

# UNDP Latvia Survey on Human Security

## Methodology

The UNDP Latvia commissioned the **UNDP Latvia Survey on Human Security 2002** to gain statistically significant information on those factors that influence people's sense of security in Latvia. The authors also sought to establish which issues are of greatest concern to the population, and to ascertain the most serious consequences of experiencing a heightened sense of insecurity.

### Survey selection of respondents

One thousand permanent residents above the age of 18 were chosen through the stratified random sampling method. The results of the **Survey** accurately reflect the makeup of the adult population according to sex, age, family status, education level, nationality, employment status, degree of satisfaction with income level and stated income level, religious affiliation, type of inhabited area and region. The **Survey's** selection of respondents was determined on the basis of the latest statistical data about the population of Latvia. To select respondents' places of residence, the random rote method was used.

### Time of Survey

September, 2002

### The method

The **Survey** was performed in two parts and was conducted in either Latvian or Russian at the respondents' places of residence. One part was conducted through direct, personal interviews, in which questions were both open and closed-ended. In a separate section, respondents were asked to answer several sets of questions in writing in private. These questions asked about adult and childhood experience of abuse within and outside the family, other stress-producing life experiences, alcohol and narcotics use, and anxiety and depression symptoms.

In the **Survey**, the respondents were asked to indicate their:

1. Degree of satisfaction with life
2. Health status (self-assessment)
3. Level of trust in others
4. Perceived ability to influence their own lives

The respondents were also asked to note:

5. Which of 31 potential threats to their general security they feared most
6. Which of 32 potential threats to their personal security they feared most
7. The most appropriate levels of action for preventing or mitigating 31 potential threats to their general security (i.e. people acting on their own, people acting together with others, government level, international level)
8. Their perception of their ability (on their own or together with others) to prevent or mitigate 31 potential threats to their security
9. The top three issues that caused them the most concern (open questions)
10. The top three factors that increased their sense of security (open questions)
11. \* *Stress-producing events experienced during the past year*
12. *Child-raising methods used by their parents/guardians during their childhood*
13. *The frequency of negative events (from a list of six such events) experienced within the family during the past year*
14. *The frequency of negative events (from a list of six such events) experienced outside of the family during the past year*
15. *The frequency of negative emotions and events (from a list of 24 such emotions and events) experienced during the past six months*
16. *Which of 31 listed tactics they employ to deal with difficulties, and how often*
17. Who they would turn to for assistance in a difficult situation (rank seven listed security providers by order of significance)
18. Which of 17 listed activities they have undertaken during the past year to increase their level of security
19. Which of 15 listed security factors help them most in dealing with difficulties
20. Which of 26 listed factors increase or decrease their sense of security

\* *questions in italics were completed by the respondents in private*

## Correlation of the selection of Survey respondents to population statistics

	Proportion of respondents in Survey (%)	Population statistics (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	46	46
Female	54	54
<b>Age</b>		
18 – 24	12	13
25 – 39	28	29
40 – 54	26	28
55 – 64	17	17
65 – 74	17	13
<b>Nationality</b>		
Latvians	57	58
Non-Latvians	43	42
<b>Region</b>		
Riga	33	32
Vidzeme	23	23
Kurzeme	14	14
Zemgale	15	15
Latgale	15	16
<b>Citizenship</b>		
Citizens	76	77
Non-citizens	24	23

Sections 5, 6, 7 and 8 were derived from the seven realms of security listed in the *Human Development Report 1994*, refined in *Human Security Indices. Methodology* (Vitosha Research, Sofia, 2002) and customized for the environment in Latvia (see Chapter 2, Box 2.1).

Respondents were asked to evaluate their sense of security on a scale from 1 (*not at all afraid*) to 4 (*very afraid*). The responses were then averaged and given a value showing the overall degree of concern, and subsequently cross-referenced according to various categories such as age, level of income, etc.

For the sake of manageability, issues were divided into two broad categories – 31 **general** risks (question: “There are different real and potential situations that cause people to feel insecure. Which of the following are you afraid of and to what extent?”); and 32 risks that could pose a threat to respondents’ **personal** lives (question: “What do you fear in your personal lives and to what extent?”).

The general and personal risk categories are not comparable to a full extent, since certain general risks such as hazardous waste dumps may personally touch the lives of some, but not all individuals; and many of the general risks, such as food poisoning, are not reflected in the personal risk category.

## About the Survey

The sense of security that people experience in Latvia has also been assessed through other research projects, interviews and case studies, as well as the *Attitudes to Various Issues of Integration* survey commissioned by the Ministry of Justice (Marketing and Public Opinion Research Centre, August 2002). The **Latvia Human Development Report 2002/2003** relies on all of the above. Together, these sources build a portrait of how secure people feel in Latvia and have led to the derivation of certain relevant *securitability factors*.

The **Survey** did not include such generalized questions as: “How secure do you feel?” since the generality of such questions is not recommended for research

purposes. Respondents can interpret such questions in many different ways, and the results may thus be imprecise.

The **Survey** was performed by the Latvian Facts (*Latvijas Fakti*) polling service in September 2002, less than a month before parliamentary elections took place. The topics brought up during the election campaign are likely to have influenced the respondents’ perceptions of human security.

## About future Surveys

The global *Human Development Report 1994* proposed the development of an index for the objective measurement of human security similar to that of the Human Development Index (HDI). The Human Development Index, which is published regularly in the Human Development Reports (see Annex), takes into account three measurable dimensions of human development – per capita income, health, and education.

To the authors’ knowledge, no comparable Human Security Index has yet been developed. This is because different countries and cultures interpret risks differently and attribute varying degrees of significance to them. However, researchers around the world are continuing to work toward the development of a Human Security Index.

This **Survey** provided one of very first insights into security in Latvia. It would be useful if a similar survey were to be conducted two years after such significant changes in Latvia’s development as European Union and NATO membership. Additional questions could be added to establish what changes have occurred in people’s *securitability factors*, to explore individual security strategies more in depth, and to gather further data about the cooperative efforts of individuals, networks and the State in addressing human security issues.

For the results and data of the **UNDP Latvia Survey on Human Security 2002** in SPSS format, see <http://www.un.lv>.