterns could help to reduce people's sense of insecurity and promote competitiveness. Instead of placing an inordinate value on maintaining their existing positions, people should

Box 2.10

Basic indicators of registered unemployment

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Economically active population (in thousands)	1196	1167	1149	1130	1100	1107	1124
Registered unemployed	90,819	84,934	111,383	109,497	93,283	91,642	89,735
Unemployment rate, %	7.2	7.0	9.2	9.1	7.8	7.7	8.5
Total unemployed, % ¹ :							
Long-term unemployed ¹	31.2	38.1	26.3	31.1	29.0	26.6	26.4
Unemployed women ²	54.7	59.4	58.5	57.4	57.6	57.4	58.7
Unemployed youth (15-24)	20.0	18.2	16.4	14.8	14.7	14.6	13.9
Older workers unemployed ²	11.3	12.5	13.1	13.7	14.7	15.3	16.5
Unemployed with post-secondary education	6.0	6.1	6.8	7.1	6.9	7.0	7.2
Unemployed with secondary education	54.7	51.9	52.7	52.3	50.5	69.6	68.3
Unemployed with trade school education	14.6	16.3	16.6	17.7	19.6	1.0	2.5
Unemployed with elementary education or less	24.7	25.7	23.9	22.9	23.0	22.3	21.9

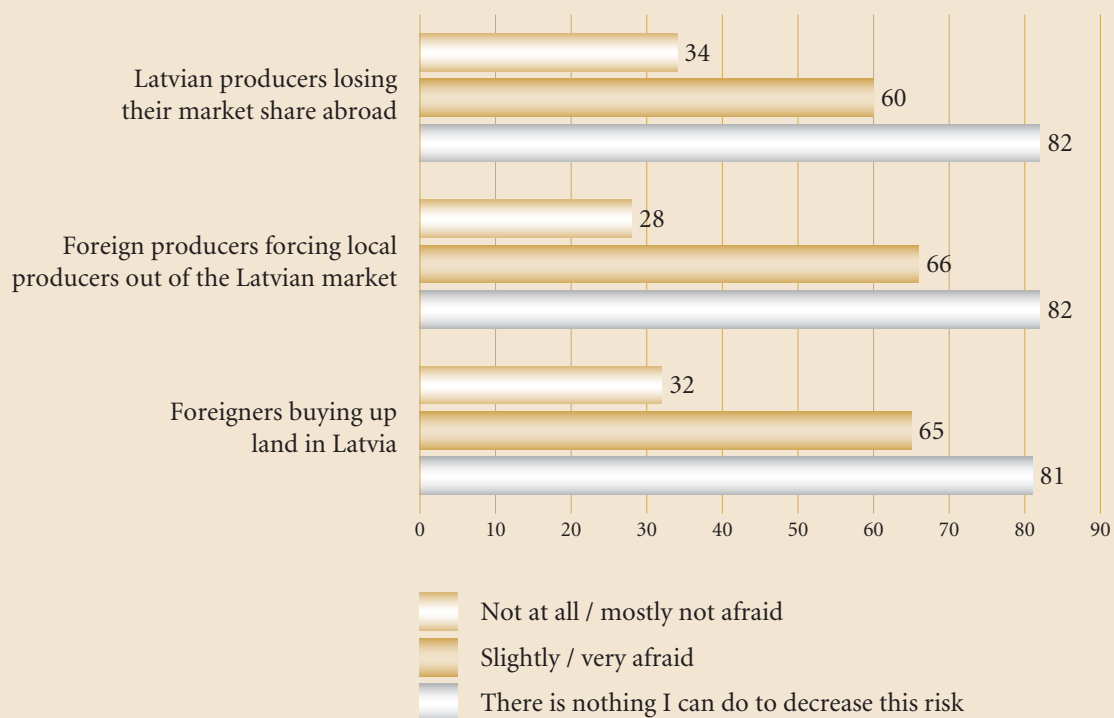
¹ Labour Force Survey. Persons aged 15 and older 1996-2001, or aged 15-74 from 2002 onward.

² Women over 50 and men over 55, as defined by the Law on Government Pensions.

Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, National Employment Agency, 2003

Box 2.11

Fears relating to globalization (%)



UNDP Latvia Survey on Human Security 2002

continue to increase their qualifications, position themselves for new jobs, and consider changing their place of employment, which might mean moving to another location.

In the interview below, Raita Karnīte, Director of the Institute of Economics of the Latvian Academy of Sciences, argues that Latvians must change their perception about globalization and capitalize on the new opportunities available (See Box 2.12).

Personal security

People need personal (physical) security, or freedom from violence. The global *UNDP Human Development Report 1994* recognized that in both wealthy and poor countries human lives are being increasingly threatened by sudden, unforeseen violence.

Most people in Latvia do not see a significant possibility of encountering life-threatening situations or starvation, which are a daily factor of life for one-third of the world's inhabitants. However, the ten most often cited threats at the personal level by respondents

of the **Survey** include being injured or killed in both non-motor vehicle and motor vehicle accidents, and being attacked on the street. Latvia has the highest motor vehicle accident rate in Europe, placing this issue at the forefront of concern for many.

At the more general level, organized crime is the second most often mentioned threat by **Survey** respondents, due to its close links with drug trafficking, prostitution and other illicit activities. Emotional and physical abuse is a top personal security issue that was not openly admitted to, but shown in the **Survey** and related studies to deeply affect its victims.

This section will assess personal security in the following areas:

- threats from other individuals or groups, i.e. street crime;
- organized crime;
- emotional and physical abuse at home;
- self-destructive behaviour, for example, suicide and the use of addictive substances;
- motor vehicle accidents.

Crime

Latvia's crime statistics provide an indication of why many people feel a low level of personal security. Since 1998 the country's crime rate has been on the increase. Over 50,000 crimes were registered in Latvia in the year 2000, of which more than 40% were classified as serious (Central Statistical Bureau, 2001).

While statistics in all three Baltic countries indicate a rise in crime, this rise has been lowest in Latvia.

Latvia's rising crime rate did not remain unnoticed by the **Survey's** respondents, of whom more than two-thirds (71%) expressed a fear of being robbed on the street. About 29% said that they felt this concern at a very high level. One-third (34%) of

Box 2.12

Raita Karnite
Director of the Institute of Economics of the Latvian Academy of Sciences

Globalization and Economic Security

What do you see as the most characteristic features of globalization in the area of economics?

Globalization by its very definition means that something assumes a worldwide scale. This has become the case with economic relationships. As a result of the revolution in information processing and communications, the exchange of information between various regions in the world is becoming more widespread, faster, and cheaper. The comparative benefits of manufacturing certain products in particular regions and countries become more obvious. Investors use this information to invest in places that will give the largest returns on their investment in the shortest possible time. The international flow of capital is followed by greater freedom in the flow of goods across national borders. This results in a division of labour, regional specializations and a significant increase in competition worldwide.

How do you judge globalization – as more positive or negative? Why?

As an economist I view globalization as a positive development because it promotes competition and furthers the more effective utilization of manufacturing resources. Globalization does, however, have its negative side-effects. It leads to a decrease in State sovereignty, and this evokes negative emotions. Social disparity is growing both on a national and international scale. Care should be taken with respect to the concentration of capital and manufacturing in the hands of only a few multinational corporations. In terms of economic stability, it would be better if a larger number of small economic units were to survive. Large companies frequently take advantage of their enormous economic influence to lobby governments and international organizations for their own benefit. This can serve to limit competition through import quotas or discriminatory technical standards, for example.

What effect is globalization having on the economic security of Latvia and its inhabitants?

The economic risks of globalization are unevenly distributed among countries and regions. Latvia is a small country and is more likely to be a recipient of the changes and consequences associated with globalization, rather than their initiator. However, small nations are more open to various external risks. Recent world economic history shows that in crisis situations, small countries are capable of adapting faster to new market conditions and recovering sooner than large countries. Latvia is at greater economic risk but at the same time it is more open to development possibilities than larger nations. Which one of these two conditions takes the upper hand will be determined by national development strategies, as well as by the analytic abilities of political and business leaders to foresee world and European regional developments several years ahead of time, and to duly prepare for changes in conditions of competition.

At the individual level, globalization means that no one can feel entirely protected, because there will be a need to face ever-increasing competition. The world market situation is such that Latvian businesses cannot accurately predict where in the world competition will emerge to threaten them most. However, it would be misleading to say that this situation represents an unavoidable decrease in economic security.

Is globalization having a varied impact on the socio-economic security of the people of Latvia and is it possible to speak of winners and losers?

Yes, there are differences. As I mentioned above, globalization increases socio-economic disparities. Like elsewhere in the world, those in Latvia who benefit most from an open market and strong competition are those living in areas with the most intense economic activity and the largest number of economically active, middle-aged individuals. The losers are those who are unable to technologically adapt to the pressures of increasing competition. These are the elderly and residents of economically disadvantaged areas. Young people are also losers, i.e. both graduates who have recently completed their education and those who fail to acquire a quality education. The market is not entirely willing to accept them due to competitive pressures, because hiring such people entails additional training costs, which the employer only recoups after some time has elapsed.

What practical recommendations would you have for the inhabitants of Latvia that would allow them to take advantage of the developmental opportunities offered by globalization, and that would reduce the potential negative effects of globalization on human security?

1. Do your best to get a broad-based, quality education. The Latvian economy will be able to compete in the world market primarily through its knowledge-based high technology sector, which means that in Latvia the highest levels of security will be experienced by professionals capable of working in this area.
2. Develop personal initiative and the ability to be pro-active. Do not be a bystander.
3. Acquire the skills necessary for competition, including those gained through sports, culture, and community activity. Knowledge, initiative and the ability to defend oneself helps one to avoid crises and promotes one's ability to land safely on one's feet.

UNDP Latvia, 2003

respondents mentioned crime as one of the top three potential threats to their personal security, through such forms as physical assault, sexual assault, organized crime, apartment theft and street crime (gangs).

Studies carried out by the Centre for the Study of Crime at the Latvian Ministry of Justice in 2000 show that the proportion of people who felt very safe walking in their neighbourhoods after dark had declined, while the proportion of those who felt unsafe had risen. In comparison with 1998, more people thought that their apartments could be burglarized during the following 12 months. Thirty-nine percent of automobile owners indicated that they had been the victims of car theft during the past five years. This had been the case for only 25% of respondents in 1998.

Human insecurity is exacerbated by the low level of trust that many Latvians feel toward their country's internal security structures. Only 44% say that they trust the police. The *Survey of Living Conditions in Latvia in 1999* showed that police are notified of only 27% to 60% of crimes committed in the country, depending on the seriousness of the offence (Latvian

Central Statistical Bureau and FAFO Practical Social Studies Institute, 2000). This points to a significant amount of latent or unreported crime.

Many of those surveyed said that they rely on their own, individual security strategies to ensure their personal safety – from avoiding dark streets at night to carrying nail files when entering potentially unsafe areas. The lack of trust in the police is to some degree being compensated for by increased community activities. If the overall level of personal security in Latvia is to be significantly increased, then crime prevention institutions, community members and victims will need to make a concentrated effort to increase the level of mutual trust.

Organized crime

Fear of organized crime in Latvia ranked second of all general risks perceived by **Survey** respondents. This high level of concern may partly be due to the emotion-laden phrasing used to describe this issue in the **Survey**. No follow-up was made to clarify the actual

interpretation of “organized crime at the State level” by **Survey** respondents, who may have included State-level corruption (including “State capture” or the domination of state institutions by individuals or groups in pursuit of private interest), smuggling, trafficking, and prostitution in their understanding of this issue. The theme of corruption was widely debated during the parliamentary election campaign in the fall of 2002, which corresponded to the time the **Survey** was conducted. This may have served to heighten participants’ concern for this potential risk.

Official statistics provide no direct information about organized crime in Latvia. However, a State Police official informed the authors of this **Report** about the general trends in the country. The official affirmed that in Latvia, as in the rest of the world, organized crime is becoming an increasing threat. Most criminal groups in Latvia have connections to groups in other countries, mainly Russia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Germany. These groups are primarily involved in smuggling, trafficking (including human trafficking) and prostitution. According to this police official, organized crime stands to have an increasingly negative effect on Latvia’s economy, and to threaten Latvia’s democratic political system and rule of law if it were to succeed in infiltrating Latvia’s government and parliament.

Abuse

Over one-fifth of all women in the confidential section of the **Survey** stated that they fear emotional abuse at home. Fourteen percent indicated that they worry about domestic violence. Abuse in the home has a particularly negative effect on one’s sense of personal security. This sense of insecurity can then spread over to other situations and events that the individual must confront. Due to the particular significance of abuse on the individual’s overall perception of security, this issue will be analysed in detail in Chapter 3.

Self-destructive behaviour

Insecurity and despair can have self-destructive consequences. Suicide accounted for 19% of deaths due to external causes in 2001, although on the whole the number of suicides has decreased since 1995. Men continue to commit suicide four times more often than women. Rural men committed suicide more often in 2001 than their urban counterparts.

The single most important factor contributing to all types of violence, self-injury, and accidents is the use of alcohol, narcotics, and psychotropic substances. In 2000 every third reported crime was associated with the use of alcohol or drugs. Of 3703 deaths by unnatural causes in 2002, 291 or 8% were linked with the use of alcohol, according to the Health Statistics and Medical Technology Agency. The use of alcohol continues to increase (8.5 litres of pure alcohol per adult in 2002), as does the use of drugs and psychotropic substances.

The **Survey** indicates that the spread of narcotics has become one of the main security concerns of Latvia’s inhabitants (see Box 2.13).

Drug addiction is spreading among young people. Youth are the main targets of drug dealers, and narcotics are becoming available in an increasing number of schools. According to the State Centre for Drug Control and Drug Abuse Prevention, 76% of newly diagnosed addicts and drug users between January and August 2002 were under the age of 24. The spread of narcotics is also indirectly facilitated by deficiencies in Latvia’s justice system. The penalties imposed for drug trafficking are often not commensurate with the damage inflicted on individual and community health.

In 2000, the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the University of Latvia carried out a study entitled *Reasons Given by Youth for Beginning to Use Drugs at Riga City Entertainment Venues*, in co-operation with the Riga Centre for the Prevention of Drug Addiction. Young people see drug use as a form of self-expression. They try narcotics and psychotropic substances to satisfy their curiosity; to forget their troubles; to overcome feelings of emptiness, insecurity, and loneliness; and to maintain good standing among their peers. These factors point to a lack of emotional fulfilment, low self-esteem, and conflict or alienation in family and other interpersonal relationships, according to the Study.

Motor vehicle accidents

Motor vehicle accidents deserve special attention, since a large number of drivers and pedestrians in Latvia endanger themselves and others by disregarding traffic regulations. The **Survey** revealed that almost three-fourths of respondents felt in danger of being victimized by aggressive car drivers. The number of cars in Latvia is increasing every year, along with the number of persons injured in traffic accidents (see Box 2.14).

Although the number of traffic fatalities has been on the decline, Latvia still has among the highest motor vehicle accident death rates in Europe.

According to Latvia's Road Traffic Safety Directorate, the number of motor vehicle accidents caused by intoxicated drivers decreased in 2000 (<http://www.csdd.lv>). Nevertheless, almost one traffic accident in five is associated with the use of alcohol. During the first six months of 2002, 6914 people were detained for driving under the influence of alcohol. Of these, 591 were repeated offenders.

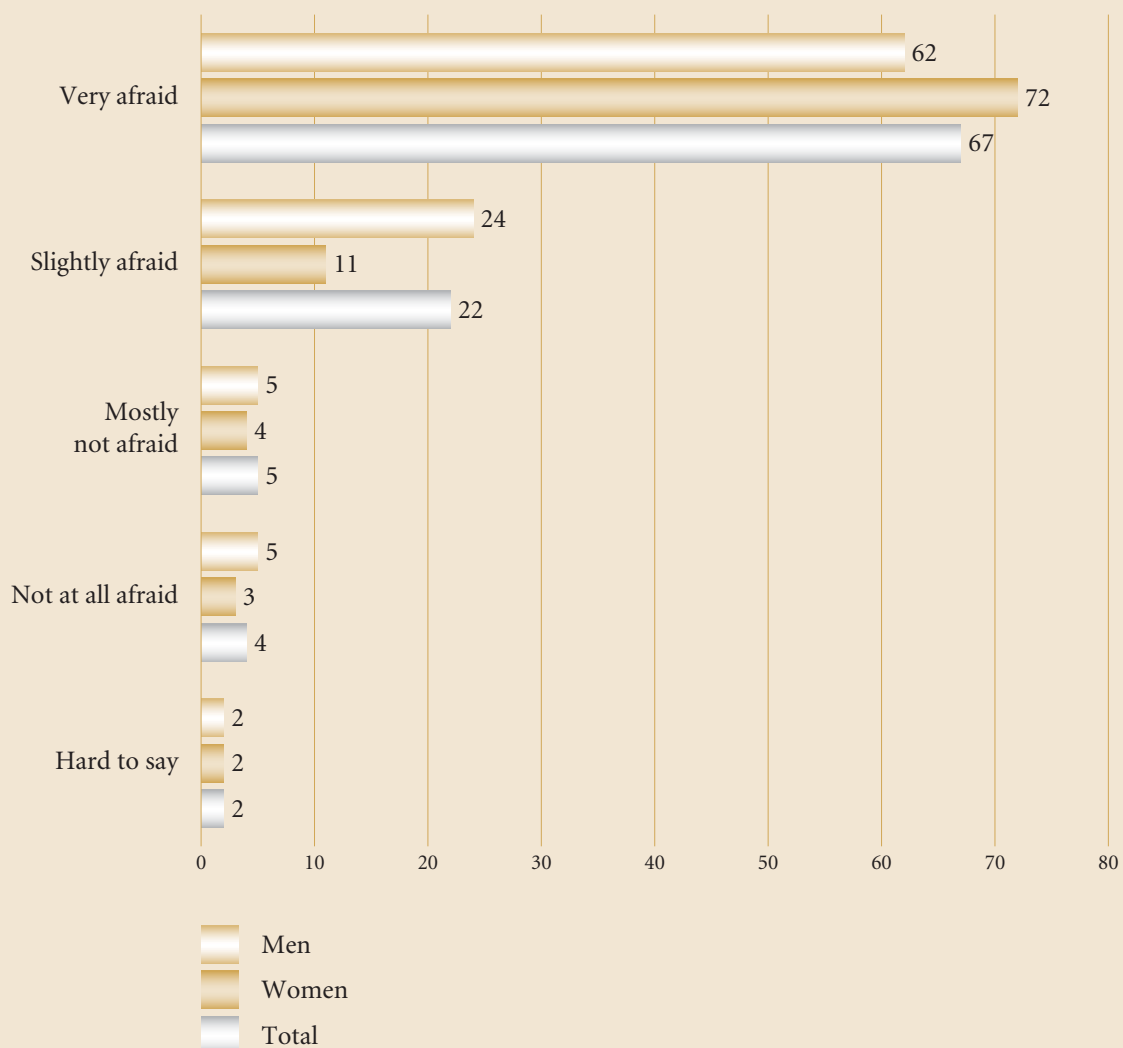
Another dangerous trend is the increase in the number people driving under the influence of narcot-

ic and psychotropic substances. During the first eight months of 2002, 172 drivers were detained for this reason, compared to 126 the previous year.

The Health Promotion Centre's year 2000 survey of habits influencing health showed that almost half of all men and one-third of women had friends or acquaintances who had driven while under the influence of alcohol during the last year (<http://www.esi-vesels.lv>). Motor vehicle users subject themselves to other types of risk as well. While nearly two-thirds (65%) of front-seat passengers claimed to regularly use their safety belts, only 6% of back-seat passengers did so.

Box 2.13

Concern about the spread of narcotics in Latvia (%)



UNDP Latvia Survey on Human Security 2002

Many pedestrians do not take sufficient measures to reduce the risks of being struck by a motor vehicle. An insignificant number make use of reflectors while walking along roadsides. According to the Health Promotion Centre's year 2000 survey, only 3% of pedestrians use them almost all the time. Trauma suffered by pedestrians is one of the most serious problems associated with road safety. In 2001, pedestrians accounted for 28% of all injuries and 36% of fatalities that occurred on the road. The lack of reflector use is one of the major contributing factors to the high rate of injuries among children. In 2001, 36% of pedestrian injuries occurred at night. Eleven percent of those injured at night were children under the age of 14 (<http://www.pd.gov.lv>).

Environmental security

In recent years the environment in Latvia has become cleaner, and has received more care and attention. The discharge of contaminated wastewater and harmful atmospheric emissions has decreased. This can be attributed mainly to a decline in industrial output and a waning agriculture sector in the early 1990s, and a decrease in income available for the purchase and use of agrochemicals.

According to the **Survey**, four of the top ten issues about which people feel insecure are environment-related (see Box 2.15). At the same time, most of Latvia's inhabitants do not believe that environmental protection should become a government policy priority. Only 3% polled in an August 2002 survey identified it as a pressing issue (Latvian Facts, 2002).

The cultivation of environmental awareness is key to increasing environmental security. Environmental awareness is determined by three components:

- 1) concern about the degradation of the environment;
- 2) knowledge about those factors that adversely affect the environment; and
- 3) a readiness to invest time and/or resources in maintaining the environment.

Concern that is not supported by basic information about environmental issues can lead to increased feelings of insecurity (see Box 2.16). Although Latvia placed 10th out of 142 nations in the 2002 Environmental Sustainability Index (ESI), its inhabitants' knowledge about basic environmental conditions could be improved. The ESI figures for 2002 indicate that Latvia performed most poorly in its social and institutional capacity to respond to environmental threats. Latvia's weak points included a lack of available information on environmental issues, difficulties in overcoming the contradictory needs of various interest groups, and deficiencies in the cultivation of environmental awareness.

One of the most recent studies on environmental awareness in Latvia took place in Daugavpils in the late 1990s by the Daugavpils University and the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences Institute of Philosophy and Sociology (Meņšikovs, 1999). It showed that many of the people living in the Daugavpils area lacked the information required to help them formulate individual or collective security strategies regarding nuclear threats from the nearby Ignalina power plant in Lithuania.

Box 2.14

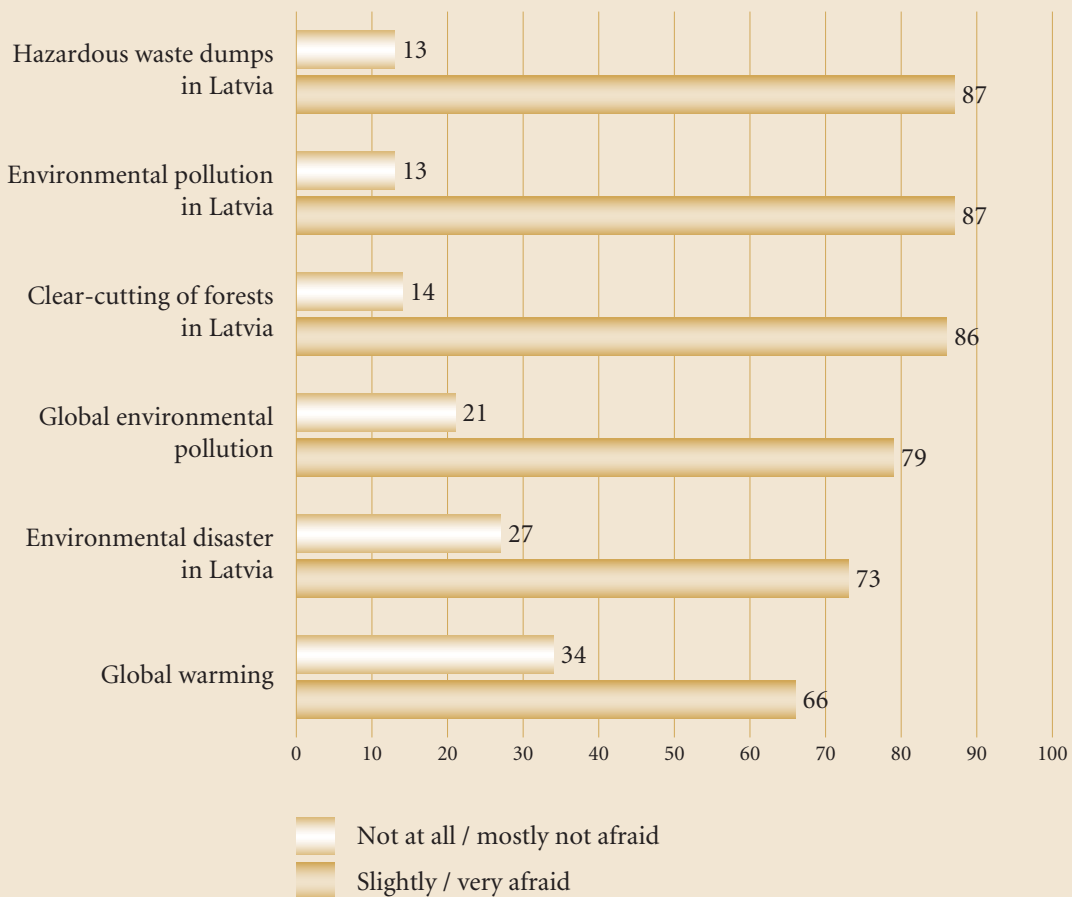
Number of motor vehicle accidents (MVAs), injuries and fatalities in Latvia

	1990	1995	2000	2001	2002
Number of MVAs resulting in injury	4325	4056	4482	4766	5083
Number of fatalities	877	611	588	517	518
Number injured	4716	4903	5449	5852	6300

Statistical Yearbook of Latvia, 2002

Box 2.15

Fear of environment-related risks (%)



UNDP Latvia Survey on Human Security 2002

Concern and knowledge are the first two elements required for promoting environmental security. The readiness to invest one's own time and resources and to support government efforts to protect the environment is the third. The European Union has formulated a series of strict environmental standards that Latvia will gradually implement over the next ten years. This will require large financial investments. Some of the more expensive long-term projects include the achievement of EU standards in the quality of drinking water and the upgrading of sewage treatment plants, as well as the development of waste management systems.

The investment of time and resources at all levels (government, communities and individuals) will also be crucial for solving Latvia's waste problems. Each year, Latvians generate 600,000 to 700,000 metric tons of domestic waste, of which two-thirds is household garbage. One-third is institutional and commer-

cial in origin. Every inhabitant of Latvia creates an average of 200 kilograms of garbage per year. Hazardous waste is another problem. According to the *Latvian Central Statistical Bureau's Report on Hazardous Waste –3BA*, 93,000 tons of hazardous waste were created in Latvia in 2000. Sixty percent of this waste came from metal processing plants.

The Latvian government appears to be making serious efforts to deal with the country's waste problem. In 2002 it adopted a National Waste Disposal Plan to regulate the disposal of domestic and hazardous waste over the next ten years, until 2012. Individuals, however, are not doing enough to solve the country's garbage disposal problems. According to Environment Ministry data, only 60% of people in Latvia have garbage removal services (<http://www.varam.gov.lv>). Refuse is sometimes disposed of in forests, at roadsides, near open water reservoirs and in other illegal locations. Only one-

quarter of the **Survey's** respondents sort their garbage, and recycling is not practiced on a wide scale in Latvia.

The Latvian government is also investing time and resources to address environmental issues at the global level on behalf of its people. The **Survey** indicates that nearly four-fifths (78.6%) of Latvia's inhabitants do not believe that they alone or together with others can affect global environmental pollution in any way. An even larger majority (87.2%) are just as critical of their ability to affect global warming trends. However, the government has had a very impressive track record in fulfilling the country's obligations in terms of global environmental risks (see Box 2.17).

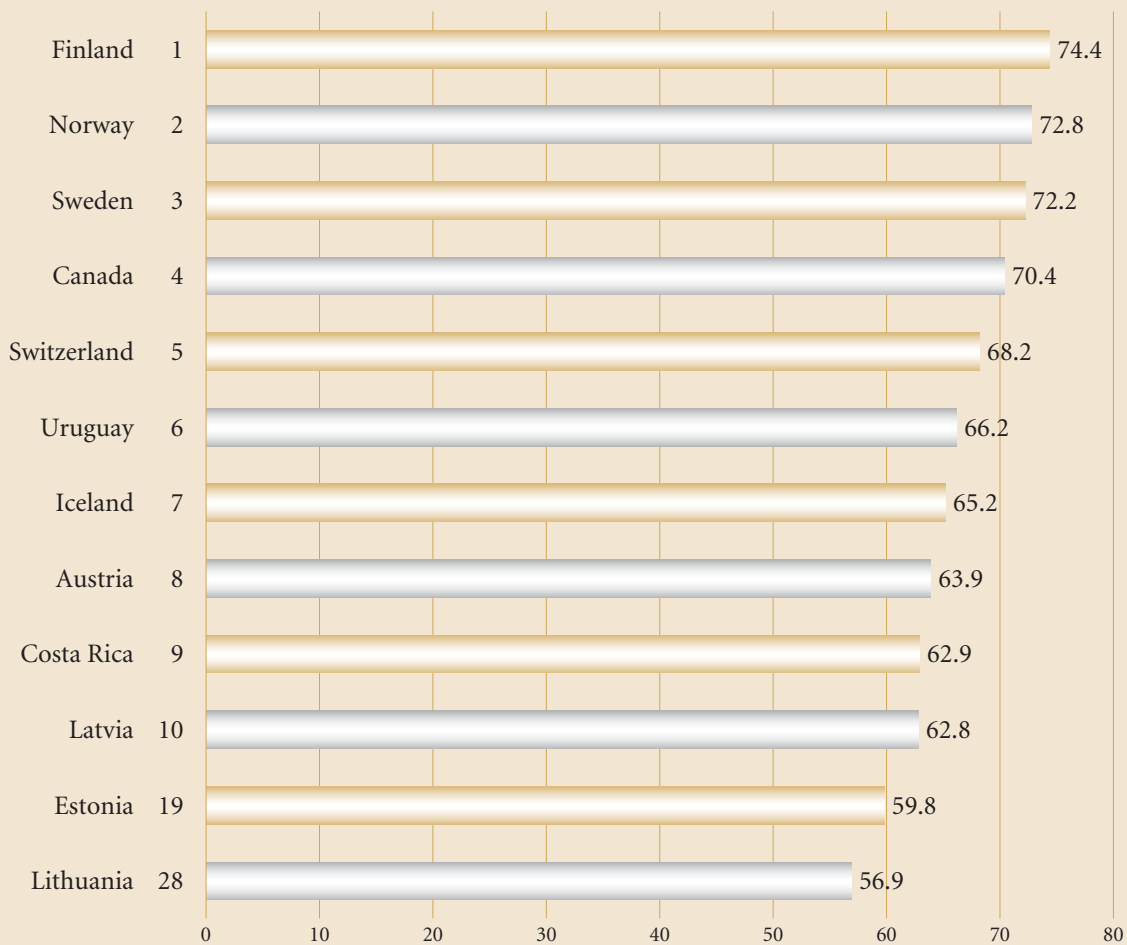
As a small nation, Latvia cannot significantly contribute to the reduction of environmental threats if it acts alone. However, every nation's contribution is important in the context of international co-operation, as are community attitudes to national projects geared to reducing global environmental problems.

The role of the individual in ensuring environmental security must increase. Although slightly more than half (51%) of **Survey** respondents believe that they alone or together with others can reduce the threat of pollution in Latvia, the level of personal involvement in environmental groups is low.

According to the *Environment* survey carried out by the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the

Box 2.16

Environmental Sustainability Index (0-100) and Latvia's rank among 142 nations



2002 Environmental Sustainability Index: an Initiative of the Global Leaders of Tomorrow Environmental Task Force, World Economic Forum Annual Meeting, 2002

Box 2.17

Latvia's contribution to global environmental risk prevention

In 1995 Latvia ratified the 1985 Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer, its Protocol on Substances Which Deplete the Ozone Layer, and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. In 2002 Latvia also ratified the Kyoto Protocol of December 11, 1997. Upon becoming a signatory to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, Latvia committed itself to working alone and together with other nations to stabilize the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Along with other signatories of the Convention, Latvia has undertaken to reduce anthropogenic CO₂, CH₄, N₂O, HFC, PFC and SF₆ emissions to 8% below 1990 levels between the years 2008 and 2012 (VARAM, 2001). Latvia has already reduced its emissions of greenhouse gases to a great degree, mainly due to the economic restructuring of the country, which has involved factory closings.

The Latvian Ministry of the Environment's (VARAM) most recent predictions suggest that if no specific measures are taken, then Latvia's level of greenhouse gas emissions in 2010 will be 45% below 1990 levels. If purposeful measures are adopted, then these emissions could fall to 51% below 1990 levels.

Data gathered by the European Commission on the energy sector indicates that Latvia is using relatively more renewable sources for electrical power generation than the other EU candidate countries and producing the lowest levels of greenhouse gas emissions (Eurostat). Considering the great difficulties that other countries are experiencing in fulfilling their commitments under the Convention, Latvia is fulfilling its international obligations and making a significant contribution – taken in proportion to the size of its economy – to reducing the risks posed by global climate change.

UNDP Latvia, 2003

University of Latvia, 20% of respondents would be willing to pay a premium on a product's price if they knew that this markup was spent on environmental preservation, but far fewer would accept a lower standard of living in support of this goal.

Because of the long-term risks to human security that can be caused by environmental problems, it is incumbent upon individuals and governments to make small economic sacrifices today for a more secure environmental future. Environmental risk management lies in the choices made by each consumer, be it in the purchase of an automobile or laundry detergent.

Food security

Food security means that food is physically and economically available to all. Furthermore, the food consumed must be safe and nutritious. The issue of food security in the 21st century is and will continue to be a matter of grave concern in many parts of the world.

Physical access to food is not a pressing problem in Latvia. There is an ample choice between locally produced and foreign-made food products all across the country. The variety of available food products is increasing each year. However, access to high quality food is best assured by regular and sufficient income, which is an acute problem for those living under the poverty level.

In Latvia food purchases still take up the highest percentage of disposable income for many households. The amount of household income spent on food continues to decrease – from 52.20 Ls in 1996 to 37.50 Ls in 2000, while the average number of kcal consumed per inhabitant continues to remain above 2400 kcal since 1996 (Central Statistical Bureau, 2003).

Four percent of the Survey's respondents acknowledged that they live in a state of semi-starvation because their income is insufficient to secure an adequate supply of food. Twenty percent stated that they only had enough money for food, and not much else (see Box 2.18). Incomes are generally lower in the

eastern region of Latgale, where people are less likely to be able to make other major purchases. Most of their limited income is spent on food.

Another concern is about people's eating habits, and about the quality of the food they consume. Although eating habits have improved in recent years as people in Latvia reduce their intake of high-fat foods and limit their use of sugar and salt, figures from the *Study of Household Budgets in Latvia in 2000* (Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 2001) and the Health Promotion Centre show that the tradition of healthy eating and maintaining a balanced diet has not yet become entrenched. Unhealthy eating habits in conjunction with a sedentary lifestyle contribute to the prevalence of cardiovascular disease, which is the major cause of death in Latvia and elsewhere in Europe.

In Latvia, the consumption of vegetable and grain products is too low, while the consumption of meat and high-fat dairy products is too high. Only 18% of rural inhabitants eat fresh vegetables on a daily basis, compared to 28% of Riga residents. In many cases, the foods that people eat on a daily basis (mainly potatoes, cream and meat) lack quality and/or variety. Ministry

of Welfare guidelines for healthy eating are available for reading at the Latvian Food Centre (LFC) or on the Internet at the LFC's website – http://www.lpc.gov.lv/download/uztura_vadlinijas.htm.

The **Survey** showed that 81% of respondents are concerned about foods with a high additive content, while 78% are worried about the potential negative health effects of low-quality foodstuffs.

Community security

A community is a group of people united by some aspect of social identity or common motivation. (For more on the role of the community in enhancing security, see Chapter 5.) Human security is enhanced by a sense of belonging and by close relationships with others, starting with the immediate family and extending to interest groups, social or religious organizations, etc. It is often tied to one's linguistic, national and/or ethnic identity. The role of the community is pivotal in the creation and maintenance of a sense of security. Through contact with other people, individuals develop their own

Box 2.18

Self-assessments of household income in Latvia's regions (%)

	Riga	Kurzeme	Vidzeme	Zemgale	Latgale
Sufficient income, no special efforts to economize	3	3	3	5	6
We live sparingly, but there is generally enough to meet our needs	25	22	24	25	19
We live very frugally and it is very difficult to save up for larger purchases	29	26	23	35	16
We barely have enough money for food and clothing	16	25	28	20	17
We only have enough money for food	19	20	18	11	29
We don't even have enough money for food and are half-starved	6	4	1	2	10
No answer	2	-	3	2	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100

UNDP Latvia Survey on Human Security 2002

identities and establish a place for themselves in the world. The community is characterized by such concepts as trust, attachment and mutual responsibility (Sennett, 1998).

Most people in Latvia are not actively involved in formal community affairs. They usually maintain contact with others through informal networks that include mainly their family members, friends and work colleagues. The overall level of involvement in social organizations or interest groups is very low. A 2001 study by the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the University of Latvia showed athletic organizations (18%) and religious organizations (6%) as those that drew the most involvement.

Family relationships are the most important support systems in Latvia and the main source of individual security. In most cases, the bulk of the emotional support and sense of community that individuals acquire is provided directly by the family. In difficult times people expect to receive help and emotional support first and foremost from their close family members. According to the 2000 Census, 83% of all people in Latvia live in families.

The family is rated higher than any other sphere of human existence in the European Values Survey (Baltic Data House, 1999). About 95% of respondents said that their families were important or very important to them. Work, friends, leisure time, religion and politics then followed in significance.

Social tendencies in Latvia are similar to those in neighbouring, developed Western countries. The number of people in marriages is regularly declining. According to present trends, at least one half of all women and men will never marry. However, this does not mean that people have stopped seeking life partners. More and more people in Latvia choose not to register their common-law marriages. Accordingly, the proportion of children born out of wedlock is increasing. The number of single-parent households is also on the rise.

Single-parent households usually have significantly lower incomes than the norm, which can be seen as a primary source of insecurity. The divorce rate in Latvia remains relatively high, even though it is on the decline. In 1979 and 1992 Latvia had one of the highest rates of divorce in the world, at 5.5 divorces per 1000 people. In 2001 it had dropped by almost half to 2.4 divorces per 1000 people. Two-thirds of divorcees have children. Personal loss is one of the main sources

of intense anxiety, and attachment at the family level is essential for a sense of security from childhood through adulthood. The children of divorced parents are a vulnerable group that is particularly prone to suffering from a lack of security.

Political security

Political security addresses issues concerning human rights and freedoms, as well as the role of a civil society and individual participation in democratic processes. It is rooted in trust in one's government and in the conviction that one's government is capable of carrying out its assigned priorities.

The most significant human rights issues in Latvia in 2002 dealt with socio-economic questions – personal rights to housing and social security, as well as the right to due process in the court system and the right to be treated with respect. Altogether the National Human Rights Office received 1151 written complaints about alleged human rights violations and provided advice on 4150 cases. Complaints point to economic and social security issues, as well as problems in the justice system and different government institutions. Further information about human rights in Latvia can be obtained from the Internet home page of the National Human Rights Office (<http://www.vcb.lv>).

Few people in Latvia express complete trust in their political institutions, which include the Saeima (or parliament), the Cabinet, and political parties. Fully one-half of Latvia's inhabitants view the Saeima as untrustworthy, while nearly as many (45%) think the same of the Cabinet of Ministers (Latvian Facts, August, 2002). The high rate of MPs who were voted out of office in the 2002 elections bears witness to public dissatisfaction with the activities of Latvian politicians.

The divide between society and its power structures remains strong. People continue to feel alienated from political decision-makers and there is a noticeable lack of civic participation. According to sociologist Ulrich Beck, participation is a pre-requisite for the demystification of politics (Beck, 1998). Communication between the Latvian political elite and its electorate must be improved.

A survey carried out in 2001 by the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the University of Latvia indicates that only about 1% of respondents are involved in political parties. Three-quarters believe

that they have no ability to influence government activities. A disturbingly large number of people (73%) also rate their ability to affect politics at the municipal level as low, confirming a sense of political powerlessness (Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, *Social Relations and Support Systems*, 2001).

Political participation in Latvia has decreased since the early 1990s. In 1993, 89% of citizens took part in the election of the 5th Saeima, compared to 72.5% in the 2002 elections of the 8th Saeima. This level of participation is still high compared to other Western democracies, and indicates that the people of Latvia have not entirely lost faith in their ability to affect political processes.

Participation translates as the ability of civil society to take part in decision-making processes at both the local and national levels. The government is currently elaborating procedures for increasing public input in government policy making – such as in agenda setting, programme-planning, and the formulation of draft legislation – as well as policy implementation and assessment (Miezaine, 2002).

NGOs are slowly becoming cooperation partners in policy planning, but most people are still passive about participating in them. People in Latvia also hesitate to use such existing participative options as open forums, discussions of draft legislation and other avenues for expressing their opinions, affecting decision-making and reducing their sense of alienation.

One reason for the low level of trust in Latvia's political elite is the pervasive perception of it as corruption-ridden. The *Face of Corruption Study* carried out by Delna in 1999, the Latvian branch of Transparency International, indicated that more than half of those surveyed believe that the government has no interest in fighting corruption. Three-quarters thought that Latvia has too many bureaucrats, of whom most use their positions for personal gain. The UNDP *Survey* also revealed that 42% of respondents are concerned about the necessity to give bribes in order to have their problems dealt with properly.

In 2002 Transparency International gave Latvia a rating of 3.7 out of 10, where 0 designates a general perception of unbridled and widespread corruption, while 10 indicates a complete lack thereof. Latvia placed 52nd among 102 countries studied. Both of Latvia's Baltic neighbours had better ratings. Estonia ranked 29th with a rating of 5.6, while Lithuania ranked 46th with a rating of 4.8. It remains to be seen

whether the establishment of Latvia's Bureau for the Prevention and Fight Against Corruption in 2002 will reduce both the public perception and actual occurrence of corruption in the country.

Different people, different issues

Although the people of Latvia generally recognize the same issues as being problematic – the spread of drugs, household income, crime, health, etc., certain risks are felt more intensely by specific groups of people.

According to the *Survey*, there are no significant differences in the perception of general risks and personal threats among citizens and non-citizens. However, there are structural differences in the way some risks are perceived. For example, citizens are more likely to fear organized crime (59%) than non-citizens (51%). Non-citizens tend to be more concerned about inadequate social safeguards, including not being able to afford medical care if taken ill, and not being able to pay their rent and other household bills.

There are differences in the perception of national threats. For example, 46% of Latvia's citizens still fear the potential reoccupation of the country by a foreign power (namely Russia). Eighteen percent said they hold this fear strongly. Only about half as many non-citizens (24%) fear such an eventuality, and only 10% of them hold this fear strongly (see Box 2.19).

Both citizens (60%) and non-citizens (50%) are afraid of nuclear threats (the study did not differentiate between the use of nuclear weapons and nuclear reactor accidents). As reflected in the University of Daugavpils study mentioned earlier in this Chapter, the nuclear reactor in Ignalina, Lithuania is a source of anxiety to many living in the surrounding area.

Women in Latgale are more likely to be concerned about becoming seriously ill and about losing their income than those living elsewhere. However, the fear of not receiving an adequate standard of medical care was ranked only fourth in Latgale, whereas it was concern #2 countrywide. As was already noted in this Chapter's section on Health Security, economic status and health are closely linked. Those who experience the highest rates of anxiety about their health are usually those who lack regular or sufficient income, i.e. the unemployed, homemakers, and low-paid salaried workers. The economically disadvantaged segments of

the population are likely to continue to avoid using the country's health care system, even if the costs to them are kept to a minimum.

A different view presents itself when perceptions of risk are analysed across age groups. Those under the age of 29 are more likely to fear becoming infected with HIV/AIDS and losing their savings. They also fear such physical threats as street crime, sexual assault, and terrorist attacks. Those in their thirties are most afraid of receiving inadequate medical care in the case of illness, and being unable to afford a proper education for themselves and their children. The middle-aged and the elderly tended to be more worried about paying their bills, avoiding financial difficulties, securing sufficient old-age pensions and maintaining their health.

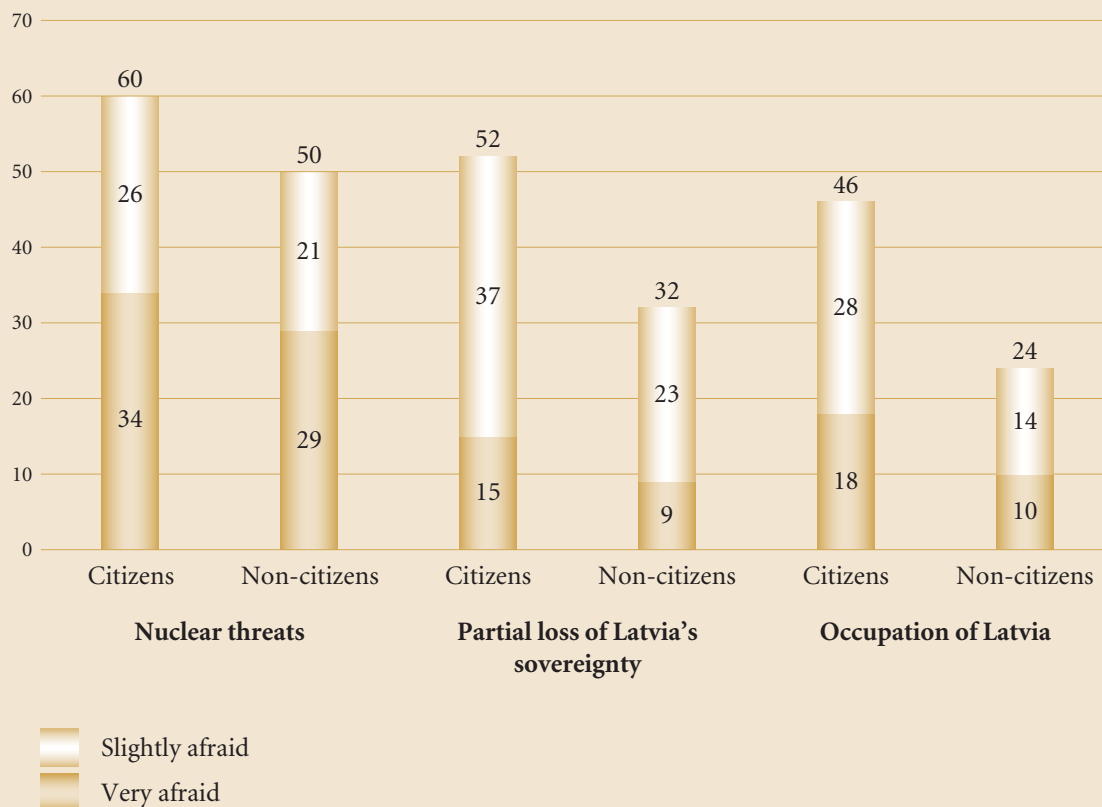
Marital status also affects perceptions of security. According to the **Survey**, those who are divorced, married but not living with their partners or widowed are

more worried about financial problems, most likely due to an absence of family support. The unmarried worry more frequently about contracting HIV/AIDS. Married individuals worry less about becoming infected with HIV/AIDS than those in common-law relationships. Married women living separately from their husbands are the most likely to fear assault. Married women living together with their husbands are less likely to fear physical violence at home, or at least admit to it.

The results obtained from the **Survey** show that people's sense of security is mostly undermined by general risk factors that are associated with current social, economic and environmental problems, including problems of access to quality food. People in Latvia are least worried about issues of national security. The prospects of Latvia being occupied by a foreign country, of ethnic or military conflict, or of civil unrest were rated as among the least likely in the category of general risks.

Box 2.19

Concern about specific risks among citizens and non-citizens (%)



UNDP Latvia Survey on Human Security 2002

Summary

This Chapter analyses the seven realms of human security as defined by the UNDP. *Health* and *economic security* are the two major realms of human security that need to be improved in Latvia. Both of these realms are interrelated. Economically secure persons are usually better able to prevent and treat health-related problems, while healthy persons are generally well-positioned to secure their economic well-being and that of their relatives.

Currently Latvia's health care system places an undue burden on the country's inhabitants. People lack clear information on medical options available through the official health system, and are not convinced that high quality health care is available through official channels. Those who lack information or who place little trust in the information available to them often avoid health establishments until an illness has set in with acute symptoms, as is the case with many tuberculosis patients. In those cases where information has been well targeted, such as with HIV/AIDS prevention, increased awareness has led to preventative measures that are slowing down the spread of this disease in Latvia. Alcohol abuse continues to be a human security hazard and the use of narcotics is on the increase.

Sufficient and predictable income and predictable employment are the cornerstones of economic security. People in Latvia are concerned about living below the subsistence level, of being unable to pay their bills and of receiving inadequate old age pensions. Those working in the shadow economy are sacrificing their future economic security in order to satisfy their immediate needs.

Unpredictable employment in a "work society" like Latvia's, where employment was practically guaranteed during the Soviet period, is a particularly sensitive issue. Many of those who are already employed are taking up two or even three different jobs to make ends meet. Conversely, the long-term unemployed are finding it increasingly difficult to re-enter the labour market. Therefore, Latvia's long-term strategy for global competitiveness must encourage the work force to increase its productivity, and seek to provide ample employment opportunities for those of working age. Individuals must understand that a broad-based, high-quality education, appropriate skills and personal initiative are tantamount to economic security – both locally and in the global context.

At the same time, government at the central and municipal levels needs to ensure an appropriate environment for stimulating economic activity, and to step in when the private sector does not assure adequate employment or incomes.

Many people have developed their own strategies to safeguard their *personal security*. Security strategies developed by groups of people are also on the rise. This would be laudable if the primary motives for such activities were not based on distrust of the country's law-enforcement and justice institutions. Activities to enhance mutual cooperation between law-enforcement officials and society could significantly improve security in the country.

Many individuals are also concerned about organized crime, due to the negative images it conjures up (few people have actually had to face this phenomenon directly), as well as the facility with which it crosses national borders and its association with State capture.

Both emotional and physical abuse are significant personal security issues with ramifications on people's sense of security in other realms. Self-inflicted injuries are strongly linked with high anxiety and insecurity levels. Although suicide rates have been decreasing lately, the increase in drug use is an issue of intense concern for many inhabitants of Latvia today. Motor vehicle accidents continue to pose a particularly high risk that could be limited through concerted action by Latvia's inhabitants in cooperation with local and national authorities.

People require sufficient information on *environmental security* and need to invest more of their time and resources for maintaining the environment. For the economically insecure (i.e. the poor), this implies a large sacrifice.

Overall, *food security* in Latvia depends upon economic security and proper eating habits.

There are two significant issues concerning *community security*. First, continuing changes in the structure of the family are having a negative impact on the way people feel about their security. With high divorce rates and an increasing number of single-parent households in a society where family values rate highly, close positive relationships are essential for maintaining a sense of security.

Second, people rely on close friends and family to help them feel secure, but networking with farther circles in formal networks is not widely practiced to pro-



mote security. Identification with a community is often related to one's closest family relationships and extends to one's further links with friends, neighbours, work colleagues, and other groups of people. It may also be related with one's linguistic and ethnic identity, as is the case for most Latvians. However, people do not organise themselves in wider circles to achieve security goals, such as neighbourhood self-help groups, advocacy groups, etc.

People in Latvia still lack a sense of belonging to European and other transnational communities, and have heightened perceptions of risks emanating from outside of Latvia. With increasing global and regional interactions, the extent to which the global community is perceived as a source of security will depend on the ability of Latvia's inhabitants to identify with and have direct experiences with ever-widening community circles.

Political security is negatively affected in Latvia by a low degree of trust in the country's political institutions and by a lack of civic participation in political processes at both the local and national levels. The perception of widespread corruption in State and local government institutions contributes to the belief that the government often lacks the volition to act in the interests of the people (Delna, 1999).

However, a relatively high voter turnout at local and national elections indicates that citizens have not yet lost hope in their democratically elected institutions. A change in perception for the better is still possible, given the improvement in communication between the government and the people, and given a newly apparent desire by the government and parliament to clamp down on corruption. At present, the fear of another foreign occupation is not a foremost political security issue.