Safety and security in sparsely populated areas 2020

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Report on the situation of safety and security in sparsely populated areas

Ministry of the Interior, Helsinki 2020

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Abstract

The purpose of this report is to provide a comprehensive overview of safety and security needs, the stakeholders of safety and security, and the current status of safety and security in sparsely populated areas. The report identifies challenges, opportunities, proven practices and networks currently working to improve safety and security. In addition, security and its operating environment are examined from the perspective of people living and spending time in sparsely populated areas, in particular.

The report begins with a description of the operating environment and safety and security situation in sparsely populated areas. It takes a closer look at demographic development, infrastructure and service availability. On this basis, the report strives to characterise the operating environment of safety and security in sparsely populated areas.

The following recommendations were drawn up based on the observations presented in the report: Securing sufficient resources for sparsely populated areas; Building up the capabilities of residents and tourists in sparsely populated areas for looking after their common safety and security; Developing cross-administrative cooperation in the work on safety and security in sparsely populated areas; Sharpening the focus on safety planning; Strengthening the communal safety activities of villages by establishing village rescue teams.

The contents of the report were compiled by the secretariat of the Harvaturva network. The expertise of the Harvaturva network and extensive reference literature were used to draw up the report, helping to ensure broad-based cooperation across sectoral boundaries.

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Tiivistelmä

Tämän raportin tarkoituksena on luoda kattava tilannekatsaus harvaan asuttujen alueiden turvallisuustarpeista, turvallisuuteen liittyvästä toimijakentästä ja turvallisuuden nykytilasta. Raportissa tunnistetaan haasteita, mahdollisuuksia, hyväksi todettuja käytäntöjä sekä tällä hetkellä turvallisuuden kehittämiseksi toimivia verkostoja. Lisäksi tarkastellaan turvallisuutta ja sen toimintaympäristöä erityisesti harvaan asutuilla alueilla asuvien ja oleilevien ihmisten näkökulmasta.

Raportissa lähdetään liikkeelle harvaan asuttujen alueiden toimintaympäristön ja turvallisuustilanteen kuvaamisesta. Yksityiskohtaisemmin tarkastellaan väestökehitystä, infrastruktuuria ja palveluiden saatavuutta. Näiden pohjalta on pyritty hahmottamaan turvallisuuden toimintaympäristön luonnetta harvaan asutuilla alueilla.

Raportissa esitettyjen havaintojen osalta on laadittu seuraavat toimenpidesuositukset: Turvataan resurssien kehitys harvaan asutuilla alueilla, Lisätään harvaan asuttujen alueiden asukkaiden sekä matkailijoiden valmiuksia huolehtia yhteisestä turvallisuudesta, Kehitetään poikkihallinnollista yhteistyötä harvaan asuttujen alueiden turvallisuustyössä, Terävöitetään turvallisuussuunnittelua, Vahvistetaan kylien yhteisöllistä turvallisuustoimintaa perustamalla kyliin pelastusryhmiä.

Sisällön kokoamisesta on vastannut Harvaturva-verkoston sihteeristö. Valmistelussa on hyödynnetty harvaturva-verkoston asiantuntijuutta ja kattavaa lähdeaineistoa. Tällä on osaltaan varmistettu laaja ja sektorirajat ylittävä yhteinen työskentely raportin laatimiseksi.

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Syftet med denna rapport är att skapa en täckande översikt över säkerhetsbehoven, säkerhetsaktörerna och nuläget gällande säkerheten i glesbygdsområden. I rapporten identifieras utmaningar, möjligheter, välbeprövade förfaranden samt nätverk som för närvarande arbetar med att utveckla säkerheten. Vidare granskas säkerheten och säkerhetsklimatet särskilt ur de människors synvinkel som bor och vistas i glesbygdsområden.

I början av rapporten redogörs för glesbygdsområdenas omvärld och säkerhetsläge. Vidare analyseras befolkningsutvecklingen, infrastrukturen och tjänsternas tillgänglighet i närmare detalj. Utgående från detta har man strävat efter att skapa en bild av säkerhetsklimatet i glesbygdsområdena.

Utifrån de observationer som presenteras i rapporten har följande åtgärdsrekommendationer sammanställts: Trygga resursutvecklingen i glesbygdsområden, förbättra invånarnas och turisternas förutsättningar att värna om den gemensamma säkerheten i glesbygdsområden, utveckla det tväradministrativa samarbetet inom säkerhetsarbetet i glesbygdsområden, intensifiera säkerhetsplaneringen, stärka byarnas gemensamma säkerhetsverksamhet genom att inrätta räddningsgrupper i byarna.

Innehållet har sammanställts av Harvaturva-nätverkets sekretariat. I beredningen har man utnyttjat den expertis och det omfattande källmaterial som finns inom Harvaturva-nätverket. På så sätt har man säkerställt att rapporten bygger på ett brett samarbete över sektorsgränserna.

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Contents

MINISTER'S FOREWORD

Finland is mainly a sparsely populated country. Apart from the Helsinki Metropolitan area and urban subregions, most of the country is sparsely populated. This also has an impact on services, and digitalisation has not made up for the effects of physical distances on service availability. Many of the lost services have been successfully replaced by new modes of service provision. Postal, parcel and ticket sales services provided in connection with kiosks, for example, have not only saved local services but also extended their opening hours. We now do a large share of our banking and shopping online, which eliminates the significance of physical distances.

Prosperity, urbanisation and digitalisation have also made multi-local working possible for many. The recommendation to work from home motivated by the coronavirus epidemic showed that many jobs can be done outside the workplace and that the prerequisites for this are good. However, there are services in which physical distances still matter, and rapid access to and proximity of the service are major factors in its quality. Prime examples of this are security services and access to urgent assistance. The population of sparsely populated areas has declined by over 20% in the 21st century, which poses a major challenge to the funding of services. At the same time, multi-local work and seasonal living make the planning and dimensioning of these services particularly difficult.

Residents in sparsely populated areas have a stronger sense of security than those living in urban environments, however. The strengths of sparsely populated areas include resourcefulness, caring and a community spirit, which combine to lay a foundation for safety. The most crucial assistance is often provided by neighbours. Residents in sparsely populated areas are used to managing, and their level of independent preparedness is high. Their main concerns are the presence of actors providing security services and adequacy of the service network. Close cooperation between the authorities and other actors in society is needed to secure services for residents in sparsely populated areas.

The Government Programme takes a strong stand on developing safety and security in sparsely populated areas. It emphasises the importance of strengthening the presence and visibility of the authorities, particularly in areas with a lower level of service. The Government wishes to safeguard the operating preconditions of contract fire brigades and a network of fire stations covering the whole country. The Government Programme also notes that by 2022, the number of police officers will be increased, and maximum response times will be specified for the police throughout the country. Securing sufficient resources and maintaining trust in the authorities help to ensure a strong sense of security throughout the country.

The aim of this report is to form a shared situational picture of safety and security in sparsely populated areas and to make proposals for measures that will improve internal security. It seeks to create a genuine understanding of the needs that should be met in order to improve safety and security in sparsely populated areas.

I would like to express my thanks to the Harvaturva network members who participated in drawing up the report and stakeholders that assisted in its preparation. A large number of experts from different sectors of society participated in this work, which was a prerequisite for completing a broad-based and human-centred situational overview. It is my hope that this overview will be read by as many policy-makers as possible, enabling the development of not only strong cities but also a diverse, vibrant and safe countryside.

Helsinki, 18 August 2020
Maria Ohisalo, Minister of the Interior

TO THE READER

The document you are holding in your hands is already the third report on safety and security in sparsely populated areas. A report titled 'Turvallisuus harvaan asutuilla alueilla' was published in 2009, and 'Turvallisuutta harvassa?' in 2014. Following the publication of the 2014 report, the Government adopted an Internal Security Strategy, which paid scant attention to issues relevant to safety and security in sparsely populated areas, however. The Harvaturva network led by the Ministry of the Interior decided to launch the preparation of a new report on the security situation of sparsely populated areas.

Harvaturva is a network of authorities, NGOs and experts interested in the safety and security of sparsely populated areas. The network operated under the Ministry of the Interior (Harva expert group) until 2014. As the implementation of the third Internal Security Programme ended, responsibility for coordinating the network was transferred to the Finnish National Rescue Association (SPEK) until 2018. The network later found that closer links with the internal security authorities and formal forums of network cooperation related to internal security were necessary. Consequently, the Ministry of the Interior and the Finnish National Rescue Association agreed in spring 2018 that the ministry would re-establish the network, ensuring the closer involvement of not only the existing network members but also the ministry and key internal security authorities in its activities. The expert network approved the transfer of its leadership to the Ministry of the Interior at its meeting on 18 April 2018.

Representatives from the following organisations have been appointed to the network: the Ministry of the Interior, the Finnish Red Cross, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the City of Kuhmo, the National Police Board, Päijät-Häme Rescue Department, the Finnish Border Guard, the Ministry of Justice, the University of Eastern Finland, the Finnish National Rescue Association in North Karelia, SamiSoster Association, Kajaani University of Applied Sciences, the Village Association of Central Finland, Maaseudun terveys ja lomahuolto, the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners, Kainuun Nuotta association, the National Defence Training Association of Finland, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, and the Finnish National Rescue Association. Network members have commented on this publication and, through their expertise, facilitated its preparation.

The purpose of this report is to raise general awareness of the status of safety and security in sparsely populated areas and to point the way to developing internal security and drafting statutes concerning sparsely populated areas.

Jari Lepistö, Senior Officer for Rescue Services

1 Introduction

The purpose of the present report on safety and security in sparsely populated areas is to produce new information and continue to highlight this topic vital for internal security. Around 5% of the population live in sparsely populated areas, which account for 68% of Finland's surface area.[1] While sparsely populated areas are found across the country, they are not all similar. This report describes factors that affect safety and security in sparsely populated areas, including demographic structure, availability of basic and security services, security issues related to infrastructure, concerns arising from the natural environment, and safety work carried out by residents and NGOs.

Residents in sparsely populated areas are used to managing independently. The further away from municipal centres they live, the better basic capabilities people have, including preparedness for incidents. The good preparedness level of households, which helps them cope with incidents, is a particular strength of rural areas. Residents' know-how, emergency food supplies, backup heating systems and neighbourly help enabled them to cope with such situations as the heavy snowfalls in Kainuu in late 2017 and early 2018. The community spirit of sparsely populated areas has also proven a significant strength during the coronavirus epidemic of 2020.

Concerns related to safety and security have previously been raised by the Ministry of the Interior, the Border Guard, the rescue services and the police alike. The Government Programme of Prime Minister Marin highlights a number of issues related to the vitality and welfare of sparsely populated areas, one of which is ensuring the availability of security services.

The nature of sparsely populated areas is constantly changing. The population continues to move to growth centres, while the number of residents in sparsely populated areas decreases. Housing and work concentrate in larger urban areas. The transformation of

1 Lukkari, T. (2017). Sparsely populated rural areas – full of possibilities. Strategy for sparsely populated rural areas 2017-2020. Publications of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry 4/2017. p. 11.

society drives a decrease in property values in sparsely populated areas; however, the advancement of information technology opens up new opportunities for teleworking and location-independent work. This makes it possible for people to consider moving from cities to more rural environments. As location independence increases and people have more free time, multi-local use of sparsely populated areas becomes more widespread, and the need for effective services and infrastructure grows. The basic services provided by the municipality also contribute to people's decisions about where to live.

This report makes recommendations for maintaining and developing safety and security in sparsely populated areas. It is hoped that the implementation of these recommendations will be promoted in all functions of society. Municipalities' welfare reports, village safety plans and various central government programmes can contribute to this.

2 Sparsely populated areas

An examination of Finland's population density (Figure 1) reveals that most of the country's surface area is relatively sparsely populated, with less than 20 persons per km^2 on average. Sparsely populated rural areas account for 68% of Finland's surface area, and in 2019, approx. 5% of the population lived in them.[2]

The highest population density in 2019 was found in Helsinki (3,052 residents/km^2) and the lowest in Enontekiö and Savukoski (0.2/km^2).[3] Most of the surface area in the regions of Kainuu, North Ostrobothnia and Lapland is very sparsely populated. The largest urban agglomerations stand out as red clusters in the population density map (Figure 1, left side), for example in the Helsinki metropolitan area.

2 Åström, C. & Lukkari, T. (2019). Final report of the parliamentary working group on sparsely populated areas. http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-366-012-0

3 Statistics Finland (2020). Statistics Finland's PxWeb databases. http://pxnet2.stat.fi/PXWeb/pxweb/fi/StatFin/StatFin__vrm__vaerak/statfin_vaerak_pxt_11ra.px/

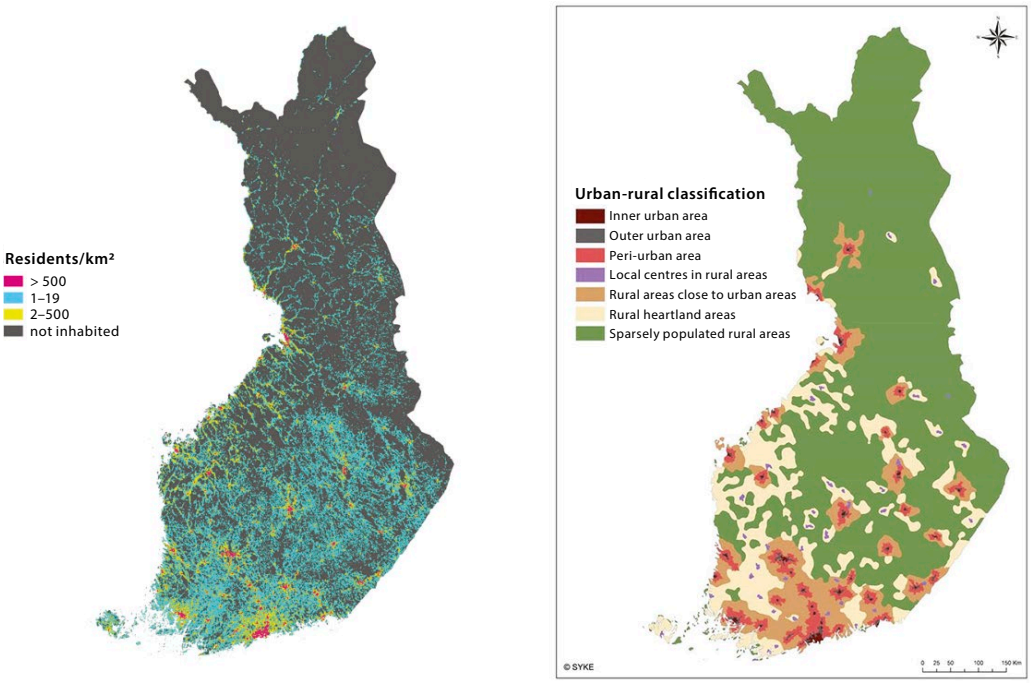

Figure 1. Population density in 1 km² squares[4] and using the urban-rural classification[5].

Regional comparisons are typically based on municipal boundaries, but administrative boundaries are poorly suited for examining population densities. Municipal mergers have made it increasingly difficult to determine which municipalities are mostly urban and which are rural: on the outskirts of large cities, low-population areas are also found. The Finnish Environment Institute has developed a classification for urban and rural areas based on geospatial data (Figure 1, right side) to describe the urban and rural zones in Finland.[5] This classification divides Finland into seven different categories: inner urban area, outer urban area, peri-urban area, local centres in rural areas, rural areas close to urban areas, rural heartland areas and sparsely populated rural areas. This classification is based on national population, labour force, building and land use data, which have been used to calculate different variables describing urban and rural areas. Rather than looking at cities and rural areas as opposed to each other, it is more natural to see them as a continuum in which different functional elements interact with each other and people and goods move around daily.[5]

4 Statistics Finland (2016).

5 Helminen, V., Nurmio, K., Rehunen, A., Ristimäki, M., Rusanen, J. et al (2014). Urban–rural classification. Principles for forming classifications based on geospatial data. Reports of the Finnish Environment Institute 25. http://hdl.handle.net/10138/135861

2.1 Demographic development

Rural heartland areas and sparsely populated rural areas have experienced a steady population decline since the 1980s.[6] As a new trend can be regarded a decline in the population of local rural centres, which began in the 2000s. Young people move to urban subregions and the municipalities surrounding large cities, as a result of which the age structure in sparsely populated rural areas is dominated by older people, and the population density decreases further[7].

The dependency ratio in rural areas exceeds the national average and is particularly unfavourable in sparsely populated rural areas, where almost one third of the residents are aged over 65.[6] This is partly explained by the reduction in the number of working age people and increase in the number of pensioners that has taken place in sparsely populated areas in the 2000s.

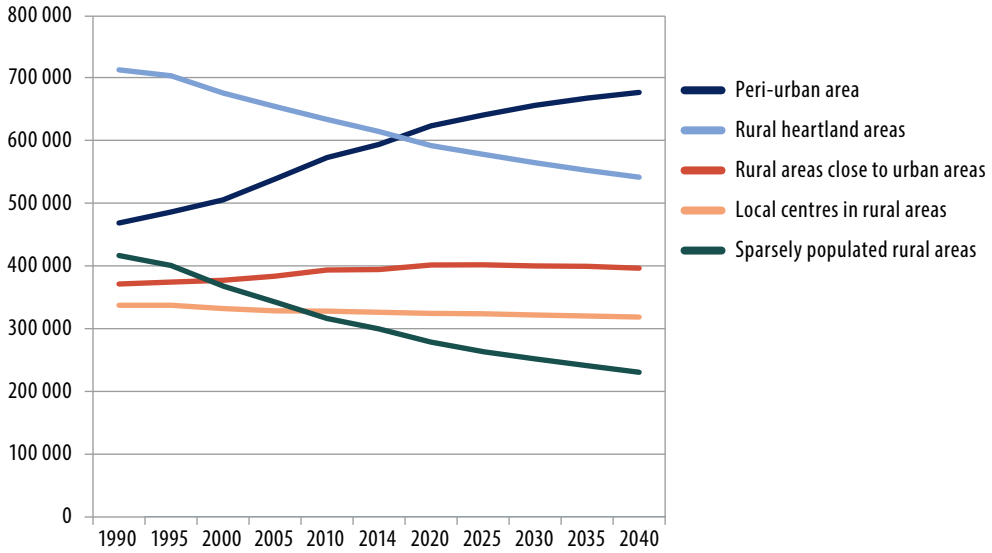

Figure 2. Demographic development and population projection using the classification into urban and rural areas (Antikainen et al. 2017).

The most obvious decline will take place in sparsely populated rural areas (Table 1), where the population has reduced by over 20% per cent in the 21st century.[8] Statistics Finland's

6 Sireni, M., Halonen, M., Hannonen, O., Hirvonen, T., Åström, C. et al. (2017). Rural Survey 2017. Publications of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry 7/2017. pp. 27–28.

7 Kultalahti, O. (2010). Maassamuuton haasteita globalisoituvassa Suomessa. Miltä maassamuuton monet kasvot näyttävät 2010? Yhteenvetoa ja tulkintaa. In Heikkilä E. ja I. Söderling (eds.) Maassamuuton monet kasvot. Migration Institute of Finland. Studies A 38. p. 145.

8 Sireni, M., Halonen, M., Hannonen, O., Hirvonen, T. … & Åström, C. (2017). Rural Survey 2017. Publications of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry 7/2017. p. 28.

projection predicts that a decline in population will continue, especially in the regions of Kainuu, Lapland, and North and South Karelia (Figure 2). However, some municipalities among the sparsely populated areas also show a significant positive net migration.[9] In Lapland, for example, there are municipalities in which the vitality created by tourism has contributed to a positive net migration. In this respect, the population trends are also diverse in sparsely populated areas.

The coronavirus epidemic may also contribute to demographic trends in sparsely populated areas. There is evidence of the epidemic having increased the number of people moving out of cities and to both rural and densely populated municipalities in summer 2020, but assessing the longer-term impacts is challenging for the time being.

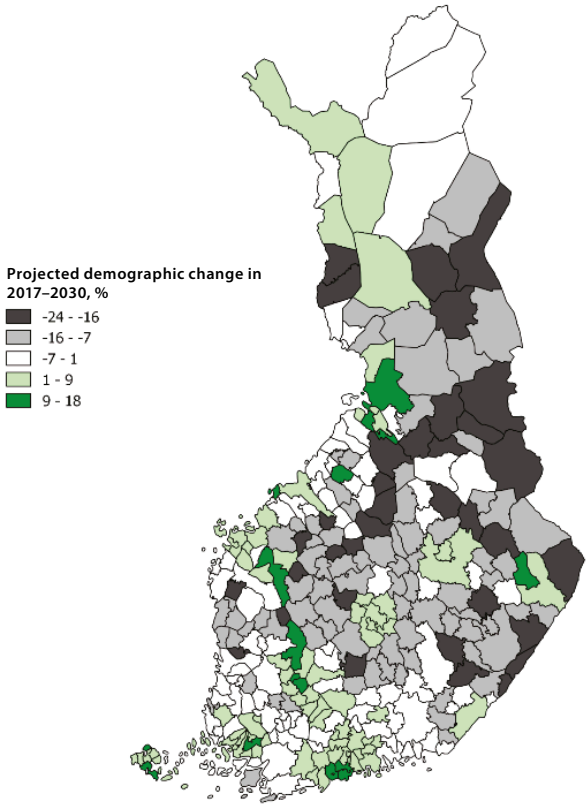

Figure 3. Projection of relative population change until 2030.[10]

9 Statistics Finland (2018). https://www.stat.fi/tup/alue/kuntienavainluvut.html#?year=2020&active1=698

10 Statistics Finland (2015). Municipal key figures. https://pxnet2.stat.fi/PXWeb/pxweb/fi/Kuntien_avainluvut/?rxid=444223df-f91c-4479-891f-5dcd50b983d2

Immigration may lead to a younger age structure in places. Immigration reached record-breaking figures in Finland in 2016, and the net international migration was positive in all regions. Immigration mainly focuses on large cities.[11] Good experiences of permanent immigration to rural areas have been gained in such areas as Närpiö and Punkalaidun, where the newcomers have provided much-needed labour for manufacturing and primary production.[12]

2.2 Multi-locality

The decline in permanent population increases the importance of seasonal residents in rural areas.[13] Living part time in rural areas is becoming more popular, which is referred to as multi-local living.

According to Statistics Finland[14], there was a total of 507,200 holiday houses in Finland in 2017. The Free-Time Residence Barometer 2016[15] found that there were 600,000 holiday houses, which had 2.4 million regular users in total. The main areas for free-time living are the archipelago and coastal areas, the Finnish Lake District, eastern parts of the country and Lapland. The ski resorts in Lapland also significantly increase the region's seasonal population. Tourism has increased in importance and can be considered the most important industry in Lapland.[16] Visitor numbers to national parks are also increasing.[17]

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11 Kultalahti, O. (2010). Maassamuuton haasteita globalisoituvassa Suomessa. Miltä maassamuuton monet kasvot näyttävät 2010? Yhteenvetoa ja tulkintaa. In Heikkilä E. ja I. Söderling (eds.) Maassamuuton monet kasvot. Migration Institute of Finland. Studies A 38. p. 147.

Sireni, M., Halonen, M., Hannonen, O., Hirvonen, T, Åström, C. et al. (2017). Rural Survey 2017. Publications of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry 7/2017. p. 43.

12 Suutari, T., Lämsä, A., Lähdesmäki, M. & Mattila, M. (2016). Immigrant labour in rural businesses. Corporate social responsibility approach. Reports of the University of Helsinki's Ruralia Institute 161.

13 Antikainen, J., Honkaniemi, A., Jolkkonen, A., Kahila, P., Viinikka, A. et al. (2017). Smart Countryside. Better services in rural areas by using digitalisation and experiments. Publications of the Government's analysis, assessment and research activities 9/2017. p.16

Lukkari, T. (2017). Sparsely populated rural areas – full of possibilities. Strategy for sparsely populated rural areas 2017-2020. Publications of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry 4/2017. p. 15.

14 Statistics Finland (2018). Free-time Residences 2017.
https://www.stat.fi/til/rakke/2017/rakke_2017_2018-05-25_kat_001_fi.html

15 FCG Finnish Consulting Group Oy (2016). Free-Time Residence Barometer. The Island Committee & the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

16 Ministry of the Interior (2014). Turvallisuutta harvassa? Report on the situation of safety and security in sparsely populated areas. Ministry of the Interior Publications 6/2014, p. 42

17 Metsähallitus (2018). Visitor numbers to protected and hiking areas and customer service points. Referred to on 22 November 2018. Available at http://www.metsa.fi/kayntimaarat.

Many areas have more holiday residents than permanent inhabitants. In total, 65 municipalities had more free-time residences than permanent dwellings in 2017[18], and free-time residents account for almost one half of the customers in some grocery stores[19]. Free-time residents play an important role in the vitality of certain services in areas with a high number of holiday houses.

Examinations of multi-locality have generally found that the populations of cities have been exaggerated, while those of rural areas have been underestimated. As the overall picture is distorted, infrastructure and service network development may also be affected by misjudgements. Vibrant cities need a vibrant countryside, and the necessary measures must be taken to highlight this fact and correct distortions. Claiming that an area is empty is quite different from asking if there is space left.[20]

For example, multi-locality and seasonal population increases are reflected in a clear growth in the utilisation rate of and need for security services. This is another reason that has made modelling the extent of multi-locality necessary. The population statistics currently in use do not reflect the actual reality of where people live.[21] More should be done to address multi-locality in population statistics and the conclusions made on their basis. In order to map this phenomenon, such means as regular surveys, processing and combining existing statistics, statistics produced by electricity companies or possibly geospatial data obtained from mobile data could be used. In order to develop statistics on multi-locality, extensive cooperation between authorities that produce data on this phenomenon and goal-oriented studies are needed.[21]

The modelling of multi-locality will require further development, especially if the aim is to produce more real-time modelling data than what is available today. However, statistics and data that facilitate modelling this phenomenon are already available. For example, Statistics Finland has produced statistics showing the municipality in which free-time residences are located and the owner's municipality of residence, as well as the number

18 Statistics Finland (2018). Free-time Residences 2017.
https://www.stat.fi/til/rakke/2017/rakke_2017_2018-05-25_kat_001_fi.html

19 Rehunen, A. & Vesala, S. (2012). Palvelujen ja palvelukeskittymien saavutettavuus. In Rehunen, A., Rantanen, M., Lehtola, I. & Hiltunen, M. (eds.) Palvelujen saavutettavuus muutoksessa – Maaseudun vakituisten ja vapaa-ajan asukkaiden palveluympäristön kehityssuunnat ja uudet mahdollisuudet. University of Helsinki, Ruralia Institute, reports 88. p. 78–79.

20 Vihinen, H. (2019). Presentation at the seminar of the parliamentary working group on sparsely populated areas on 27 February 2019: Mitä löytyy faktojen takaa? Natural Resources Institute Finland.

Siren (2011). Maaseudun harvuus ja väljyys https://www.ruralpolicy.fi/files/1850/YTR6WEB.pdf

21 Huovari, J., Vihinen, H., Kotavaara, O. & Härmälä, V. (2020). Monipaikkaisuuden tunnistaminen muuttaa väestö- ja aluekehityksen kuvan Suomessa. Policy Brief, 7/20. Government's analysis, assessment and research activities

of holiday residents in each municipality.[22] The impact of secondary residences on the population of municipalities has been studied in the Nordic context, in which seasonal variations in the population are highly significant for sparsely populated municipalities (Figure 3).

Experience has also been gained of using geospatial data produced by telecommunications operators to support the government's decision-making.[23] The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's Geospatial Data Platform project created a geodata portal, which was under development as this report was being drawn up.[24] At the moment, additional studies are needed to determine the extent to which geospatial data could be used to model multi-locality in sparsely populated areas and thus to promote safety and security.

22 Statistics Finland (2018). Database on residences, buildings and free time residences. https://www.stat.fi/tup/vaesto_asunnot/index.html

Statistics Finland (2018). Numbers of holiday residents in municipalities. (Published free of charge due to the coronavirus situation.) http://tilastokeskus.fi/static/media/uploads/ajk/koronavirus/kesa-asukkaat_kunnittain_2018.xlsx

23 MTV news (2020). https://www.mtvuutiset.fi/artikkeli/telia-tarjoaa-datansa-ihmisvirtojen-liikkeista-valtioneuvoston-kayttoon-yksiloita-ei-voida-tunnistaa/7779042#gs.4t3fx1. Referred to on 23 April 2020.

24 Geospatial platform (2020). https://beta.paikkatietoalusta.fi/info. Referred to on 23 April 2020.

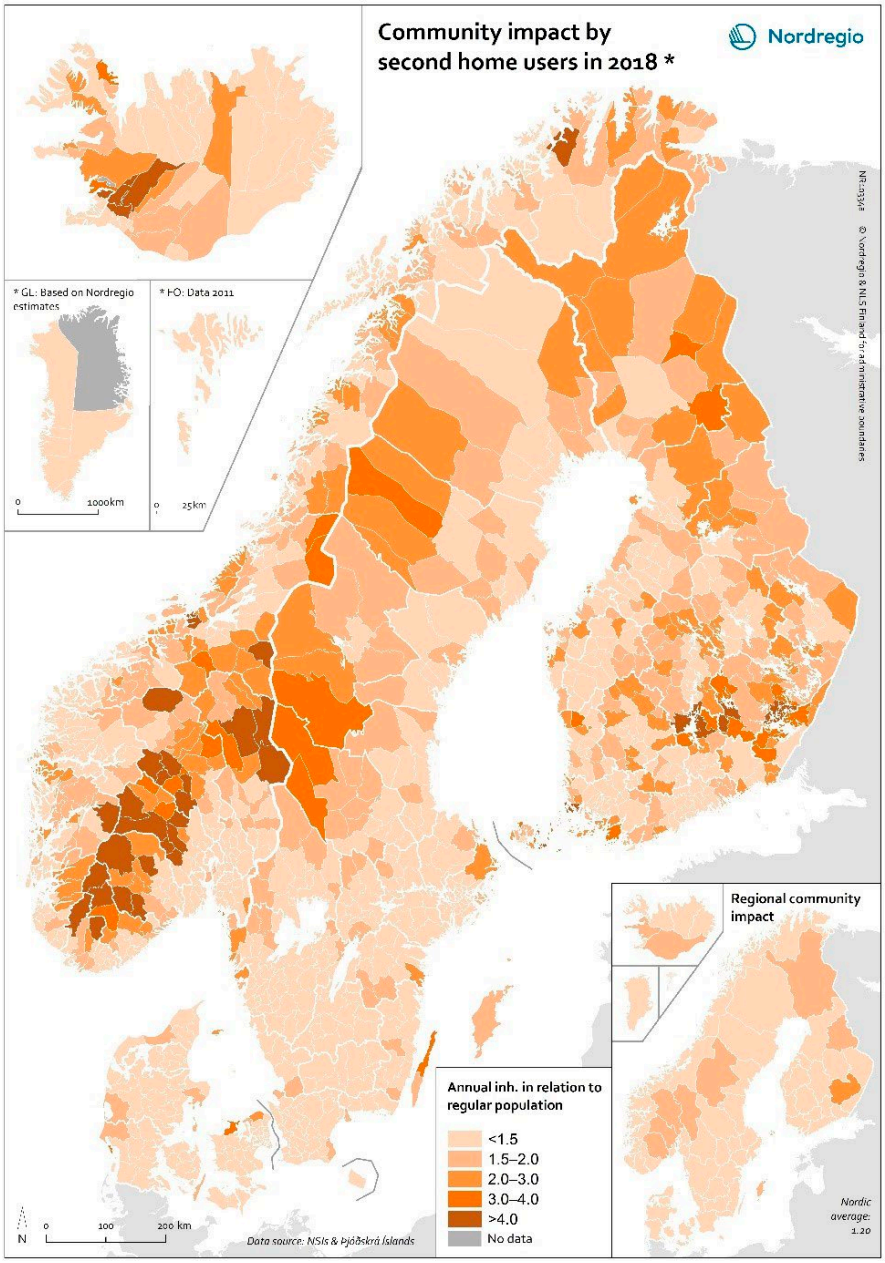

Figure 4. Estimate of second home users' community impact. The figures show the ratio of the total annual population to the number of permanent residents. In this estimate, the total annual population has been calculated as follows: 3 x number of free time residences/summer cottages in the municipality + number of permanent residents.[25] The figures are estimates.

25 Slätmo, E., Ormstrup Vestergård, L., Lidmo, J., & Turunen, E. (2019). Urban–rural flows from seasonal tourism and second homes: Planning challenges and strategies in the Nordics (Nordregio Report). DOI: 10.6027/R2019:13.1403-2503

2.3 Infrastructure

A safe society needs well-functioning infrastructures. Roads, telecommunications networks and the security of electricity supply are basic prerequisites for the smooth running of not only everyday life but also business activities in sparsely populated areas. The following section examines the maintenance of the lower-grade road network, water services and telecommunications and electricity networks, which are susceptible to disruptions.

2.3.1 Road network

Sufficient maintenance of the road network is essential for safe road use. The limited resources available for maintaining basic transport infrastructure have led to prioritisation, as a result of which maintenance has to some extent focused on the busiest road sections.[26] As a consequence, the services and maintenance of the lower-grade transport network are deteriorating, with a particular impact on sparsely populated areas. More than one half of rural residents are dissatisfied with the condition of roads. The proportion of residents dissatisfied with pedestrian and cycling paths is also higher than the proportion of those who are satisfied.[27]

Concerns associated with the road network and transport are thus a popular talking point at village safety events organised by NGOs. Residents would like the authorities to take local knowledge and local residents' proposals into account in efforts to improve road safety.[28] Businesses, including the forest industry, have also expressed their concern over the deterioration of the lower-grade road network, or minor roads[29]. Clearing snow off the roads and other winter maintenance are also closely linked to road safety. The adequacy of road maintenance is occasionally a concern, especially in areas with heavy snowfalls where the snow may affect not only road safety but also the accessibility of homes and availability of assistance in emergencies, for instance.

A private car is often a necessity in sparsely populated areas. As many as 98% of respondents in a survey addressed to citizens as part of the Rural Survey regarded private motoring as essential in rural areas. Many would use public transport if the connections

26 Finnish Transport Agency (2013). Finnish Transport Agency's operational and financial plan 2015–2018 to the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

27 Sillanpää, K. & Ålander, T. (2017). Rural Survey part 2, p. 38. Summary report on a survey addressed to citizens. Publications of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry 8/2017.

28 Finnish National Rescue Association (2017). Kyläturvallisuus on koko Suomen asia. News item.

29 Finnish Forest Industries (2015). Järjestöt: Alempi tieverkko on täysin aliarvostettu. Press releases/5 February 2015. https://www.metsateollisuus.fi/tiedotteet/jarjestot-alempi-tieverkko-on-taysin-aliarvostettu/

were better.[30] On the other hand, in a survey conducted by the Finnish National Rescue Association to investigate how residents cope with various incidents, respondents reported that they would manage the longest without public transport, with 91% saying they would cope for a week or longer.[31]

The driving behaviour of foreign tourists is of concern for local residents, especially in areas where tourism is growing strongly. An amendment made to the Driving Licence Act in February 2018, under which Chinese tourists are allowed to drive in Finland, has added fuel to the debate on this issue. In Norway and Sweden, Chinese drivers had already been given the right to drive earlier. According to the Ministry of Transport and Communications, there are no indications that foreign drivers would have more accidents than others.[32] Four months after the legislative change concerning driving licences had taken effect, the police in Lapland, for example, found that the threats had not been realised.[33] In any case, more attention should be paid to providing instructions for tourists who hire a car. Car rental companies currently carry a significant responsibility for providing guidance to drivers.

2.3.2 Electricity network

Most long-term power outages occur outside urban areas.[34] Key causes of outages are natural phenomena, including wind and storms as well as snow and ice loads.[34] Differences between power outages in sparsely populated areas and areas covered by local detailed plans are largely explained by structural differences of the distribution network. The circular network layout frequently used in cities improves reliability, and underground cabling is commonly used in areas covered by local detailed plans. In sparsely populated areas, on the other hand, overhead lines are still used, which are more susceptible to damage, especially in wooded areas. In addition, the long distances in sparsely populated areas slow down damage repairs.

Under the Electricity Market Act (588/2013), by the end of 2028 damage to the distribution network may not cause an outage of more than six hours in areas covered by a local detailed plan. Similarly, the maximum duration of an outage outside local detailed plan

30 Sillanpää, K. & Ålander, T. (2017). Rural Survey part 2, p. 40. Summary report on a survey addressed to citizens. Publications of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry 8/2017.

31 Laurikainen, H. (2019). Varautuminen ja kansalaisten kriisinkestävyys. SPEK tutkii 19. https://issuu.com/spek_ry/docs/spek_tutkii_19_issuu.

32 Keskisuomalainen (2018). https://www.ksml.fi/kotimaa/Lappilaiset-pelk%C3%A4%C3%A4v%C3%A4t-kuollakseen-kiinalaisia-kuskeja/1104040

33 Yle News (2018). https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10269234

34 Finnish Energy (2018). Outage statistics 2017. Finnish Energy ET, Helsinki. https://energia.fi/files/2785/Sahkon_keskeytystilasto_2017.pdf

areas should not exceed 36 hours. Under a transitional provision (section 119), these criteria have to be met for one half of distribution network users by the end of 2019 and for 75% of users by 2024, excluding free time residences. For weighty reasons, the implementation period may be extended in compliance with the detailed rules cited in the provision.

Replacing medium and low voltage overhead lines with underground cables is an effective way of improving reliability. On the other hand, underground cables are not always the best or most cost-effective method in sparsely populated areas, which is why it is likely that efforts will also be made to improve reliability by other means.[35] These upgrades will probably also reduce power outages in sparsely populated areas. It should be noted, however, that within the framework of the current legislation, different areas will still not be treated equally, as a 30-hour difference will remain in the acceptable duration of a power outage (6 hrs vs. 36 hrs) depending on where you live. In addition, climate change is likely to drive an increase in extreme weather phenomena that damage electricity networks and other infrastructure.

As long power outages are more frequent in the countryside, rural households are better prepared for these incidents than their urban counterparts. In a survey on citizens' preparedness conducted by the Finnish National Rescue Association, rural residents said they would manage longer than others without electricity and running water.[36] Those living in a city also believed that power outages would be more harmful.[37] Unlike residents in urban high-rise buildings, those living in rural areas are more likely to have resources that promote preparedness, helping the residents to cope independently during an incident. Emergency food supplies, backup heating systems and neighbourly help aided residents in coping with such situations as the heavy snows in Kainuu a few years ago, even if there were concerns over how older people, families with young children and others in need of help would manage.[38] While power outages mainly affect the rural population, as a whole they do not occur frequently enough to provoke general

35 Energy Authority (2020). Development of power network business, reliability of the power network and effectiveness of supervision in 2019 – local price differences. https://energiavirasto.fi/documents/11120570/12862527/S%C3%A4hk%C3%B6verkkoliiketoiminnan+kehitys+hintaerot+_2019.pdf/5293a98f-f003-cf30-d1c5-72b792b2b3cb/S%C3%A4hk%C3%B6verkkoliiketoiminnan+kehitys+hintaerot+_2019.pdf. Referred to on 14 May 2020.

36 Laurikainen, H. (2019). Varautuminen ja kansalaisten kriisinkestävyys. SPEK tutkii 19. https://issuu.com/spek_ry/docs/spek_tutkii_19_issuu

37 Laurikainen, H. (2016). Kotitalouksien varautuminen Suomessa. Telephone interview regarding preparedness for incidents during normal conditions. SPEK tutkii 13.

38 Finnish National Rescue Association (2018). Kainuun sähkökatkot asukkaiden kokemuksina – Varautumista, huolta ja auttamista. Referred to on 20 September 2018.

dissatisfaction among the residents. In a survey addressed to citizens as part of the Rural Survey[39], 80% of respondents were satisfied with the current security of electricity supply.

2.3.3 Information network services

Well-functioning data connections are vital for rural employment, education, health services, social relations and safety.[40] Everyone in Finland has the right to a faultlessly working telephone line and a broadband connection with a minimum speed of 2 Mbps to their permanent residence or enterprise.[41] However, rural residents are in places forced to rely on mobile connections, often with lower reliability compared to a fixed broadband connection.[42] The dismantling of landline networks and delays in the construction of replacement systems have created additional challenges. Communications network problems are often associated with incidents, the main causes of which are the power supply to network equipment or technical problems.[43]

As disruptions to communications networks often affect mobile connections, in particular, wider availability of fixed broadband connections in sparsely populated areas reduces the impact of incidents. The Digital Infrastructure Strategy published by the Ministry of Transport and Communications[44] thus addresses the importance of telecommunications network coverage for safety and proposes that broadband investments be targeted especially at sparsely populated areas. On the other hand, the strategy does not comment on how this will be financed.

The importance of well-functioning information networks has been emphasised by such exceptional situations as the coronavirus epidemic in 2020, which has further increased

39 Sillanpää, K. & Ålander, T. (2017). Rural Survey part 2. Summary report on a survey addressed to citizens. Publications of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry 8/2017.

40 Pyykönen, M. & Lehtonen, O. (2016). Tietoliikenneyhteyksien merkitys maatilojen ja kuntien kehityksessä. Luonnonvara- ja biotalouden tutkimus 56/2016.

41 Finnish Transport and Communications Agency Traficom (2020). Your right to basic communications services. https://www.traficom.fi/fi/viestinta/laajakaista-ja-puhelin/oikeutesi-viestinnan-peruspalveluihin. Referred to on 14 May 2020.

42 Finnish Transport and Communications Agency Traficom (2020). Fixed broadband availability. https://www.traficom.fi/fi/tilastot/kiintean-verkon-laajakaistasaatavuus. Referred to on 14 May 2020.

Finnish Communications Regulatory Authority (2016). Consumer survey 2016. Finnish Communications Regulatory Authority publications. https://www.viestintavirasto.fi/tilastotjatutkimukset/tutkimukset/viestintapalvelujenkuluttajatutkimus.html

43 Finnish Transport and Communications Agency Traficom (2020). Disturbances in communications networks and services. https://www.traficom.fi/fi/viestinta/laajakaista-ja-puhelin/verkon-hairiot?toggle=MONITORi%20-%20Tietoa%20l%C3%A4hialueesi%20palveluista. Referred to on 14 May 2020

44 Ministry of Transport and Communications (2018). Turning Finland into the world leader in communications networks – Digital Infrastructure Strategy 2025. Publications of the Ministry of Transport and Communications 10/2018. http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/161066/LVM_10_2018_Suomi_tietoliikenneverkkojen_karkimaaksi_Digitaalisen_infrastruktuurin_strategia.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

the significance and scale of teleworking and distance learning. The popularity of multi-local work is likely to continue to increase. This will drive the need to ensure the availability of well-functioning telecommunications connections in all sparsely populated areas.

2.3.4 Water services

In sparsely populated areas, especially in the countryside, individual properties mainly organise their own water supply, which is also the basic premise in the Water Services Act. Water supply networks and pumping stations serving several properties in rural areas, where they exist, are mostly owned and operated by water service cooperatives formed by property owners. Some networks of such cooperatives also extend to areas classified as sparsely populated rural areas.

In recent years, few water supply and sewage networks have been built in sparsely populated rural areas. However, some domestic water networks, especially older ones, are found in these areas. While some of the areas have previously had a higher population, migration over the past few decades has turned them into sparsely populated rural areas.

Ensuring that the existing pumping stations and water supply networks keep working is a key safety factor in these areas. While the estimated number of residents this issue concerns is not very large, or no more than a few thousand people, effective water services are of critical importance for them. Clean domestic water is a staple needed every day, and not everyone has access to a safe backup water source. Other challenges include water cooperatives' and water associations' competence related to water services and, in general, their ability to carry out the necessary operating and maintenance tasks as more stringent official requirements are introduced, and the activities have mostly relied on voluntary work carried out by ageing cooperative members.

Business activities in these areas should be taken into account separately, especially large-scale livestock farming and tourism business. The own-initiative preparedness and responsibility of these businesses for arranging sufficient water services, individually for each property if necessary, should be highlighted.

2.4 Services

Effective basic services play a key part in everyday safety and sense of security.[45] The offer of services in rural areas has dwindled in the 2000s due to public sector cuts and reduced demand for services.[46] Centralisation has led to longer distances and reduced accessibility.[47] The following Table describes the nature and availability of services in sparsely populated areas.

While daily services can still be found reasonably close in the population centres of rural areas, in dispersed settlements the distances are increasing. For example, the distance from dispersed rural settlements to the nearest shop is on average over nine kilometres. People living in sparsely populated areas reported that the distance to a location where they had access to daily services was almost 21 kilometres on average, while those living in the archipelago had to travel approx. 16 kilometres. For the majority of respondents (79%), the main mode of transport was a private car.[48] On the other hand, residents in a sparsely populated area tend to shop for several days at once, which means that they do not necessarily have to use the services every day.

A survey addressed to citizens as part of the Rural Barometer indicated that most residents in the archipelago and sparsely populated rural areas were satisfied with the overall offer of services, regardless of the distances. The advancement of ICT services partly makes up for the lack of convenience stores and specialist shops. Using online services may be a problem for people not familiar with the web environment.

45 Hämeenaho, P. (2014). Everyday networks of wellbeing in sparsely populated rural Finland. Ethnological research on mothers' perceptions regarding public services. National Institute for Health and Welfare. Research 129.

46 Antikainen, J., Honkaniemi, A., Jolkkonen, A., Kahila, P. …& A. Viinikka (2017). Smart Countryside. Better services in rural areas by using digitalisation and experiments. Publications of the Government´s analysis, assessment and research activities 9/2017. p. 16

Sireni, M., Halonen, M., Hannonen, O., Hirvonen, T. … & Åström, C. (2017). Rural Survey 2017. Publications of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry 7/2017. p. 46

47 Rehunen, A. & Vesala, S. (2012). Palvelujen ja palvelukeskittymien saavutettavuus. In Rehunen, A., Rantanen, M., Lehtola, I. & Hiltunen, M. (eds.): Palvelujen saavutettavuus muutoksessa – Maa- seudun vakituisten ja vapaa-ajan asukkaiden palveluympäristön kehityssuunnat ja uudet mahdollisuudet. University of Helsinki, Ruralia Institute, reports 88. p. 70

48 Sillanpää, K. & Ålander, T. (2017). Rural Survey part 2. Summary report on a survey addressed to citizens. Publications of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry 8/2017. p. 17

Table 1. Table 2: Nature and availability of services

Service	Nature and availability
Grocery stores	The number of village shops has declined. The purpose of the new village shop subsidy granted by the Finnish Food Authority is to promote the availability of services in sparsely populated rural areas and to support their vitality. The size and product range of grocery stores in municipal centres are proportionate to the population of the municipality or trading area. Most stores provide essential food items, whereas the residents are in most cases forced to travel further for more specialised foods and daily goods.
Post offices	There have been cutbacks in the post office network. Postal services are often provided as part of grocery trade, and automated parcel points are becoming more common. Mail is increasingly delivered three days a week.
Health services	Health services have been centralised. In smaller localities, health services may only be available on certain days of the week. Longer distances to health services increase the costs of attending examinations and treatment and may raise the threshold for contacting a physician. The manyfold increase in a municipality's population during the high season is often not addressed when scaling the service needs. Residents need to travel further for emergency care services. In localities with fewer than 3,000 residents, emergency care services are increasingly provided by a neighbouring municipality. The rescue department's first response service meets part of the needs, shortening the wait for an ambulance in the most urgent cases of illness or injury. The average response times of pre-hospital emergency medical services varied from 14 minutes in Uusimaa to 23 minutes in Lapland. Longer average response times were recorded in areas without permanent settlement: 26 minutes in Lapland and over 29 minutes in East Savo. The averages were calculated for missions in January–June 2018.[49]
Social welfare	Every Finnish person has a basic statutory right to the social services they need, regardless of their place of residence. There are regional differences in the availability of social services, however.[50] Services are less accessible in sparsely populated areas.[51] The transfer of the administration of social assistance to Kela and service accessibility have raised concerns in sparsely populated areas, in some of which Kela has cut back on its service points, and in which the Internet is unreliable in places.[52]
Care of the elderly	Older people living in sparsely populated areas live at home longer, and some are unwilling to move to care institutions. On the other hand, places in care institutions are being reduced, and an increasingly large share of older people in a worse condition are kept at home. This trend does not only concern sparsely populated areas.
Early childhood education and care	The trend in early childhood education and care services is the same as in basic education. The services are being centralised, and the units are larger. The offer of family day care has been reduced in many localities, and services are increasingly centralised to day-care centres located in municipal centres and larger urban centres. Bringing children to day-care may also take longer. Improving the availability of family day care could be helpful, especially in the daily life of farms, where children often need care early in the morning and late in the evening. As services are centralised to large units, travel takes a great deal of time.

49 Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (2018). National pre-hospital emergency medical service response times under service level decisions between 1 January and 30 June 2018. Available (in Finnish) at https://stm.fi/documents/1271139/8074035/Ensihoidon%20valtakunnalliset%20palvelutasop%C3%A4%C3%A4t%C3%B6sten%20tavoittamisajat%201.1.%20-%2030.6.2018.pdf/d2131846-3c18-4d5f-a696-c6953b84c586

50 Rissanen, P. (ed.) (2018) Sosiaali- ja terveyspalvelut Suomessa. Asiantuntija-arvio, syksy 2018. Päätösten tueksi 2/2019. Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare.

51 Kivelä, P. (2014) Syrjässä syrjäytyneet. Pelon sosiaalipolitiikka ja verkostoyhteistyön mahdollisuudet maaseudulla. The Finnish Blue Ribbon.

Tedre, S. & Pulkkinen, A. (2010) Vanhuksen paikka maaseudulla. Vanhustyön johtajien käsityksiä. Maaseudun Uusi Aika 1/2010, 5–16.

52 Yle News (2020). https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-11360692.

Service	Nature and availability
Schools	Village schools have been closed down as municipalities are under pressure to cut expenditure, and schools have been centralised to municipal centres. This has increased the need for school transport. Children's longer journeys to school and, for example, walking to a bus stop on dark winter mornings affect everyday safety and experienced safety as part of travel and school attendance. The average time spent on school travel has increased, and the journey to school may consist of multiple stages.[53] General upper secondary schools and vocational institutions are usually located in larger municipal centres. The long distances to upper secondary education institutions force young people to move away from home early.

2.5 Providers of security services

The security authorities' service network has been strained over the past decade. The activities of the police and the Border Guard have been hit by cutbacks. The rescue services network maintained by municipalities has remained more or less unchanged, excluding the closure of some fire stations. Delays in access to assistance have raised some concerns. This section looks at the activities of the police, rescue services and Border Guard in sparsely populated areas.

The Police, Customs and Border Guard Strategy for 2020–2023 prepared in cooperation by these authorities states that "daily surveillance cooperation aims to ensure comprehensive surveillance, also in sparsely populated areas and at border crossing points with little traffic. The focal areas of day-to-day surveillance cooperation are border checks and customs control at border crossings, surveillance of foreigners, and surveillance of sparsely populated areas as well as off-road and waterborne traffic."

The importance of collaboration between security actors is constantly stressed. Efforts to support this cooperation have included the development of the Regional Security Status model, which was published in spring 2020. The model "guides the organisation of security surveillance in multi-authority cooperation and the selection of security indicators suitable for the area for this purpose". The model was developed in broad-based cooperation between different authorities and stakeholders. The project received support from nearly 43 different organisations, including 16 municipalities. It was implemented by VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland, the Police University College, the Finnish National Rescue Association and the National Defence University.

53 Kattilakoski, M., Kilpeläinen, A. & Peltomäki, P. (eds.) (2012). Welfare and Rural Services through Community Orientation. Rural Policy Committee, Thematic Group on Welfare Services. Rural Policy Committee publication 1/2012.

Initiatives such as the Regional Security Status model can also facilitate regional security planning in sparsely populated areas. The model could support municipalities, for example in conducting surveys and thus mapping the regional knowledge base as well as promoting local cooperation in concrete terms.

2.5.1 Role of municipalities in promoting safety and security

The role of municipalities in promoting safety and security in their areas is both statutory and arises from their other tasks. The municipalities' statutory role in preparedness for various incidents during normal conditions is based on statutes applicable to the authorities' duties, under which an organisation must perform its duties in all conditions.[54]

The municipalities' other activities aiming to promote everyday safety are based on the Local Government Act[55], under which "municipalities shall advance the well-being of their residents and the vitality of their respective areas, and shall arrange services for their residents in a way that is financially, socially and environmentally sustainable." Municipalities' statutory duties involve different objectives and obligations associated with safety and well-being, which are monitored in electronic welfare reports, among other things. Sectors with many objectives, obligations and supervision duties related to safety and security include education, training and early childhood education and care; cultural, youth and library services; land use planning; water and energy supply; and waste management. In sparsely populated rural areas, municipalities' duties are often discharged in cooperation between several municipalities, by another municipality, or through a joint municipal authority. The rural administration's local government co-management areas address such issues as preparedness in primary production (for example, water services).

The municipalities' statutory tasks in the areas of environmental health and social and health care services are essential for safe everyday life. Municipalities carry the main responsibility for implementing environmental health care legislation and carrying out supervision in their areas.[56] Environmental health care tasks relevant to safety include food inspections, health protection, veterinary care, general assessment of environmental health hazards and preparedness for special environmental health situations. Rescue services, which currently are a statutory responsibility of the municipalities under the Rescue Act, have a key role in safety. For a description of the challenges facing rescue services in sparsely populated rural areas, see section 2.5.3.

54 Emergency Powers Act 1552/2011.

Varautuminen ja jatkuvuudenhallinta kunnassa (2012). p. 21.
https://www.defmin.fi/files/2088/Varautuminen_ja_jatkuvuudenhallinta_kunnassa_fi.pdf

55 Local Government Act 410/2015

56 Act on the Local Government Co-management Area for Environmental Health Care 410/2009.

The perceived sense of security is an important element in safety and security. The municipalities work together with different authorities, NGOs and other actors to develop preparedness in a proactive and preventive direction by identifying and assessing threats and striving to prevent and reduce their impacts in advance. Especially in sparsely populated areas, effective cooperation between the security authorities, or the police, rescue services and the Border Guard, as well as between the residents and NGOs, is highly important in supporting safety. For example, municipalities are often involved in preparing village safety plans, safety training, coordination of voluntary work and supporting residents' independent preparedness.

2.5.2 The police

The internal operating environment of the police has undergone dramatic changes, especially in the 2000s. Structural reforms covering the entire police administration have had a major impact on these changes, not forgetting the jurisdiction reform of 1996. During this period, there have also been significant cuts in police resources.

The focus of the first phase of the administrative structure reform, which took effect on 1 January 2009, was on the local police; the 90 police departments established in 1996 were discontinued and replaced by 24 new police departments.

The second phase, which targeted particularly the police command and police departments of regional governments, was implemented on 1 January 2010. Of the operative units, the reform concerned the Helsinki Police Department, the National Bureau of Investigation and the National Traffic Police. Administrative structures were reformed, units were closed down, and a so-called two-tier administration model led by the National Police Board was put in place.

Adaptation measures in the police also continued after that date: on 12 April 2012, the Ministry of the Interior appointed a project to develop the administrative structure of the police further. Among other things, its aims included maintaining the operational ability of the police at a good level as well as reducing the number of personnel in administrative, support and leadership positions while ensuring that sufficient numbers would be available for working in the field and in crime prevention tasks. This led to the third reform of the administrative structure in the police, which entered into force on 1 January 2014. In addition to a few other changes, the National Traffic Police as an administrative organisation was integrated with the newly established police departments.

Internal migration and the ageing of the population have progressed rapidly in Finland over the last few decades. Migration to growth centres has been even faster and stronger than anticipated. In keeping with this trend, the security authorities' resources have been

reallocated to growth centres and, in general, to areas with higher population densities. At the same time, the security services provided by authorities in sparsely populated areas have changed their form, at least in part, in many cases slowing down access to assistance. Challenges are also created by the various licence and permit services provided by the police in sparsely populated areas which do not have a police service point within a reasonable distance. This trend is of concern for rural residents, as a survey conducted in 2019 indicates that one in three residents in sparsely populated areas (34%) expects the availability of police services to deteriorate in the future, whereas this view was held by one out of five of those living in large cities (20%).[57]

The report of a Surveillance and emergency missions project carried out by the police[58] also states that the centralisation of functions to cities and urban centres appears to have affected the surveillance and emergency services of more sparsely populated areas over time. Deployment times in sparsely populated areas are generally longer than in large population centres and cities. Delays in receiving assistance may erode trust in the authorities' ability to carry out their duties, and thus also the sense of security. This may additionally raise residents' threshold for reporting incidents to the police.[59]

The presence of the police is often seen as a factor that bolsters the sense of security. While the number of emergency missions in sparsely populated areas is relatively small and the need for surveillance is not continuous, the services must still be provided for the area. They must be organised in an appropriate manner as determined by the existing resources. The above-mentioned police report suggests that operations could, for example, be made more efficient by "developing the management of field activities, occasionally sending patrols to sparsely populated areas, thematic surveillance, increasing cooperation between police departments, stepping up cooperation with the Border Guard and developing alternative operating models." In addition, the report stresses the need to implement alternative models for operative activities and to explore possibilities for developing cooperation with such stakeholders as the voluntary fire brigade associations, the Red Cross, the Volunteer Rescue Service and pre-hospital emergency medical services.[59]

The demographic trends in sparsely populated areas pose significant challenges to operative policing. As the population concentrates in the largest urban areas of the country and the rural population continues to decline, the tasks of the police will be based

57 Laurikainen, H. & Nikkanen, M. (2020). Turvassa 2019. Kansalaisturvallisuus Suomessa. SPEK tutkii 20. https://issuu.com/spek_ry/docs/turvassa_2019

58 National Police Board (2019). Valvonta- ja hälytystoiminnan tila -selvityshankkeen loppuraportti 3/2019. https://www.poliisi.fi/tietoa_poliisista/julkaisut/julkaisu/valvonta_ja_halytystoiminnan_tila_selvityshankkeen_loppuraportti?docID=86272

on the same distribution. This means more missions in cities, and fewer in rural areas. Providing police services in sparsely populated areas will thus be even more challenging. On a realistic note we must accept that in the future, providing emergency services with equally short response times in all parts of the country will remain impossible, regardless of what resources the police have. However, better resources would to some extent improve the performance of the police and be apt to enable faster response times, also in areas where they currently are considerably longer than average.

2.5.3 Rescue services

The large surface area of Finland and the long distances also set challenges for rescue services. The tasks of rescue services comprise accident prevention, including safety training, and surveillance tasks, rescue missions, tasks related to civilian preparedness, and warning the population in case of accidents and incidents. Continuous competence development and staff training is required to manage these tasks. The rescue sector is increasingly working together with various stakeholders to develop the safety of society, preventing accidents. As the latest document to steer accident prevention, the Ministry of the Interior adopted an accident prevention action plan for the rescue services, which became effective at the beginning of 2020. The main objective of the action plan is to improve people's ability to manage everyday risks independently.

The rescue departments have approx. 100,000 rescue missions every year.[59] The three largest task categories of rescue operations are first response missions, checking and securing automatic fire alarms, and traffic accidents. The number of rescue service tasks in Lapland was about one half of that in Helsinki in 2018. Sparsely populated areas mainly belong to the lowest risk category (class 4), when the numbers of building fires and fire risks are put in proportion to the population and surface areas of properties. In these areas, the median deployment time of rescue services was 15:37 minutes.[60] In 2018, fire damage to buildings in risk class 4 areas exceeded the damage in high risk class areas (including municipal centres) in total.[61] The risks of more serious personal injuries and damage to property are higher in sparsely populated areas, which is why improving residents' preparedness and ensuring a good community spirit are important.

Rescue services have a comprehensive service network. There are some 800 fire stations in Finland, of which more than a half are maintained by contract fire brigades. The personnel

59 Ministry of the Interior (2016). A safe and resilient Finland – Rescue Services Strategy 2025. Ministry of the Interior Publications 18/2016, p. 11.

60 Emergency Services College (2019). Emergency Services College statistics 2014–2018. Published in Muut [1/2019].

61 Prontonet.fi (2020). Damage in building fires and risks of building fires. Search by risk class on 10 January 2020.

participating in rescue operations can be classified into full-time personnel and the personnel of contract fire brigades. In 2019, there were approx. 4,000 full-time employees and almost 15,000 contract fire brigade members[62]. Consequently, contract fire brigades make up a significant part of the rescue services at the national level.

Considering the low population density in Finland, contract fire brigade activities are essential for organising rescue operations[63], especially in sparsely populated areas. In addition to rescue operations, contract fire brigades and voluntary fire brigade associations play an important role in offering recreational activities for young people, and thus promoting meaningful inclusion. This is apt to improve participants' mental well-being and thus prevent accidents and similar. The fire brigade's role in offering meaningful recreational activities is emphasised in sparsely populated areas, where the availability of such activities is generally more limited than in large cities. All in all, rural areas are more dependent on the services provided by contract fire brigades, which is why maintaining their vitality is of primary importance.

An opportunity to participate in contract fire brigade activities is also offered to unemployed jobseekers. This is made possible by the exempt amount of the unemployment benefit, which is EUR 300. During the coronavirus epidemic of 2020, however, the exempt amount has proven excessively low, making it difficult to secure fire brigade activities in sparsely populated areas. To ensure the continuity of these activities, the mobility of fire brigade members enabled by multi-locality could also be used. If a fire brigade member could work as part of a local contractual fire brigade in their municipality of either permanent or free time residence, their competence could be drawn on more fully.

A study on the decline and emergence of fire brigade activities found that disbanded fire brigades were unable to recruit sufficient numbers of committed personnel. Fire brigade activities have become more and more professional and require strong commitment, including continuous training. Additionally, young people moving away are a key problem, especially in sparsely populated areas. Lack of personnel means that a small number of members have to carry out most of the tasks, putting them under strain.[64] The findings of the latest Contract Fire Brigade Barometer are similar and reflect concerns over fire brigades being unable to attract enough members who can respond to emergencies in the future. As reasons for this were cited fire brigade activities having to compete with

62 Prontonet.fi (2020). Personnel statistics. Accessed on 17 August 2020.

63 Ministry of the Interior (2020). A safe and resilient Finland – Rescue Services Strategy 2025. Ministry of the Interior Publications 18/2016, p. 10.

64 Eskelinen, K., Tervala, V., Malinen, S. & Hamilton-Skurak, H. (2017). Miksi palokuntatoiminta hiipuu tai viriää? SPEK tutkii 15. Grano Oy 2017.

other pastimes, the fact that the activities were not attractive, lack of time, the demanding nature of the fire brigade activities, and problems related to population numbers in small municipalities with negative net migration. Long distances from home to the fire station were mentioned in freely worded responses.[65]

The regional government reform, which was launched by Prime Minister Sipilä's Government and subsequently dropped, sparked concerns over rescue services in sparsely populated areas. From the perspective of these areas, securing funding has an essential role in maintaining the service network and operational ability. In the regional government reform which failed to make headway, the funding model for rescue services was examined purely in proportion to the population of each area. Had this reform gone ahead, it could have had negative effects on the service network, especially in sparsely populated areas. Reduced resources would have an impact on both getting to the scene of the accident and preparedness for accidents.

Popular tourism areas face their own challenges, as the number of tourists seasonally increases the likelihood of different accidents. In Lapland, for example, going about in nature, either independently or under guidance, is prominent in tourism activities. Long distances, difficult terrain and poor mobile phone coverage pose challenges to helping persons who have had an accident while out and about. Through safety communications, accidents can be prevented by building up people's skills in operating outdoors and preparing for excursions.

When preparing the administrative reform launched under Prime Minister Marin's Government Programme, which also concerns rescue services, particular attention should be paid to ensuring that the provision of rescue services in sparsely populated Finland is safeguarded through funding solutions.

Additionally, Prime Minister Marin's Government Programme has two objectives related to safety in sparsely populated areas. Firstly, the Government aims to safeguard a network of fire stations covering the whole country. The second objective is strengthening the role of contract fire brigades as partners of rescue departments, also recognising their current and future challenges and special characteristics.[66]

65 Suomen Sopimuspalokuntien Liitto (2017). Sopimuspalokuntabarometri. Publication of Suomen Sopimuspalokuntien Liitto.

66 Government (2019). Government Programme of Prime Minister Marin 10 December 2019. p. 79. http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-287-808-3.

2.5.4 The Border Guard

The security situation in Europe remains unpredictable, and the antagonism between Russia and the West continues. Cases of illegal entry have been associated with organised crime and other security threats and, additionally, the risk of violent terrorist attacks is heightened.[67] Climate change, demographic development, increasingly rapid urbanisation, cross-border and internal migration, poverty, youth unemployment, food security, scarcity of natural resources and the changing nature of conflicts are examples of interlinked issues.

If the current development continues, the economic welfare of population groups and regions will become polarised. Social, cultural and health-related polarisation will also challenge a safe and secure welfare society. Inequalities and social exclusion are the most important background factors for conventional security threats, including crime and becoming a victim of crime. In the phenomenon of social exclusion, different problems, including socioeconomic, intoxicant abuse and mental health problems, often accumulate on the same persons. In proportion to the size of their cohort, young men commit the most offences, and the share of young adults threatened by social exclusion is growing. The average age of the population is increasing more rapidly in Finland than in any other EU country. Rather than happening evenly across the country, the ageing of the population particularly affects sparsely populated areas.[68]

Prime Minister Marin's Government has set the objective of safeguarding rights to basic public services of people living in sparsely populated areas and in the archipelago by supporting regional collaboration, by introducing new practices and by guaranteeing sufficient resources (availability of services, social safety, transport).[69]

The Border Guard is one of the security authorities that operate in sparsely populated areas and the archipelago. It has assumed a larger role as a security authority in sparsely populated areas in the 2000s.

The Finnish Border Guard's goals of societal effectiveness are maintaining border security, ensuring smooth border traffic, serving as an authority that provides assistance in sparsely populated areas in the border zone and coastal areas, improving maritime safety and

67 The Finnish Border Guard (2019). Annual report of the Finnish Border Guard 2018. https://issuu.com/princepsoy/docs/rvl_vuosikertomus_2018_web. Referred to on 27 April 2020.

68 Ministry of the Interior (2019). National risk assessment 2018. Ministry of the Interior Publications 2019/5. http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-324-245-6.

69 Government (2019). Government Programme of Prime Minister Marin 10 December 2019. http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-287-808-3.

participating in military defence. These goals are pursued cost-effectively on land, at sea and in the air, also in difficult environmental conditions and during all incidents and emergencies of society.[70]

Border surveillance maintains order and security at land and sea borders with the purpose of preventing and analysing unauthorised border crossings, monitoring territorial integrity and carrying out other statutory surveillance tasks.[71] The Border Guard strengthens the surveillance of the eastern border and capabilities for combatting security threats at external borders. By the end of 2018, the Border Guard had transferred 80 person-years from border checks to surveillance at the eastern border, and personnel hired with the help of additional appropriations continue to be deployed in this task. The Border Guard maintains a capability to combat serious crime associated with illegal entry at the external borders and develops its readiness to act in all security situations.[72]

The Border Guard is the leading maritime SAR authority and a multisectoral maritime law enforcement authority. Maritime search and rescue includes aiding people and vessels that are in distress, preventing accidents, searching for lost people or vessels, and providing emergency medical transport. As from 1 January 2019, responsibility for leading oil and chemical spill response in sea areas was transferred to the Border Guard.[73]

The Border Guard's information activities help bolster citizens' sense of security. In addition to sparsely populated areas, the communications stress the dimensions of both internal and external security and the Border Guard's extensive social significance.

2.5.5 NGOs

Factors that influence well-being and safety include not only everyday environments but also the support and care people provide to each other and their knowledge, skills and training. Well-being and safety are born and nurtured, and they may be weakened, with people's everyday conditions, interaction, lifestyles and choices. Various NGOs participate in strengthening these strategic factors of well-being, safety and security. NGOs play an important role in reinforcing networks between people, promoting personal life management and supporting different authorities alike.

70 Ministry of the Interior (2019). Final accounts of Ministry of the Interior's accounting unit (KPY 200) 2018. Ministry of the Interior publications 2019:13. http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-324-253-1.

71 The Border Guard (2020). https://www.raja.fi/rajaturvallisuus. Referred to on 14 May 2020.

72 The Finnish Border Guard (2018). The Border Guard's performance plan 2019. https://www.raja.fi/download/76782_RVL_TS_2019_TTS_2020_2023.pdf?3982545385d5d788. Referred to on 27 April 2020.

73 Ministry of the Interior (2018). Press release 28 December 2018: https://intermin.fi/-/ymparistovahinkojen-torjunnan-johtovastuu-merella-siirtyy-rajavartiolaitokselle

The NGO field is also in constant flux as new organisations are established and old ones cease to operate every year. In 2018, there were 106,051 associations in the Finnish Patent and Registration Office's Register of Associations. Year 2018 saw the establishment of 3,762 new organisations, whereas 1,097 ceased to operate. When we add up the members, volunteers and employees carrying out NGO work, inactive members who support the work and persons who participate in the activities in Lapland, for instance, 326 organisations reached almost 83% of the region's population in 2019.

275,000 people participated in the activities of around 10,000 associations operating in the social and health care sector in 2018, providing training and advice for 121,000 people. The associations also offered other assistance and support, such as peer activities, to 141,000 participants.

Of the Finnish adult population, 12.1% are involved in voluntary exercise and sports club activities, while 2.7% volunteer in other physical activity or sports organisations. Additionally, 7.4% participate in voluntary activities associated with physical activity in other associations or organisations. In total, 20.5% of the population participate in voluntary work in the field of physical activity, which means around 845,000 volunteers.

There were 3,863 village associations in Finland in 2019. The villages carry out large-scale and significant voluntary activities to increase the vitality, welfare and safety of villages. In 2019, a total of 6,200,000 hours of voluntary work were completed in village activities, and village associations employed 650 persons who were long-term unemployed.

NGO activities are not limited to offering hobbies, recreation, support and assistance or organising events for people in their daily lives. They also aim to have a more extensive impact on societal phenomena, develop activities and share expertise. Additionally, NGOs play a growing role in the provision of services.

A key actor from the perspective of preparedness and readiness is the Voluntary Rescue Service (Vapepa), which is a consortium of 53 NGOs and communities coordinated by the Finnish Red Cross. Its members offer their skills and resources to support the authorities in search missions and response to accidents and incidents. The Voluntary Rescue Service also has an important role in providing psychosocial support in emergencies. It has around 1,500 emergency response teams, many of which operate specifically in sparsely populated areas.

Since 2016, North Karelia Rescue Department has trained village rescue teams to support authorities during incidents, including power outages caused by storms. Providing neighbourly help and communicating information about the situation to the rescue department are important tasks. Team members also participate in preparing village

safety plans. The rescue teams collaborate with the Voluntary Rescue Service network and contract fire brigades. The teams' participation in neighbourly help activities also proved particularly necessary during the coronavirus epidemic of 2020.

In recent years, several village safety projects have been funded in Finland, in which key development measures have been aimed at improving the welfare and safety of villages. Numerous safety events have been organised in villages, and residents have been trained to cope with many types of incidents. Most village safety projects have been led by local and regional village associations. Good experiences have also been gained of Leader activities in promoting the safety of communities. In many cases, the potential would also be sufficient to set up permanent activities.

Since 2005, the Finnish Red Cross has carried out a number of projects related to safety and welfare in villages in a broad-based cooperation with NGOs and authorities, especially in Lapland, Satakunta, North Karelia and the archipelago areas of Southwest Finland. The Finnish National Rescue Association has also participated in safety projects since 2014. It has provided training for a network of village safety instructors and published a village safety guide, and it maintains the kyläturvallisuus.fi web service as a platform for providing instructions. The Finnish National Rescue Association has trained around 70 village safety instructors in total, and the Our safe village training material prepared by it is used to varying degrees in village safety training organised around Finland.

Such social problems as loneliness undermine the sense of security in sparsely populated areas. This phenomenon is highlighted during crises, as the coronavirus epidemic has demonstrated. The NGO sector plays an important part in tackling social challenges. NGO actors, including the Network of rural support persons, offer someone to talk to and practical support for those in a difficult life situation, especially residents in sparsely populated areas.

The importance of NGOs and associations in sparsely populated areas will be emphasised further as the authorities' network erodes. However, NGOs are up against the same phenomena as all actors in sparsely populated areas. For example, the numbers of active participants decline as a result of migration and the ageing of the population. This is why particular attention should be paid to securing the operating conditions of NGOs in normal and emergency conditions.

Municipalities continue to play a key role in promoting everyday safety. The goal thus is producing municipal welfare and safety plans as a single document by a broad-based cooperation network in the form of actions plans that are as concrete as possible. To develop cooperation, an operating model called Everyday safety has been created

in Lapland. Its basic idea is building cooperation and safety networks. NGOs play an important role in this model.

The NGO sector has plenty of untapped potential to work for safety in sparsely populated areas. The number of active stakeholders is large at the general level, which is why it would be justified to consider involving the third sector more extensively, for example in the activities of regional working groups. This would add new perspectives to the preparation of plans.

2.5.6 Parishes

In addition to NGOs, parishes have been identified as important providers of well-being services, especially in sparsely populated areas. Unlike many others, parish services are still available in many localities with a dwindling population, which highlights their relative importance. It thus appears that, compared to cities, parish workers and volunteers provide particularly vital support in the daily life of rural areas.

A parish of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland operates in the area of each municipality. As the authorities' network erodes and municipal services become less readily available, parishes have increased their importance as service providers. Areas with a low population have been able to hold on to parish services for longer than other services. The parish offers opportunities for meeting and working together for people of different ages, as well as concrete help through its social work.

Parishes offer both material assistance and mental support in crises, and parish employees are able to respond quickly to acute needs. The employees have professional competence in social welfare and health care. In social work carried out by the church, a person's different needs are met simultaneously, which makes it possible to provide versatile assistance and refer them to other services. If necessary, the parish will also support such groups as older people in their homes. This work has proved highly significant, for example during the coronavirus epidemic.

As local parishes are independent, they can direct and develop their activities guided by the local needs. Active participants in village communities can usually make their voices heard in parishes. The value base of parish activities builds the prerequisites for cooperation. As they foster the equal value of each person, mutual respect and emphasis on caring, parish activities promote safety.

In sparsely populated areas, the importance of cooperation between different actors is stressed. Familiarity, caring and communality based on collective action create a sense

of security and lay a foundation for mutual assistance. The activities of NGOs, local associations and parishes build a sense of community and promote everyday safety.

A reduction in the financial resources of parishes will set challenges to their activities in sparsely populated areas in a near future. The importance of voluntary work will increase as there are fewer paid employees and premises. Developing cooperation between authorities, NGOs, and local associations and parishes will become increasingly important. Joining forces when training volunteers is an example of good practices.

3 Observations on the safety and security situation

This chapter contains observations on safety and security in sparsely populated areas brought up by the Harvaturva network; their current status, significant challenges and good practices for solving the challenges.

3.1 Current status of safety and security

Many of the remaining residents in the villages of sparsely populated areas are older people. They wish to go on living in a rural setting for as long as possible. Being close to nature offers meaningful activities, while the familiar village community provides safety. The ability to reach older people is regarded as a challenge from the perspective of public services. There may be shortcomings in clearing the snow off roads and yards in winter. Transport connections are also deteriorating in other respects. A private car is increasingly necessarily as less public transport is available.

In particular, the question of service availability is particularly relevant to the need for emergency and support services. Increasingly, the security authority comes from a municipal or urban centre located at a distance. This means longer response times. Geographic distances are highlighted when examining crime in cities and sparsely populated areas, and crime victims' access to assistance. Distances to security actors' bases and support services for victims are generally longer in rural areas than in cities. This is manifested as longer response times in emergency missions and sometimes as difficulties in finding the address or location of the person in need of assistance if the need has arisen outside residential areas, for example in the forest. This is also true for many other services, including substance abuse services. Support organisations and other assistance providers are usually located in cities, which means that they are isolated from potential clients living in sparsely populated areas. This may result in care poverty and insecurity. Longer

response times in services challenge residents to develop their personal capabilities, in which different stakeholders play an important role.

Limited financial possibilities and slow progress of the digital network pose many challenges. Reforms affecting the authorities are often carried out on economic terms, and they rarely increase the availability of local services in sparsely populated areas. The limitations of financial resources can also be seen in infrastructure maintenance. Deterioration of roads increases response times and affects the accessibility of villages. An inadequate digital network has a negative impact on service accessibility. Mobile network black spots also make it difficult to connect with the rest of the world.

Common factors for sparsely populated areas are a small population and low population density, but this is as far as similarities between them usually go. It would be a mistake to say that there is such a thing as a typical rural municipality. Sparsely populated areas have different regional, socio-economic, demographic and cultural factors. Some villages may have an excellent level of activity and do many things together, and their daily life is full of projects. In others, on the other hand, the lack of active agents may lead to a dwindling community spirit, and residents may be more like to withdraw.

Doing things together creates vitality in sparsely populated areas. Network-based activities make it possible to draw on a broad range of different skills. Bureaucratic or otherwise rigid operating models may be a challenge to developing cooperation. However, good and sustained cooperation can be found in most areas. By sharing good practices, cooperation in areas with a more modest level of activity can also be stepped up.

The *changing climate* creates many types of threats. Extreme weather phenomena are expected to become more frequent. Excessive drought or precipitation may cause crop losses with extensive national impacts. As seasonal variations become less clear, knowing what to expect when out and about in nature is more difficult. For example, weak ice or avalanches are more likely to take even locals by surprise. In winter, the temperature stays more frequently around zero, which means that slippery road conditions are becoming more common. Conditions favourable to heavy falls of wet snow are common in Eastern and Northern Finland in winter, putting the electricity network at risk. It has been estimated that climate change may also increase the intensity of storms. At the very least, damage caused by them will exacerbate; as the ground remains unfrozen for longer, more trees will fall. Dry and hot weather offers excellent conditions for forest and grass fires. While catastrophic forest fires have so far been avoided in Finland, the fires in the summer of 2018 tested the rescue services in such regions as Lapland and Southwest Finland. The largest forest fires often occurred in sparsely populated areas, as in other areas the fires were detected earlier.

3.2 Key challenges to developing safety and security

When gauging the sense of security, sparsely populated areas are considered a safer environment than cities as a whole.[74] However, the work on safety and security in sparsely populated areas involves many challenges that are less common in an urban environment, and tackling them requires the inputs and joint efforts of different sectors of society.

Lack of resources has become chronic. The eroding network of the authorities gives rise to insecurity. It is increasingly difficult for the police and rescue services to recruit new officer for sparsely populated areas. Similarly, there are fewer persons willing to assume a leading role in taking care of common issues. The role of civil society in promoting common causes is challenging as active participants age and their numbers decline. Due to a lack of money, equipment cannot be replaced and becomes obsolete. As resources dwindle, ways of involving new and young people in taking care of common issues and investing in shared equipment are needed. Attracting young people to fire brigade activities would help to safeguard rescue services.

An inadequate knowledge base hampers development efforts. Identification of phenomena related to safety and security in sparsely populated areas and the collection of data on them must be regular and systematic. Different types of research are also needed to expand the knowledge base. In addition to quantitative statistics, qualitative information acquired by such means as interview surveys is also needed to identify these phenomena. Due to limited resources, studies are conducted as projects, and usually on project funding. The dissemination of new information should additionally be improved, and more emphasis should thus be placed on communication and raising of awareness.

The *demographic structure* creates challenges. An ageing population needs more support in their lives, but service providers and support networks are far away. The realisation of linguistic rights also needs to be improved in places. Sámi-language services, for example, are not readily available at the Emergency Response Centre.

Geographical and social isolation have an impact on residents' fear of crime in sparsely populated areas even if, according to the routine activity theory, these factors also isolate potential perpetrators and thus reduce the residents' likelihood of being victimised. Geographical and social isolation also means isolation from potential surveillance, which can be either informal (social control by well-informed neighbours and similar), or carried out by such authorities as the police. Because of their isolation, residents may

74 Laurikainen, H. & Nikkanen, M. (2020). Turvassa 2019: Kansalaisturvallisuus Suomessa.
Aho, P. & Rahkonen, J. (2014). Rural Barometer 2014 (2014). Research report. Taloustutkimus Oy.

fear that they would have no effective means of protecting themselves against criminals or obtaining assistance when under threat. These beliefs and fears are based on the possibility of becoming a victim rather than a real risk.

3.3 Good practices for everyday safety

The *Everyday safety model in Lapland* has been developed for 15 years already. Its idea is very simple: all actors are brought together to decide what is the most important for promoting everyday safety, security and well-being. The municipality and other actors engage in cooperation in which people's needs are viewed as a whole. By combining resources, it is possible to transition from expensive corrective work towards a proactive approach. It is easier to obtain additional funding for jointly agreed development projects when different parties are committed to a common goal. Broad-based cooperation facilitates the identification of good practices developed in different parts of Finland. Cooperation also constantly gives rise to new local cooperation models helping to improve everyday safety. This operating model improves the well-being and safety of residents in sparsely populated areas and prevents social exclusion. It was piloted in the region of Lapland in 2012–2014, after which the model has been spread in Lapland and North Ostrobothnia under the guidance of the Regional Council of Lapland.

Residents in rural areas have practical skills. In sparsely populated areas, people are used to managing, and the sense of community is often strong. Communities usually meet in shared facilities, such as village halls. New village halls have also been built. Village activity can be channelled to building up safety knowledge and skills.

In North Karelia, the *village rescue team activities* are well advanced. Rescue teams participate in maintaining and developing the safety of villages together with the locals. The teams consist of local volunteers interested in safety issues. Neighbourly help has also been linked to the rescue team activities. The capabilities of village rescue teams have been improved, making it possible to alert local teams to assist rescue authorities at the time of incidents.

Cooperation between authorities has proven to work well in border zones. In North Karelia, for example, the social and health services (Siun sote joint municipal authority) have provided first response training for Border Guard patrols. Training has been produced for patrols and they have been equipped with defibrillators, as they often are the only authorities at hand near the border and in other remote localities. If an accident occurs, the Border Guard patrol may be the closest authority, and in this case they are able to start

resuscitation or other necessary actions before the actual pre-hospital emergency care team arrives.

Eksote joint municipal authority has developed *emergency physician* activities in South Karelia. During their 12-hour shift, the physician treats on average five pre-hospital emergency care cases in the field, shortening the response time of medical services. If the distance to the patient's location is long and urgent medical transport is required, the emergency physician can meet the ambulance, enabling treatment to start sooner. This operating model has been successful in saving lives.

4 Networks in safety and security work

Networking plays an important role in developing safety and security in sparsely populated areas. Being familiar with the various networks helps understand the channels for exerting influence. Different authorities and NGOs, which can help with the practical work, are usually represented in these networks. This chapter presents a few networks relevant to safety and security in sparsely populated areas.

4.1 Harvaturva network

Harvaturva, a network appointed and led by the Ministry of the Interior, consists of 21 stakeholders representing authorities, NGOs and experts. The network's term of office runs from 2 January 2019 to 31 May 2023. The network draws up annual action plans for itself. The tasks of the Harvaturva network include:

- Monitoring the development of safety and security in rural areas and sparsely populated areas
- Producing information about the challenges facing sparsely populated areas and potential solutions
- Spreading practices for strengthening safety and security in sparsely populated areas
- Improving information flows between security authorities and other stakeholders in sparsely populated areas
- Exerting influence in society to promote safety and security in sparsely populated areas.

4.2 Safe and resilient municipalities network (Kriisinkestävä kunta)

The Safe and resilient municipalities network is a cooperation platform that supports work related to risk management, safety and security, and preparedness in municipalities. The network was established in 2018, and it comprises more than 300 people from around 145 different municipalities. The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities coordinates the network and ensures the prerequisites for its operation. The network's activities also receive support from the National Emergency Supply Agency. In addition to cooperation between municipalities, the network has in a few years become a central forum for exchanges of information between municipalities and their stakeholders and for developing cooperation.

The aim of the network is to develop safety culture, safety management and the quality of risk management in municipalities and to enhance the significance and effectiveness of the work on safety, security and preparedness as part of the overall security of society. The network is intended for municipalities' personnel, and it offers an opportunity for networking, discussions and the sharing of good practices for experts. The network organises various events each year, the largest one of which is the Safe and resilient municipality seminar held in late autumn. Shorter seminars and trainings are additionally organised in spring. Since spring 2020, the Tuovi portal maintained by the Ministry of the Interior has served as the network's communication platform (www.sisäinenturvallisuus.fi).

4.3 Rural Policy Council

The Rural Policy Council is a government-appointed body that prepares and implements national rural policy by bringing together key parties and networks to promote the vitality of rural areas in collaboration. The 35 members of the Council represent stakeholders from the three sectors of society, ranging from the local to the national level. Its term of office runs from 31 March 2016 to 31 December 2020.

In addition to programme work, network activities have been at the core of rural policy for a long time. The Rural Policy Council's action plan is the National rural policy programme 2014–2020, which is underpinned by community-led development and the diversity of Finnish rural areas.

The secretariat and five thematic networks of the Rural Policy Council play a key role in performing the Council's tasks. The thematic networks focus on sparsely populated

areas, a viable operating environment, civic activities and well-being, competence and employment, and Swedish-speaking areas.

The sparsely populated rural areas network (HAMA) is one of the Rural Policy Council's five networks. The main strategic objective of the network is ensuring that sparsely populated rural areas are a good environment for living and enterprising and that the principles of sustainable development are followed in them.

The Strategy for sparsely populated rural areas 2017–2020 seeks solutions for sustainable development in sparsely populated rural areas, implements the National rural policy programme from a horizontal perspective, and highlights the special features and potential of sparsely populated areas in national and international policy, decision-making and programmes. The HAMA network's policies are shaped by a multidisciplinary expert group whose members operate in different parts of Finland.

Through its activities and active communications, the HAMA network highlights the development needs, strengths and opportunities of an area and the everyday activities of the people and businesses operating in it, and brings up development measures needed to promote the area's potential in discussions and decision-making. The Strategy for sparsely populated rural areas contains measures that concern industries, employment, services, infrastructure and bioeconomy. Issues related to safety and security in these areas are a central part of the network's activities, and sustainable development and digitalisation are cross-cutting themes. The network's current term of office ends on 31 January 2021.

The Civic action and welfare network (KAHVEE) is another one of the Rural Policy Council's networks. Its activities focus on rural residents' well-being and smoothly running daily lives. The thematic priorities of the network's activities include promoting inclusion and democracy, strengthening civic activities and community-led local development, and securing and developing services. In the context of services, the network is particularly active in rural issues related to the health and social services system and the school network. Examining sustainable development from the perspective of rural policy and promoting sustainable daily life, housing and well-being are at the centre of its activities in 2019–2020.

Everyday safety issues are prominent in the network's activities. The network produces and shares information on this topic and good operating models through various publication channels, seminars and networks. Stakeholders in the network are involved in developing the national security cooperation model, especially regarding safety skills and capabilities in sparsely populated areas. The Finnish Village Movement Association, which is part of the network, participates in the cooperation group on internal security led by the Ministry of

the Interior with the aim of improving safety and security in sparsely populated areas. At village level, it is likely that the establishment of local preparedness centres in connection with village halls will be piloted. In the future, safety planning in villages will be included in local village plans, and an effort will be made to integrate these plans into municipal planning, for example to step up cooperation and exchanges of information with rescue authorities.

4.4 Partnership Network of Finnish Rescue Services

Rescue departments have established a voluntary consortium, the Partnership Network of Finnish Rescue Services. Its activities focus on four service areas: rescue operations, safety, pre-hospital emergency medical care, and support services. The network is led by the chief executive officers of rescue departments and a board subordinate to them. The board consists of the chairpersons of the service areas as well as a chairperson and vice chairperson, who are appointed separately.

The ultimate objective of the Partnership Network is to develop the activities of rescue departments, ensuring that the services provided for citizens are of a high quality, efficient, economical and based on a uniform interpretation of the statutes and regulations in force.

The service areas of rescue operations and safety, in particular, work on those service forms that also operate in sparsely populated areas. The service area of rescue operations considers, among other things, matters related to contract fire brigade activities. The service area of safety services discusses preventive measures for improving safety.

Different expert networks operate under the Partnership Network's service areas, including liaison officers for supervision and safety communications experts. The network engages in many types of cooperation with various stakeholders and has appointed its representatives to various projects and other working, steering and management groups.

4.5 National cooperation model for internal security

The objective of the National cooperation model for internal security is to promote safety and security in people's daily lives and to strengthen the sense of security of the population living in Finland. The cooperation model strives to influence these aspects in a systematic and sustained manner.

Internal security refers to those aspects of society that ensure that everyone can enjoy the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the rule of law without fear or insecurity caused by crime, disorder, accidents or phenomena and changes in Finnish society or an increasingly international world.

In this context, everyday safety and security refers to internal security phenomena that occur repeatedly or affect a large proportion of the population.

In the cooperation model, member organisations collaborate to

- identify and monitor phenomena and problems affecting internal security,
- agree on common priorities and objectives, and
- coordinate their efforts to achieve the objectives.

The bodies of the National cooperation model for internal security comprise

1. the National cooperation group on internal security;
2. the National cooperation group's expert network, and
3. the National cooperation group's secretariat.

4.6 National cooperation group for contract fire brigade activities

At the end of 2019, the Ministry of the Interior appointed a National cooperation group for contract fire brigade activities. In addition to the Ministry of the Interior, it is composed of the Regional State Administrative Agencies, the Emergency Services College, the rescue departments, the Finnish National Rescue Association, the Finnish Association of Fire Officers, the Federation of Finnish Contract Fire Brigades and the FSB - Finlands Svenska Brand- & Räddningsförbund. The National cooperation group's term of office runs from 1 December 2019 to 31 December 2023. The cooperation group's tasks include:

- Identifying problems related to interpreting legislation and agreements
- Preparing a proposal for an action plan to develop contract fire brigade activities
- Preparing proposals for necessary development projects and development of contract fire brigade activities

- Systematically analysing the strengths and weaknesses of the contract fire brigade system
- Conducting the necessary dialogue at the national level with parties exerting influence on contract fire brigade activities

As central challenges, the sector has identified improving the prerequisites for cooperation and development of resources and competence. A key question is how contract fire brigade activities can be safeguarded in sparsely populated areas. From the perspective of safety and security services for sparsely populated areas in Finland, this should be a particular priority.

5 Recommended measures

In this Chapter, the Harvaturva network puts forward five recommendations related to the observations highlighted in the report. An assessment of the implementation of recommendations given in the previous report published in 2014 can be found in Appendix 1 to this report.

Recommendation 1: Securing sufficient resources for sparsely populated areas.

The security authorities' resources are strongly concentrated in municipal centres, and in smaller municipalities it is difficult to obtain skilled employees for certain posts. The need to secure the resources is common to all authorities. The special needs of sparsely populated regions should also be addressed in resource allocation. Such authorities as the Border Guard carry out first response missions in some areas to meet local needs. In addition to securing the authorities' resources in sparsely populated areas, NGOs' operational ability should also be ensured.

Contract fire brigade activities are faced with challenges related to continuity, including the ageing of fire brigade members, a decline in their number, and difficulty in recruiting new members. An encouraging approach should be adopted when recruiting new fire brigade members, and in the recruitment of contract fire brigade employees, the requirements of the operating environment should be addressed better, and the operational ability criteria should be put in proportion to them. In addition, resources for equipment that meets the requirements set by the conditions should be secured. As one possibility related to resource use, fire brigade members' mobility enabled by multi-locality should be explored. During the coronavirus epidemic, a need to review the exemption amount of an unemployed contractual fire brigade member's unemployment benefit has also emerged. The exempt amount should be increased to ensure that essential rescue services can be provided more reliably in future.

The rights of language minorities and the indigenous Sámi people to receive services and safety communications material in their mother tongues should also be taken into consideration in resource allocations.[75]

Recommendation 2: Building up the capabilities of residents and tourists in sparsely populated areas for looking after their common safety and security.

As security services are centralised and cut back, their response times become longer. This is why it is important to build up and strengthen people's personal capabilities for maintaining safety, including everyday risk management tasks and action in emergencies. Preparedness for long-term incidents in society should also be addressed. Safety communications aims to influence people's skills and attitudes. There is a need and demand for free safety training in sparsely populated areas. For example, the availability of safety training provided by different rescue departments varies, some rescue departments charge a fee for the training, and there is an obvious need for operating methods that are uniform at the national level.

Recommendation 3: Developing cross-administrative cooperation in the work on safety and security in sparsely populated areas.

Today, safety and security work culminates in the motto 'Together we are stronger'. By combining meagre resources, more effective results can be achieved. A common situational picture helps to perceive the impacts of different factors of safety and security and lays a better foundation for planning. The use of multiple channels in this work also helps to get the common message across. Operating models should be created for achieving the objectives formulated together.

Recommendation 4: Sharpening the focus on safety planning.

Municipalities' safety planning or electronic welfare reports are tools that can be used to develop guidelines for the municipalities' safety work – also in sparsely populated areas. Village safety plans can also add detail to safety planning. Village safety plans identify any development areas in more concrete terms and assign responsibilities more clearly. Adequate support should be provided for safety planning, making sure that the plans can be genuinely used as part of the municipalities' more general safety planning. At the

75 Constitution of Finland 731/1999, sections 17 and 121
Act on the Sámi Parliament (974/1995)
Sámi Language Act (1086/2003).

national level, consistency should be aimed for: safety planning should be considered and developed in small municipalities in the same way as in large cities.

Recommendation 5: Strengthening the communal safety activities of villages by establishing village rescue teams.

The existence of village rescue teams means that assistance is available close by in emergencies. The rescue team activities can also help strengthen neighbourly help. Coordinating rescue teams is basically a good fit with rescue departments' other tasks. The teams' capabilities can be improved in cooperation between authorities and NGO actors. A ready-made concept that can be disseminated as a national operating model will help launch the activities.

Attachment 1: Implementation of the measures recommended in the report published in 2014 (Turvallisuutta harvassa?)

An assessment of the implementation status of measures (**Not implemented** / **Partly implemented** / **Implemented**) and short justifications for the assessments are given below.

Recommendation 1: Increasing and improving cooperation between authorities and with NGOs with the aim of ensuring safety and security in sparsely populated areas

Status: Partly implemented

Justifications for the assessment:
The Harvaturva network led by the Ministry of the Interior was launched in early 2019. One of its tasks is to consider issues related to the safety and security of sparsely populated areas. In addition, development needs related to skills and preparedness in sparsely populated areas have been considered as part of the work on the Internal Security Programme. The topic was also touched upon while developing local safety planning.

Recommendation 2: Securing personnel resources for contract fire brigades

Status: Partly implemented

Justifications for the assessment:
Improving the personnel resources of contract fire brigades is primarily a task for the fire brigade associations. To promote resource development, cooperation with rescue departments is considered necessary. There are local differences in the implementation of the recommendation. Some fire brigades have been successful, while others have been more passive or experienced difficulties in attracting new members to fire brigade activities. In 2019, the Ministry of the Interior established a national cooperation group for contract fire brigade activities. One of its tasks is to prepare proposals for ensuring the continuity of contract fire brigade activities.

Recommendation 3: Deployment of the Everyday safety in municipalities operating model in sparsely populated areas

Status: **Partly implemented**

Justifications for the assessment:
The operating model has been used in Lapland and North Ostrobothnia, whereas at the national level, there currently is untapped potential.

Recommendation 4: Launching safety work in all villages

Status: **Partly implemented**

Justifications for the assessment:
While this issue has been promoted in several contexts, there still are significant differences in the scope of the safety activities of village associations and other village communities. Village rescue team activities have been developed in North Karelia. They are led by North Karelia Rescue Department, which has trained village activists to take action in situations where assistance is needed. The operating model proved useful during the coronavirus epidemic of 2020 as one form of offering neighbourly help.

Recommendation 5: Preparedness for power outages can be promoted

Status: **Partly implemented**

Justifications for the assessment:
The structure of electricity companies' distribution networks and security of supply are the most important factors influencing the reliability of power supply. As extreme weather phenomena have become more common, most network companies have elected to instal underground cables. Efforts have been made to improve individuals' capabilities for coping with long-lasting incidents using the 72 hours concept. Less attention has been paid to any actions during a power outage. In the future, this issue should be focused on.

Recommendation 6: Supporting residents' independent preparedness in sparsely populated areas – in cooperation with the authorities

Status: Implemented

Justifications for the assessment:
Among other things, active safety communications by the authorities and the NGO sector have had an impact on this issue. At the latest, the coronavirus epidemic has given visibility to the topic and presumably influenced attitudes and skills.

Recommendation 7: Securing the prerequisites for successful cooperation – coordination, clear agreements and training

Status: Partly implemented

Justifications for the assessment:
Systematic networking has been stepped up, and evidence of its benefits has been obtained.

Recommendation 8: Developing indicators to support the monitoring of the safety and security status

Status: Implemented

Justifications for the assessment:
A great deal of work has been done across sectoral boundaries to assess the safety and security of sparsely populated areas. Such reports as Turvassa 2019 (Finnish National Rescue Association), the Rural Barometer (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry), and the final report of a project examining the status of police surveillance and emergency response missions are a few examples of studies and investigations carried out to put together a situational picture of safety and security. For more examples, see the Table of contents of this report.

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