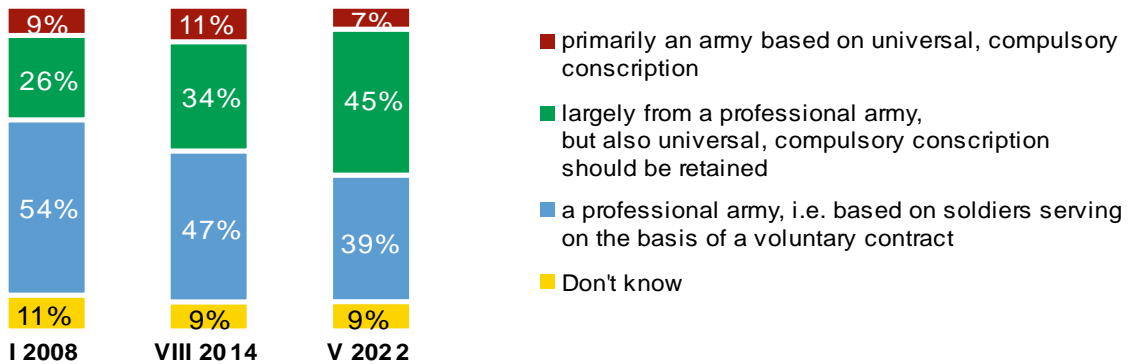


Military service and national defence

Since February 2009, conscription for basic military service have not been used in Poland, and in 2010 the process of full professionalization of the armed forces was completed. The regulations in force provide for voluntary military service in peacetime, and subjecting people to compulsory military service is possible when there is a threat of war.

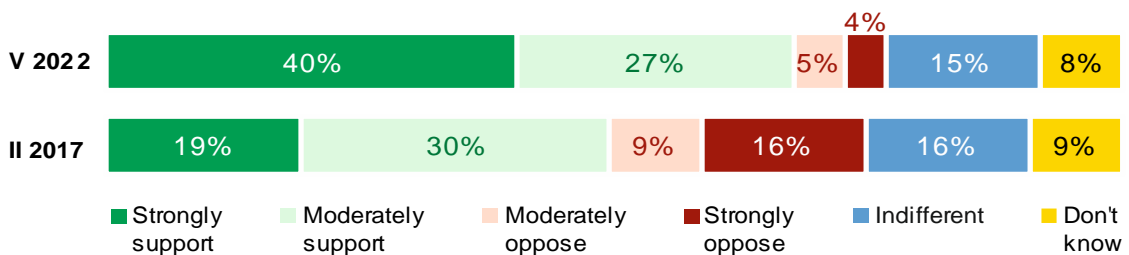
Russia's armed attack on Ukraine and the perceived threat by that country have led to a growing belief in the need to provide military training to a greater number of Poles. Currently, the largest group of respondents (45%, 11 percentage points more than in 2014 and 19 percentage points more than in 2008) believe that the Polish armed forces should largely consist of a professional army, but universal compulsory conscription should also be in force. Full professionalisation of the military, which is expressed in the statement that the Polish armed forces should consist of a professional army, i.e. one based on soldiers serving on the basis of a voluntary contract, is supported by 39% of respondents (8 points less than in 2014 and 15 points less than in 2008). Only 7% believe that the Polish armed forces should consist primarily of an army based on universal, compulsory conscription.

Should the Polish armed forces consist of:



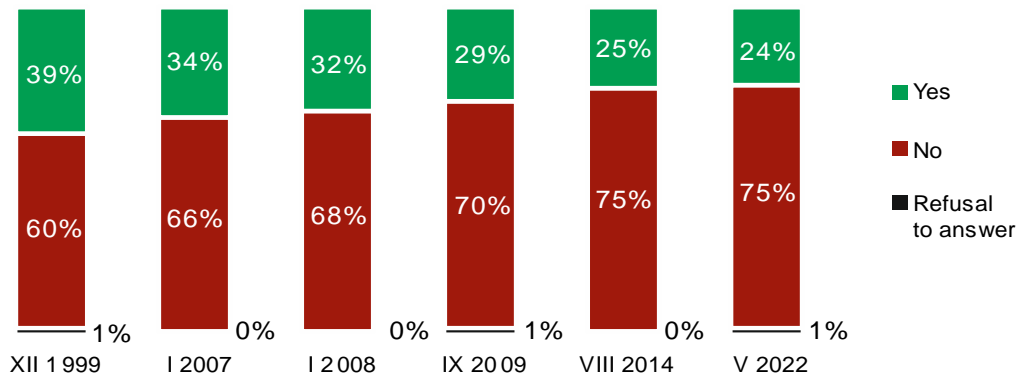
Since 2017, Poland's defence potential has been increased by the creation of units of the new, fifth type of armed forces, i.e. the Territorial Defence Forces. Compared to 2017, when we asked the respondents for the first time about their attitude to the new service, commonly known as territorial defence, there has been a very large increase in support for its existence. Currently, more than two-thirds (67%) of adult Poles support them, which means an increase by 18 percentage points. Compared to the previous survey, the number of opponents of the Territorial Defence Forces has decreased significantly from 25% to 9%.

Do you personally support the existence of the Territorial Defence Forces?



Abolishing universal military conscription and professionalisation of the army has resulted in a decrease in the percentage of adult Poles with experience in the military service or training. Currently, less than a quarter of respondents (24%) declare that they have completed or are currently undergoing military training or service, while in 1999 nearly two-fifths (39%) did. Respondents' declarations show that 45% of men and 6% of women underwent military training or service. This data is almost identical to 2014. It can therefore be presumed that the establishment of the Territorial Defence Forces prevented a further shrinkage of the group of adult Poles who have had such experience.

Have you ever had military training?



Knowledge and skills acquired in the course of activities in the Volunteer Fire Brigade or other non-governmental organizations involved in civil protection may be useful not only in the event of war, but in the event of any common threat. Over the past eight years, the percentage of Poles with experience in such NGOs has slightly decreased from 10% to 7%. Compared to 2014, the already small percentage of respondents declaring experience of belonging to a civil defence formation also decreased. Currently, only 4% of respondents declare that they have belonged to a civil defence formation, compared to 8% in 2014. Less than one-fifth of adult Poles (17%) declare that they have participated in some training, exercises or other activities aimed at preparing the population for natural disasters, catastrophes, environmental threats, terrorist attacks or in the event of war. This is 5 percentage points less than in 2014.

Taking into account the above-mentioned experiences in the field of defence and civil protection, it can be concluded that one-third of all adult Poles (33%) have had at least one of them. This is much less than declared in 2014, i.e. a decrease by 8 percentage points.

Scope of experience and knowledge in the field of civil defence or civil protection in the event of a common threat



More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: “National Security and Defence-Related Issues”, June 2022. Fieldwork for national sample: May 2022, N=1087. The random sample is representative for adult population of Poland.