

The Invictus Index: A National Security Research of the Eastern European Countries Bordering Russia



Salzburg, Austria Aug 4, 2023 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - The aftermath of the Ukraine-Russia war depicted some of the most important aspects of socioeconomic structure and security in the European Countries and the research, The Invictus Index reflects areas of vulnerability for the region including Poland, the three Baltic States, and Moldova. This region is considered the "buffer zone" that acts as the corridor between the EU and NATO countries along with Russia. Invictus Index is national security research of the Eastern European countries bordering Russia based on the national security of the countries. The research focuses on areas like budget and personnel of the armed forces as well as internal matters like corruption, political, economic, information, and cyber security, media literacy of the public, and many other factors.

The threat coming from the 'corridor' is strongly felt and geographical location is playing a vital part here. With the help of the Invictus Index, the level of national security in five countries can be determined which are part of the buffer zone, a significant interest of Russia. As a result, the countries are strengthening their armed forces and military technology in order to deal with bigger threats. Combat-capable, well-trained, and well-equipped army plays the primary role in national security and so, the budget for defense is booming. Except for Moldova, all the other countries are member states of NATO and have purposefully moved towards an increase in defence spending in the amount of 2% of their

gross domestic product (GDP).

Similarly, Latvia is looking forward to pushing its defense budget to 2.5% of GDP in 2025. Estonia has also assigned 2.35% of GDP for their defense spending in 2022 which is around €770 million. The country is willing to increase it up to 3 or even 6% of GDP in the coming years. Lithuania increased its defense budget from 2.05% of GDP to 2.52% of GDP in 2022 which is around €1.5 billion. From the viewpoint of per capita basis, Latvia has the lowest per capita military spending at €404.29. Since Poland has faced a fair share of Russian aggression in its neighbouring country, it increased its military spending to 2.4% of GDP in 2022, which is around €14.24 billion. They have a 47.1% jump planned for 2023. While Moldova has a defense budget of a mere 44.84 million EUR in 2022. Considering the current geopolitical events, the country is increasing its spending by an additional 68.2%, reaching 78 million EUR. Evidently, these countries from the buffer zone are integrating power defense with an enhanced budget.

Just like a state's external security, improvements are required also for internal security, which the public faces in the most direct way and on a daily basis. State and municipal police patrols, maintenance of public order, prevention, detection, and investigation of criminal offenses, and many other cases – these are the processes that take place literally every day in plain sight of the residents. In the case of Latvia, the police system is not very enthusiastic, and it is reflected by the serious understaffing problem faced by the police force. In Latvia, there are approximately 6,000 job positions in law enforcement, the recruitment rate is approximately 77%, and approximately 1,000 of the total 1,600 vacancies are soon to be eliminated. While Estonia has a better recruitment rate of around 86%, the management stresses that the number of police, border guard, and rescue service employees has dropped off to its lowest point ever. In the case of Lithuania, while the lowest level of remuneration on the force exceeds 1,000 EUR per month, the police are still quite understaffed. The number of police officers per 100,000 residents shows data that was last collected in 2020. The indicator in Latvia is 402, in Lithuania – 281, in Estonia – 306, and in Poland – 258.

Within the context of the tense global events of last year, many indicators, such as the increase in prices of resources, goods, and services, have gone well beyond any previously planned boundaries. For example, in terms of the annual increase in producer prices in January of 2023 on the EU scale; in the group of the four states in question (except for Moldova, which is not a member state of the EU yet; its indicator is: 24.5%), Latvia has taken a stable leading position with 38.8%, leaving behind Lithuania (26.8%), Poland (26.7%) and Estonia (12%).

Corruption is one of the biggest problems that affects the socioeconomic stability of countries. The corruption perceptions index can help build a clearer picture, and it has been prepared by the international anti-corruption organization known as “Transparency International”. In this ranking Estonia gained 74 points, Lithuania earned 62 points, and Latvia – 59 points in 2022. Poland is lower at 55 and lastly, there is Moldova at 39.

The political security in the countries is also not in the best shape as most people seem to be quite reluctant in this regard. In the first round of the parliamentary elections in 2020 in Lithuania, only 47% of the citizens participated in voting. Similarly, in the case of Moldova, only 47.51% of eligible voters participated in 2021. Estonia and Poland also witnessed a decrease in the number of voters participating.

Information, Media, and Cyber Security play a vital role in the growth and development of the ‘Buffer Zone’. Media Literacy Index of 2022 shows that Estonia has gained 72 points which makes it a part of Block 1, but Lithuania and Latvia received 58 and 54 points which put them into Block B. Poland is

somewhere between with 56 points and Moldova is in Block 4 with only 32 points. However, the cyber security systems in every country are witnessing a drastic and positive change with advanced technology, according to the National Cyber Security Index or NCSI.

The research of the Invictus Index has ranked the five countries from the buffer zone based on Defense budget, Defense spending per capita, Increase in producer prices, Corruption Perceptions Index, Political Stability Index, Media Literacy Index, and National Cyber Security Index. In the chart, Estonia has ranked 1st, followed by Lithuania at 2nd, Poland in 3rd place, Latvia at 4th, and then Moldova at 5th. This research by Invictus will shed more light on the area with more transparency and statistical data.

Invictus is an Austrian non-governmental (research) organization that thrives to reveal the truth among the mass. Find out more research work at <https://invictusnews.com/>.

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