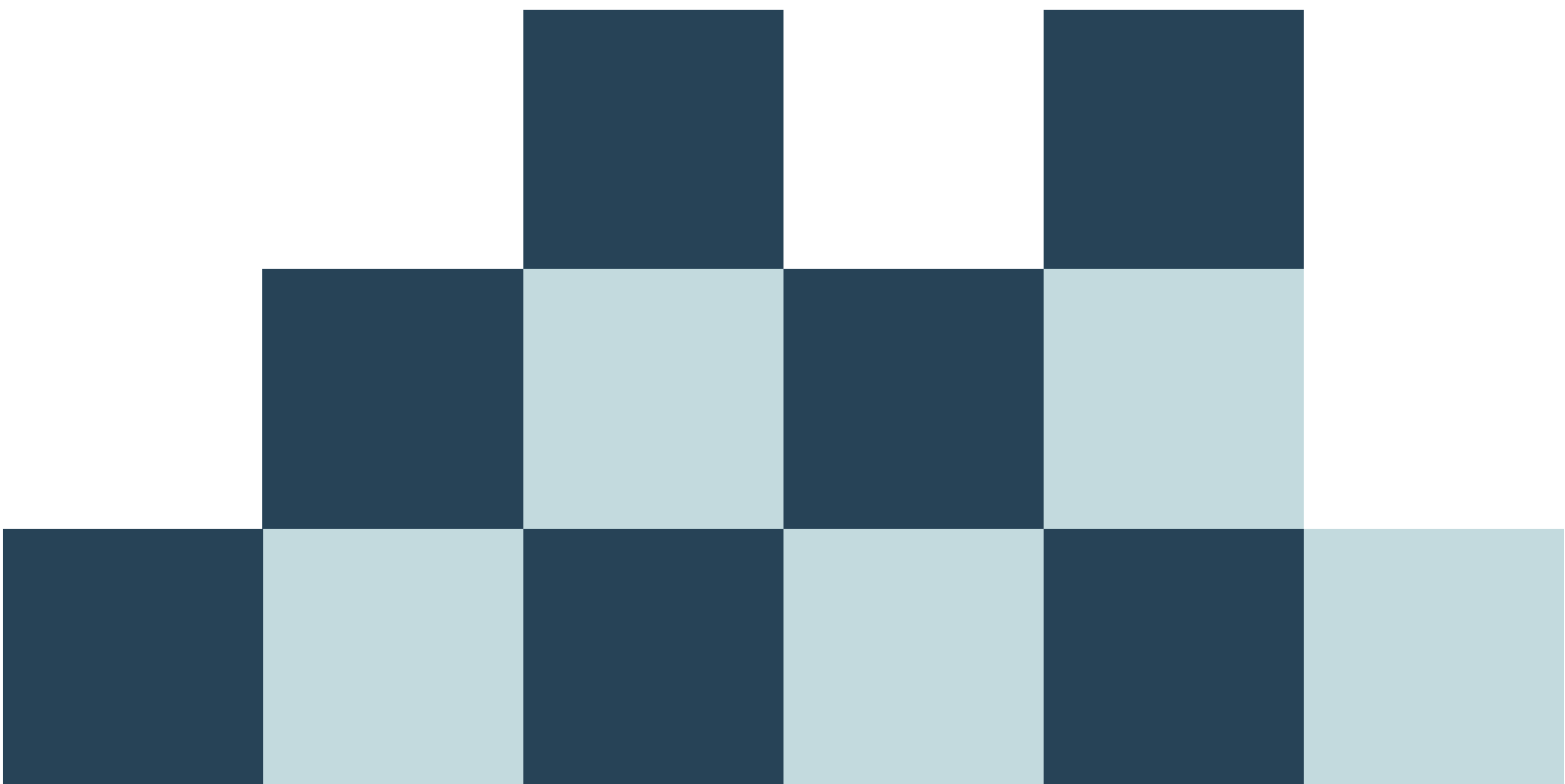




Myndigheten för  
totalförsvarsanalys

# Establishment of civil areas

– Interim report 2 of the government assignment to evaluate  
the new structure for civil defence and societal crisis  
preparedness



Swedish Agency for Defence Analysis  
Establishment of civil defence areas –  
Interim report 2 of the government assignment to evaluate  
the new structure for civil defence and societal crisis  
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## Summary

The new structure for civil defence and societal crisis preparedness entered into force on 1 October 2022.<sup>1</sup> Its purpose is to strengthen society's ability to manage peacetime crisis situations, situations of heightened preparedness and, ultimately, war. A key element of the new structure is the division of the county administrative boards into six civil areas, which adds a higher regional level of administration.

The Swedish Agency for Defence Analysis (MTFA) has been tasked by the government with following up and evaluating the implementation of the new structure. In this interim report, MTFA has assessed whether the six civil areas are being established in accordance with the intentions underlying the establishment of civil areas. Essentially, the intention behind the introduction of civil areas was to clarify leadership and responsibilities, and to create the conditions for more effective collaboration within civil defence, and between civil and military defence.

Based on the information provided in the Ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas (2022:525), we have examined:

- how agencies are working to establish forms for collaboration
- how agencies interact with one another
- how agencies interpret their own and others' roles and responsibilities
- the obstacles to the efficient use of resources.

The new structure is still in the implementation phase. MTFA's overall conclusion is that the intentions behind the establishment of civil areas have not been achieved to date.

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<sup>1</sup> The structural reform comprises the Ordinance on the preparedness of central government agencies (2022:524), the Ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas (2022:525), amendments to the Ordinance on total defence and heightened preparedness (2015:1053), and the Ordinance containing instructions for the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (2008:1002), and certain adjustments to the instructions of a number of other agencies.

## **The establishment of civil areas has progressed to varying degrees and is still ongoing**

A new level of civil defence administration was added with the introduction of the new structure. Since the structure came into force in autumn 2022 until spring 2024, the work has mainly involved establishing the civil area administrations, clarifying roles and responsibilities in relation to the county administrative boards, and building structures and forums for collaboration. To some extent, work on specific planning has also begun in parallel with ongoing establishment work.

The civil area administrations were staffed at varying pace, which affected their ability to make joint interpretations of roles and responsibilities and coordinate work between the administrations. This in turn hampered efforts to clarify the higher regional level and establish forms of collaboration.

Efforts to standardise the administrations have been stepped up since all the administrations have been staffed, and the administrations now have a more consistent approach. However, there are still differences in staffing levels between the civil area administrations. It is also clear that the county administrative boards support the administrations with resources to varying degrees.

## **Unclear allocation of responsibilities and roles is taking time to resolve**

It has taken time to work out which issues are to be dealt with by the regional level (the 21 county administrative boards), and which should instead be transferred to the higher regional level (the six county administrative boards responsible for civil areas). Efforts to clearly define responsibilities between the two levels are still ongoing. The allocation of responsibilities is made more complex by the fact that county administrative boards are also preparedness agencies, which means that the county administrative boards need to collaborate with the other preparedness agencies. However, this also compromises the clarity of the role of the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas as a link between the central and regional levels.

Other issues that are taking time to resolve involve overlapping responsibilities and roles in the ordinances. How the overlapping coordination responsibilities between county administrative boards responsible for civil areas and sector-responsible agencies will work is still unclear. Moreover, there is uncertainty as to whether sector-responsible

agencies can and should coordinate actors at levels other than the central level; and if so, what this involves in relation to the geographical area responsibility of the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas.

In some respects, the wordings of the role and mandate of county administrative boards responsible for civil areas are unclear. The wording of the ordinance provides them with a relatively vague mandate in their coordinating role. Expressions such as ‘take the initiative to coordinate’ and ‘provide guidance to county administrative boards within the civil area’ help to provide unclear expectations of their role. As the wordings of the ordinances are considered vague, the agencies need to agree on shared interpretations. This work has been made even more difficult by the absence of explanatory memoranda or other guidance explaining the purpose of the ordinances.

MTFA notes that the terms *civil area*, *civil area administration* and *county administrative board responsible for a civil area*, as well as the abbreviation *civo*, are used both in the political discussion and by the agencies concerned in a manner that does not always clarify what is meant. The administrations provide support and are directly subordinate to the civil area head. MTFA’s evaluation shows that the administrations perform the tasks set out in the ordinance. That said, MTFA notes that it is unclear whether county administrative boards responsible for civil areas should be equated with the administration and its resources, or whether the entire county administrative board is involved. In turn, this impacts how tasks are interpreted and can be performed.

### **Both civil area administrations and military regions describe generally effective collaboration**

The introduction of county administrative boards responsible for civil areas means that elements of the military regions’ collaboration with county administrative boards are taken over by the civil area administrations. The county administrative boards responsible for civil areas collaborate with the Swedish Armed Forces at both regional and national level.

Both civil area administrations and military regions describe generally effective collaboration. However, the military regions feel that county administrative boards responsible for civil areas have a weak mandate to coordinate other county administrative boards. Several military regions also highlight the fact that the administrations are too small to be able to handle critical tasks during periods of heightened preparedness.

According to the military regions, the county administrative boards are still their most important partners; partly because the administrations have been undergoing an establishment phase, and partly because the county administrative boards have more extensive resources. However, this means that the military regions have more actors with which to collaborate than before the reform.

### **This collaboration is complicated by the fact that geographical divisions are not aligned**

Geographical differences between civil areas and military regions make collaboration difficult in certain respects. This poses a particular challenge for county administrative boards that are responsible for civil areas and need to collaborate with two military regions, as working methods and planning differ between the military regions. Moreover, other agencies with important roles in the field of total defence are divided in ways that do not correspond to civil areas and military regions. However, all agencies appear to be adapting to the prevailing circumstances up to now.

### **A number of obstacles to the implementation of civil areas need to be addressed**

MTFA's overall conclusion is that the intentions behind the establishment of civil areas have not been achieved to date. Some of the obstacles are largely dependent on external factors and are not linked to the new structure. These include difficulties in sharing security-sensitive information, competition for skills and a greater workload due to the growth of total defence, for example.

Other obstacles are expected when a new level of administration is introduced. We assess such obstacles to be temporary; even if they are both time-consuming and resource-intensive initially. Above all, it is necessary to find new ways of collaborating and clarifying the allocation of roles and responsibilities.

Finally, there are obstacles that are more difficult to resolve: MTFA believes that these are due to the way in which the structure is designed. These obstacles include the wording of mandates, the allocation of roles and the lack of geographical alignment between civil areas and military regions.

In the light of the above, MTFA would like to highlight and recommend the following:

### **The mandate for county administrative boards responsible for civil areas needs to be clearer**

Our evaluation shows that the mandate of the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas is perceived as both vague and weak. MTFA considers that the ambiguity linked with the mandate presents an obstacle to the work of the agencies. MTFA therefore argues that the Government should review how the mandate for the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas can be clarified in order to create better circumstances for clearer leadership and responsibilities. In this review, the government should consider whether a clearer mandate will suffice, or whether the mandate needs to be strengthened as well.

### **Work on the allocation of roles and responsibilities needs to continue**

The results of this interim report suggest that the agencies need to continue their joint efforts on the allocation of roles. MTFA also notes that a number of factors impact the role of the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas. One remaining issue to which particular attention has been drawn is how the overlapping coordination responsibilities between sector-responsible agencies and county administrative boards responsible for civil areas should function. Another issue involves the allocation of responsibilities between the 21 county administrative boards and the six county administrative boards responsible for civil areas, and the ongoing efforts to categorise issues between the two levels. Furthermore, MTFA considers that there is a need to clarify what type of tasks an administration is able to perform with the current staffing levels. In this context, it is important to identify whether the county administrative board responsible for the civil area is to be equated with the administration, or the entire county administrative board. The issue of the capacity of the administrations should be viewed in relation to the role to be adopted by the civil area administrations. We intend to monitor the work of the agencies on these issues within the framework of ongoing government assignments.<sup>2</sup>

### **The consequences of differing geographical divisions need to be monitored**

One obstacle that makes collaboration difficult is the difference in the regional divisions between civil areas, the Swedish Armed Forces and other agencies. As things stand at present, the agencies consider the differences to

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<sup>2</sup> The final report on the assignment is to be submitted by 30 November 2025.

be manageable. However, both civil area administrations and military regions have pointed out that as planning becomes more specific and the workload increases, it may become difficult to respond to multiple actors simultaneously. MTFFA assesses that the negative consequences of different geographical divisions may increase during periods of heightened preparedness. Therefore, MTFFA believes that the government should monitor the consequences of these differences in divisions and take note of whether the problems are exacerbated when the reform is implemented in full. Additionally, other requirements may arise when Sweden is fully integrated into NATO defence planning.

# 1. Introduction

The new structure for civil defence and societal crisis preparedness entered into force on 1 October 2022.<sup>3</sup> Its purpose is to strengthen society's ability to manage peacetime crisis situations, situations of heightened preparedness and, ultimately, war. The government has tasked the Swedish Agency for Defence Analysis (MTFA) with following up and evaluating agencies' implementation of the new structure over a period of three years.

One of the basic building blocks of the new structure is a geographical division of the county administrative boards into six civil areas. These civil areas also establish a higher regional level of administration. In this report, which constitutes the second interim report of the government assignment, MTFA follows up and evaluates the implementation of civil areas.

## 1.1 The government's assignment to MTFA

### **The government has allocated the following assignment to MTFA:**

The Swedish Agency for Defence Analysis shall follow up and evaluate agencies' implementation of the new structure for civil defence and societal crisis preparedness and the agencies' prerequisites for this. In its work, the agency shall operate on the basis of the goals adopted by the Riksdag for total defence, military defence and civil defence. Follow-up and evaluation shall focus on the agencies' coordination and establishment of work under the new civil defence structure, and also on how the structure contributes to efficient use of resources in order to achieve the set goals.<sup>4</sup>

In interim report 1 of the government assignment, MTFA mapped the regulatory financial criteria for the agencies' work with the new structure. We also conducted a brief analysis of the purpose of introducing the

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<sup>3</sup> Ordinance on the preparedness of central government agencies (2022:524); Ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas (2022:525); Ordinance amending the Ordinance containing instructions for the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (2008:1002). See also Ministry of Justice, Ärendeförteckning I, ärende 18, regeringssammanträde 2022-05-19; dir. 2018:79, *Ansvar, ledning och samordning inom civilt försvar*; government press conference, 18 May 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Government decision Fö2022/01177, Fö2022/01610 (in part), *Regleringsbrev för budgetåret 2023 avseende Myndigheten för totalförsvarsanalys*. The final report on the assignment is to be submitted by 30 November 2025.

reform.<sup>5</sup> In interim report 2, we will analyse in greater detail the problems and intentions forming the basis for the introduction of civil areas: see also chapter 2 and Appendix 1. In forthcoming reports on the government assignment, MTFFA will focus on the implementation of preparedness sectors, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency's role in the structure, and also an overall analysis of the implementation of the new structure.

## 1.2 Purpose and research question

The purpose of interim report 2 is to follow up and evaluate the agencies' work on implementing the civil areas. The overall question is whether the six civil areas are being established in accordance with the intentions underlying the establishment of civil areas.

Based on the information provided in the Ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas (2022:525), we examine:

- how agencies are working to establish forms for collaboration
- how agencies interact with one another
- how agencies interpret their own and others' roles and responsibilities
- the obstacles to the efficient use of resources.

### 1.2.1 Scope and interpretation of the assignment

According to the assignment, the evaluation is to be based on the Riksdag's objectives for total defence, military defence and civil defence.<sup>6</sup> The assignment shall also focus on the agencies' coordination and establishment of work under the new civil defence structure, and also on how the structure contributes to efficient use of resources in order to achieve the set goals.

MTFA has chosen to evaluate the implementation of the structure in relation to the intentions and assumptions that provided the foundation for the reform. These intentions, as well as the purpose of the structure, are in turn linked to the Riksdag's objectives. Therefore, these objectives form a general point of departure for the evaluation.

According to the government assignment, the evaluation is to focus on the coordination and establishment of the agencies. To understand this, MTFFA has examined how different actors interpret their own and others' roles and

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<sup>5</sup> Swedish Agency for Defence Analysis, *Uppföljning och utvärdering av ny struktur för civilt försvar och samhällets krisberedskap*, Interim report 1, 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Prop. 2020/21:30, p. 125, bet. 2020/21: FöU4, rskr. 2020/21:133–136.

responsibilities, as well as concepts and boundaries in the ordinances that make up the new structure.

Furthermore, the evaluation is to focus on how the structure contributes to efficient use of resources in order to attain the set goals. MTFA has therefore focused on the obstacles to the efficient use of resources in the implementation of civil areas.

Finally, the evaluation is to focus on civil defence. This is why we have not examined how the agencies work with crisis preparedness under the new structure. However, civil defence cannot be separated entirely from crisis preparedness, and so some observations related to crisis preparedness are also included in this report.

This interim report covers the period from 1 October 2022 to the spring of 2024.

### **1.3 Method and implementation**

MTFA applies a programme-theoretical approach in order to follow up and evaluate the new structure for civil defence and societal crisis preparedness. In simplified terms, this means that we evaluate our results against the intentions of the reform.

Data has mainly been collected by means of semi-structured qualitative interviews, mainly in the spring of 2024. We have interviewed representatives of all civil area administrations, 15 county administrative boards, all military regions and the Gotland Regiment P 18, as well as the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency. The selection of county administrative boards is intended to cover both larger and smaller county administrative boards in different civil areas. Four of them are county administrative boards responsible for civil areas.

We also interviewed five police regions and five regional offices of the Swedish Transport Administration. The Swedish Police Authority and the Swedish Transport Administration are central agencies that are important partners for the civil areas. We also interviewed five municipalities and four regions in order to obtain a municipal and regional perspective. About half of the interviews were conducted on site, and half online. A full list of interviews can be found in Appendix 2.

Document studies of inquiries, annual reports, meeting agendas, strategy documents and agreements have been used to complement the interviews.

Quality assurance of the report has been conducted via MTFAs internal procedures and with the support of the agency's Scientific Advisory Board. The following have been given the opportunity to fact-check chapters 1–7 of a draft report: the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, all six civil area administrations, Gotland County Administrative Board, Gävleborg County Administrative Board, Kalmar County Administrative Board, Jämtland County Administrative Board, Örebro County Administrative Board, all four military regions and the Gotland Regiment P 18.

## 1.4 Key terms in the report

The key terms used in the report are explained below. Unless otherwise stated, the definitions are taken from the Ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas (2022:525).

**Civil areas:** A division of the 21 county administrative boards into six civil areas: Northern, Central, Western, Eastern, South East and Southern.

**County administrative board responsible for a civil area:** Each civil area has a designated county administrative board responsible for it.

**Civil area head:** The county governor is the civil area head for the county administrative board responsible for the civil area.

**Civil area administration:** The civil area head is supported by a preparedness administration in the county administrative board responsible for the civil area. Preparedness administrations [Beredskapskanslierna] is the term used in the ordinance; but as several county administrative boards already had preparedness administrations, they chose to use the term civil area administration instead. This is also the term used by MTFAs in its reporting. Sometimes, we also use the term 'administration' to refer to the civil area administration.

**Civil area administration head:** Civil area administration head, directly subordinate to the civil area head.

**The LST 21 structure:** The county administrative boards are 21 agencies with a common assignment. There is no superior county administrative board, and cooperation between county administrative boards is regulated by agreements, powers of attorney, steering documents and an organisation built around county director groups and networks, such as

Försvarsdirektörsnätverket [the Defence Director Network].<sup>7</sup> LST 21 is the designation we use when the county administrative boards collaborate and deal with common issues and tasks.

**Military regions (MR):** There are four military regions in Sweden: Northern, Central, Western and Southern<sup>8</sup>. The Gotland Regiment P 18 is not a formal military region, but performs the same tasks as a military region staff unit.

**Geographical area responsibility:** Geographical area responsibility means that there is an agency within a geographical area (municipality, county, civil area and the whole country) that has to work towards orientation and coordination of measures in respect of crisis preparedness and civil defence. The aim is to ensure that all relevant actors within the area act in a coordinated manner in their preventive, preparatory and response efforts conducted within the geographical area. With the exception of the government, this responsibility does not mean that the agency responsible for geographical areas takes over responsibilities and tasks from other actors, or is able to make decisions on the activities of other agencies.<sup>9</sup>

**Table 1 Summary of geographical area responsibilities in respect of crisis preparedness and civil defence at various levels**

Level	Area	Agency	Scope
<b>Local</b>	Geographical area of municipalities	Municipalities	Civil defence and crisis preparedness
<b>Regional</b>	County	County administrative boards	Civil defence and crisis preparedness
<b>Higher regional</b>	Civil area	County administrative boards responsible for civil areas	Civil defence <sup>10</sup>
<b>National</b>	All of Sweden	Government with the support of the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency	Civil defence and crisis preparedness

<sup>7</sup> Swedish National Audit Office, *Vanans makt – regeringens styrning av länsstyrelserna* (RiR 2019:2), 2019, p. 42.

<sup>8</sup> Ordinance containing instructions for the Swedish Armed Forces (2007:1266).

<sup>9</sup> Uppsala County Administrative Board, *Länsstyrelsernas geografiska områdesansvar. Vägledning för utövande*, January 2019.

<sup>10</sup> The county administrative board responsible for civil areas has a geographical area responsibility for its area in terms of civil defence prior to and during periods of heightened preparedness, but not prior to and during peacetime crisis situations: see section 7 of the Ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas (2022:525). However, county administrative boards responsible for civil areas also have tasks in the field of crisis preparedness under sections 5 and 6 of the same ordinance.

## 1.5 Outline of the report

This introductory chapter is followed by chapter 2, where we analyse the intentions behind the introduction of civil areas.

Chapter 3 describes how the establishment of civil area administrations has been implemented.

Chapter 4 focuses on how the collaboration works between county administrative boards responsible for civil areas and county administrative boards within the civil area.

Chapter 5 focuses on the collaboration between county administrative boards responsible for civil areas and central agencies.

Chapter 6 looks at the collaboration between the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas and the Swedish Armed Forces.

Chapter 7 describes how county administrative boards responsible for civil areas are working with some of the ordinance-prescribed tasks: host nation support, overall situation reports, crisis preparedness and taking over municipal rescue services.

Our conclusions are presented in Chapter 8.

## 2. The structural reform and the intentions behind the creation of civil areas

This chapter analyses the intentions and assumptions underlying the introduction of civil areas. These provide a starting point for our follow-up and evaluation of the coordination and establishment of civil areas by the agencies under the new structure. The chapter begins with a brief description of the reform and what the introduction of civil areas involves. See also Appendix 1 for a more detailed description.

### 2.1 The structural reform in brief

The introduction of the new structure for civil defence and society's crisis preparedness is part of the ambition to strengthen Sweden's total defence. In May 2022, the government adopted new ordinances and amendments to ordinances and presented them as a structural reform of the organisation of the state.<sup>11</sup>

In concrete terms, this structural reform comprises:

- the Ordinance on the preparedness of central government agencies (2022:524) (hereinafter referred to as the Preparedness Ordinance)
- the Ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas (2022:525)
- amendments to the Ordinance on total defence and heightened preparedness (2015:1053) and the Ordinance containing instructions for the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (2008:1002), as well as a number of adjustments to the instructions of several other agencies.

In MTFAs first interim report of this government assignment, we worked on the basis of the above-mentioned ordinances and assessed that the new structure for civil defence and societal crisis preparedness includes four main elements:

- An increase in the responsibilities and tasks of central government agencies in the field of civil defence and societal crisis preparedness.

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<sup>11</sup> Ministry of Justice, Ärendeförteckning I, ärende 18, regeringssammanträde 2022-05-19; government press conference, 18 May 2022.

- Designation of certain central government agencies as preparedness agencies, categorisation of the majority of these preparedness agencies into ten different preparedness sectors, and designation of ten sector-responsible agencies.
- Geographical division of county administrative boards into six civil areas with six designated county administrative boards responsible for civil areas.
- The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) in the role of a coordinating and supporting function within the structure.<sup>12</sup>

### 2.1.1 Civil areas introduce a higher regional level

Civil areas are one of the basic elements of the new structure. In each civil area, a county administrative board is designated as the county administrative board responsible for the civil area, and the county governor in that county is also the civil area head.<sup>13</sup> The introduction of civil areas adds a new level of state administration for civil defence known as the higher regional level: see Figure 1.

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<sup>12</sup> Swedish Agency for Defence Analysis, *Uppföljning och utvärdering av ny struktur för civilt försvar och samhällets krisberedskap*, Interim report 1.

<sup>13</sup> Section 2 of the Ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas (2022:525).



**Civil areas (the county administrative board responsible for the civil area is underlined)**

The **Northern Civil Area** (Civo N) comprises the county administrative boards of Västernorrland, Jämtland, Västerbotten and Norrbottn.

The **Central Civil Area** (Civo M) comprises the county administrative boards of Uppsala, Södermanland, Västmanland, Värmland, Örebro, Dalarna and Gävleborg.

The **Eastern Civil Area** (Civo Ö) comprises the county administrative boards of Stockholm and Gotland.

The **South East Civil Area** (Civo SÖ) comprises the county administrative boards of Jönköping, Kalmar and Östergötland.

The **Western Civil Area** (Civo V) comprises the county administrative boards of Halland and Västra Götaland.

The **Southern Civil Area** (Civo S) comprises the county administrative boards of Kronoberg, Blekinge and Skåne.<sup>14</sup>

Figure 1 Map of the civil areas

The county administrative board responsible for the civil area must have a preparedness administration to support the civil area head. This preparedness administration is headed by an administration head who is directly subordinate to the civil area head.<sup>15</sup> The term 'civil area administration' will be used throughout this report, as this is how the administrations refer to themselves.

Within a civil area, the county administrative board responsible for the civil area has a geographical area responsibility in respect of civil defence prior to and during periods of heightened preparedness, but not prior to and during peacetime crises.<sup>16</sup> This means that the county administrative board responsible for the civil area essentially has a cohesive and coordinating function for civil defence within the civil area. The county administrative boards retain their geographical area responsibilities within the 21 counties. They continue to have a cohesive and coordinating function for civil defence

<sup>14</sup> Ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas (2022:525), Appendix List of civil areas.

<sup>15</sup> Section 2 of the Ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas (2022:525).

<sup>16</sup> Section 7 of the Ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas (2022:525).

and crisis preparedness for municipalities, regions and other actors in each county.<sup>17</sup>

## 2.2 Assumptions behind the introduction of civil areas and a higher regional level

If we are to evaluate the implementation of civil areas and a higher regional level, we need to understand the intentions and assumptions behind that part of the reform. As stated, the structural reform comprises two new ordinances and a series of amendments to other ordinances. There are no explanatory memoranda or other material describing the government's aims and considerations with these. However, the reform was preceded by an assignment to the Committee on Defence to perform an assessment of security policy developments and their consequences for Swedish defence and security policy. This was followed by an inquiry which was to work on the basis of the conclusions and proposals of the Committee on Defence and prepare a proposal for a new structure for responsibility, leadership and coordination in the field of civil defence. Therefore, to understand the background to and aims of the reform, we have based our study on the Committee on Defence report titled *Motståndskraft* [Resilience], the structural inquiry and the terms of reference to the structural inquiry.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Section 7 of the Ordinance on instructions for county administrative boards (2017:868); Ordinance on county administrative boards' crisis preparedness and tasks prior to and during periods of heightened preparedness (2017:870).

<sup>18</sup> Ds 2017:66, *Motståndskraft. Inriktningen av totalförsvaret och utformningen av det civila försvaret 2021–2025*; dir. 2018:79 *Ansvar, ledning och samordning inom civilt försvar*. See also prop. 2020/21:30, p. 125. Note also that the national security strategy published in 2024 clarifies the fact that the purpose of the new structure is to strengthen society's operational capability in times of war and threat of war and in peacetime crises. Skr. 2023/24:163, *Nationell säkerhetsstrategi*, 4 July 2024.

**Table 2 MTFAs interpretation of problems and assumptions behind introducing civil areas and a higher regional level**

Problem	Assumptions	Please note
The counties and county administrative boards are too small to effectively maintain coherence in preparedness planning and defence efforts.	Larger regional areas and leadership of the same provide better conditions for coordination.	
Collaboration between military and civil defence is made more difficult by the fact that the military regions need to collaborate with several county administrative boards in parallel.	Fewer county administrative boards with which the Swedish Armed Forces have to collaborate will facilitate and streamline collaboration between military and civil defence.	
Collaboration between military and civil defence is impeded by the fact that the geographical division between counties and military regions is unaligned.	The introduction of civil areas and a change in the geographical division of the military regions to match the civil areas will provide better conditions for effective leadership and coordination.	The geographical division of the military regions has not changed.
Coordination and collaboration at a regional level is impeded by the fact that agencies of particular importance for total defence do not have a corresponding regional organisation.	Collaboration within civil defence and between civil and military defence will be facilitated if central agencies that are of particular importance for total defence adapt their regional organisations to the civil areas.	The Swedish Transport Administration has adapted the division of its organisation to the civil areas. Other central agencies have not adapted their organisations.
Unclear leadership and responsibilities make it difficult to ensure coherent orientation of total defence and the effective use of civil and military resources.	The introduction of a county administrative board responsible for a civil area which is led by a civil area head in each civil area is expected to provide clearer leadership and responsibilities.	
Unclear leadership and responsibilities make it difficult to ensure coherent orientation of total defence and the effective use of civil and military resources.	Giving the civil area head a mandate to coordinate and direct defence efforts during periods of heightened preparedness, and to ensure that the area's assets are allocated and utilised in such a manner as to promote those defence efforts, will strengthen the possibilities for a coherent approach to total defence. Regulatory powers would be attached to this.	These proposals have not been incorporated into the ordinance.

Source: Ordinance (2017:870) on the county administrative boards' crisis preparedness and tasks before and during periods of heightened preparedness; Ds 2017:66, *Motståndskraft. Inriktningen av totalförsvaret och utformningen av det civila försvaret 2021–2025*, pp. 65, 98–99; SOU 2021:25, pp. 339–347; Swedish Armed Forces, *Försvarmaktens reviderade underlag inför kommande försvarsbeslut – bilaga 2*, 2023, s. 29; Swedish Armed Forces, *Remissyttrande Struktur för ökad motståndskraft (SOU 2021:25)*, p. 8; Swedish Armed Forces, *Försvarmaktens redovisning av regeringsuppdraget om att bedöma konsekvenser av åtgärdsförslagen i Försvarsberedningens rapport Kraftsamling*, p. 10. The national security strategy published in 2024 clarifies the fact that the purpose of the new structure is to strengthen society's operational capability in times of war and threat of war and in peacetime crises. Skr. 2023/24:163, *Nationell säkerhetsstrategi*, 4 July 2024.

Table 2 summarises the problems highlighted by the Committee on Defence and the structural inquiry, as well as assumptions about how these problems are intended to be resolved by introducing civil areas and a higher regional level. The assumptions behind the introduction of civil areas form a starting point for MTFA's evaluation. We have also noted when the actual structure deviates from proposals and assumptions in the structural inquiry. See Appendix 1 for a more detailed summary. The final chapter of the report discusses our empirical findings in relation to the intentions.

### 3. Establishment of the civil area administrations

This chapter focuses on the establishment of the administrations that, according to the Ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas (2022:525), have to support the civil area head (the county governor). The administration is to be headed by an administration head who is directly subordinate to the civil area head.<sup>19</sup> The chapter also describes how the administrations collaborate in order to identify common approaches.

#### 3.1 Summary observations

- The civil area administrations have been staffed at different rates, and most are still working on establishing their activities. Initially, this created different conditions for the development of the civil areas.
- The civil area administrations have worked on standardising their work by holding weekly meetings and identifying a common orientation for the administrations' activities in 2024. The aim is to ensure that the civil areas do not differ too much in terms of the interpretation and implementation of their ordinance-regulated tasks.
- The county administrative boards in some civil areas supported the civil area administrations initially by providing staff, as well as other initiatives. Overall, the Civil Protection and Preparedness and Civil Areas operational areas increased by more than 30 full-time equivalents in 2023. The civil areas account for most of that increase. Many county administrative boards have instead had a reduced number of full-time equivalents for Civil Protection and Preparedness during the same period.

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<sup>19</sup> Sections 2 and 4 of the Ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas (2022:525).

## **3.2 The establishment of civil area administrations has progressed to varying degrees and is still ongoing**

This section describes the work of county administrative boards responsible for civil areas in establishing their civil area administrations, in terms of both staffing and joint activities.

### **3.2.1 Differences in the staffing of the civil area administrations impacted the ability to start joint work**

Work on establishing the civil area administrations was essentially able to begin when the government adopted the new structure in May 2022. The six civil area administrations were launched at different rates. The differences in the recruitment situation created an imbalance between them and, according to MTFÄ, delayed the initial development of civil areas. Additionally, this meant that not all civil areas had the opportunity to participate in the meetings initially organised by MSB to clarify the allocation of roles between different actors (see also chapter 5).

When the structure was introduced in October 2022, two of the six county administrative boards responsible for civil areas had an administration head in place. The last administration head was recruited in the autumn of 2023. According to one administration, the lack of early staffing in some civil areas was due to the fact that there was a desire to have relevant initial values for what the new recruits would be working with. The administrations that were quick to recruit staff got off to an early start on efforts to identify working methods, but the uneven staffing of the administrations had an adverse impact on the joint work. One civil area administration that had a head and staff in place at an early stage indicated that not being able to work together with the other civil area administrations created a sense of frustration. It became difficult for the administration to interpret the ordinances alone and to coordinate with county administrative boards, MSB and other agencies. One consequence of this was that staff left, thereby increasing the workload for the remaining employees.<sup>20</sup>

### **3.2.2 Staffing levels continue to differ between the civil area administrations**

County administrative boards responsible for civil areas are receiving directed funding in the order of SEK 20–23 million annually for the new structure, which has resulted in a benchmark of 12 full-time equivalents per administration. The Gotland County Administrative Board has also been

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<sup>20</sup> Office of the Central Civil Area, *PM budget 2024 för Civilområdeskansliet*, no date specified.

awarded approximately SEK 4.5 million annually.<sup>21</sup> Some civil area administrations argue that these funds are insufficient for the assignment.

MTFA's summary shows that the staffing of the civil area administrations varied between 7 and 14 full-time equivalents in September 2024 (see Table 3). Overall, the number of full-time equivalents increased from just over 35 in 2023 to almost 60 in September 2024.

**Table 3 Number of full-time equivalents (FTEs) in the civil area administrations in 2023 and 2024**

County administrative boards responsible for civil areas	FTEs, 2023 (Dec.)	FTEs, 2024 (30 September 2024)
Norrbottn	4	9.5*
Skåne	6	14
Stockholm	5	7
Västra Götaland	5.5	11
County of Örebro	8.5	8**
Östergötland	7	7.5***
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>57</b>

Note: \* On 7 October 2024, the number was 10.5 full-time equivalents. Additionally, there are various functions corresponding to approximately 0.5 full-time equivalent.\*\* Includes support on loan from the county administrative boards of Dalarna, Värmland and Örebro, totalling one full-time equivalent.\*\*\* The total for 2024 is estimated to be 10.5 full-time equivalents. Security protection and document management are also included. Operational support and the time of the civil area head are not included. Source: Annual reports for each county administrative board in 2023; data from the civil area administrations on 1 October 2024, 2 October 2024 and 20 October 2024.

Besides the administration head, the staffing of the administrations is made up of coordinators and administrators. Lawyer, communications officer, functional manager and total defence developer are other functions found within the administrations to varying degrees. Some administrations receive support from the county administrative board responsible for the civil area

<sup>21</sup> Government decision Fi2023/02869, Fi2023/02993, *Regleringsbrev för budgetåret 2023 avseende länsstyrelserna*, Appendix 3 Fördelning av medel 2023\_rev; government decision Fi2023/00435 et al., *Regleringsbrev för budgetåret 2024 avseende länsstyrelserna*, Appendix 3 Fördelning av medel 2024.

in terms of communication and legal matters. The administrations share administrative functions such as HR, registers and archives with the county administrative board responsible for the civil area. Resources such as communications security systems and security protection are also shared.

### **3.2.3 The civil area administrations have produced a common orientation for their activities**

The ambition of the civil area administrations is to coordinate and standardise work amongst themselves. One example of this is the way in which they attempted to recruit similar categories of staff, even if the division of labour is not exactly the same at the different administrations. The civil district administrations describe effective cooperation, with close collaboration in the form of weekly meetings.

Working on behalf of the Heads of Civil Areas, the Heads of Administration have produced a common orientation for the activities of the civil area administrations in 2024. The priority objectives include clarifying the responsibilities, roles and mandates for the civil area head and the county administrative board responsible for the civil area. The orientation indicates that the following areas – in accordance with the ordinance-prescribed tasks – should be developed consistently for all civil area administrations:

- planning with the sectors
- planning with the Swedish Armed Forces, by military region and nationally
- host nation support (support to the Swedish Armed Forces and civil host nation support)
- overall situation reports
- capability assessment and material for orientation and prioritisation
- war organisation, rescue service and exercise and training plan.

The orientation also identifies eleven joint actions and activities within the above-mentioned areas that are to be implemented in 2024.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> County Administrative Boards, *Inriktning för civilområdeskansliernas verksamhet 2024*, 9 November 2023.

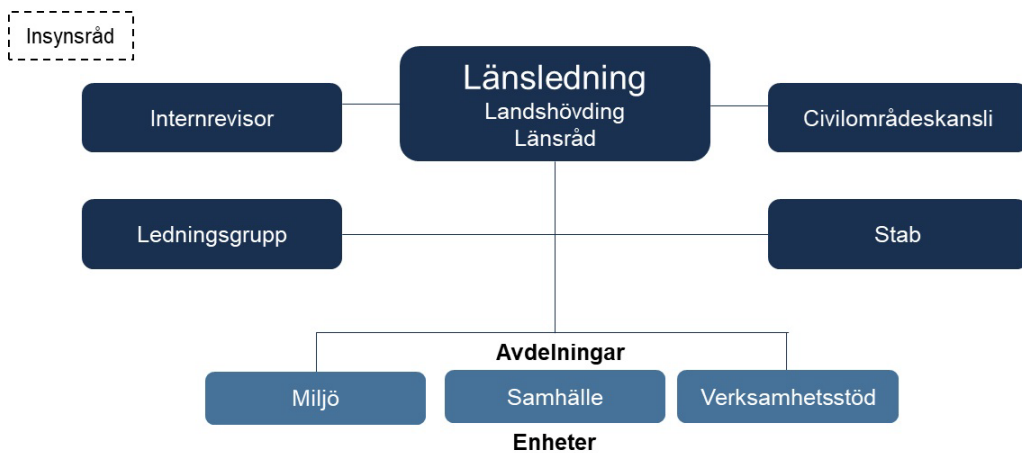
### 3.3 The civil area administrations make up a small part of the county administrative boards' work on civil protection and preparedness

This section describes how the staffing of the administrations relates to the county administrative boards' Civil Protection and Preparedness operational area.

#### 3.3.1 The civil area administrations account for most of the increase in the area of civil protection and preparedness at the county administrative boards

Figure 2 shows the organisation of a county administrative board responsible for a civil area. In most cases, the preparedness function at the county administrative boards is located at a unit for Civil Protection and Preparedness under the Social Affairs Division (or equivalent). The civil area administrations are based at the same buildings as the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas, but on separate premises to which employees of the county administrative board do not otherwise have access.

Figure 2 Organisation chart of a county administrative board responsible for a civil area



Source: Slightly revised from Norrbotten County Administrative Board, 'Organisationsschema 2024', accessed on 18 October 2024.

In 2023, the number of full-time equivalents for the Civil Protection and Preparedness operational area varied from about 40 at the Stockholm County Administrative Board to about 8 at the Södermanland County Administrative Board.<sup>23</sup> Some county administrative boards argue that these

<sup>23</sup> Excluding the Civil Areas operational activity. MTFAs review of the county administrative boards' annual reports for 2023.

differences in resources create an imbalance that adversely affects the quality of activities throughout the entire civil area.

In 2023, all 21 county administrative boards reported a total of 396 full-time equivalents for the Civil Protection and Preparedness and Civil Areas operational areas. Of these, 38 – or just under 10 per cent – belong to the Civil Areas operational area. The civil area administrations are therefore a small part of the Civil Protection and Preparedness operational area.<sup>24</sup>

When merging the Civil Protection and Preparedness and Civil Areas operational areas, there was an increase of just over 30 full-time equivalents in 2023 compared with 2022 for all 21 county administrative boards. The civil areas account for most of that increase.

**Table 4 The county administrative boards' reported full-time equivalents for the Civil Protection and Preparedness and Civil Areas operational areas for the period 2021–2023**

Full-time equivalents for Civil Protection and Preparedness (VÄS 45) and Civil Areas (VÄS 46) <sup>25</sup>					
	2021□ (before civil areas)	2022		2023	
	Civil protection and preparedness	Civil protection and preparedness	Civil area	Civil protection and preparedness	Civil area
<b>County administrative boards responsible for civil areas</b>	141	159	1.5	147	36
<b>Other□ county administrative boards</b>	224	205	0	210	2
<b>Total</b>	365	363	1.5	358	38

<sup>24</sup> This percentage may change for 2024, but MTFAs has made no such forecast.

<sup>25</sup> The Civil Protection and Preparedness operational area covers protection against accidents, crisis preparedness and civil defence, as well as total defence. According to the county administrative board's joint operational and case structure (VÄS), the Civil Protection and Preparedness operational area is designated VÄS 45 and the Civil Areas operational area is designated VÄS 46. Key performance indicators for the Civil Areas operational area are presented separately in the 2022 annual reports. In the annual reports for 2023, the reporting of key performance indicators has been merged with the Civil Protection and Preparedness area. However, operating costs and full-time equivalents continue to be reported separately for each operational area (VÄS 45 and VÄS 46).

Source: Annual reports for each county administrative board for 2021, 2022 and 2023.<sup>26</sup>

For several county administrative boards, the number of full-time equivalents in the Civil Protection and Preparedness area has decreased in 2023. Table 4 shows that compared with 2022, the Civil Protection and Preparedness operational area was reduced by 5 full-time equivalents across all county administrative boards in 2023, and by 12 full-time equivalents at county administrative boards responsible for civil areas. The total increase for other county administrative boards was 5 in the same period.<sup>27</sup>

The civil area administrations have recruited staff from the county administrative boards to varying degrees. Recruitment has also taken place from municipalities in some cases. Several county administrative boards state that they compete with one another and with other agencies for the same type of expertise, which has made it even more difficult to replace staff who leave. There has also been a high level of staff turnover among preparedness directors at the county administrative boards. The challenges presented by high staff turnover in the field of crisis preparedness and civil defence at the county administrative boards are not new<sup>28</sup>, but they have become more relevant given the ongoing growth of total defence.

### 3.3.2 The civil area administrations need resources and expertise from the county administrative boards

Employees at other county administrative boards within the civil area sometimes work on issues common to the civil area in order to assist the administrations when they do not have the expertise they need. Some county administrative boards responsible for civil areas and other county administrative boards argue that this is a positive aspect, because expertise is then distributed throughout the civil area instead of being concentrated within individual county administrative boards. They feel that this could also help civil area administrations and county administrative boards to develop at the same pace and establish a sense among employees that they are part of

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<sup>26</sup> MTFAs notes that the county administrative boards included in the 'other county administrative boards' category report in different ways. Five out of 15 county administrative boards report full-time equivalents (and operating costs) under the Civil Areas area for 2023. Others do not. The fact that the county administrative boards do not report in the same way makes comparisons and follow-up difficult.

<sup>27</sup> In five of the other county administrative boards, the total reduction was five full-time equivalents between 2022 and 2023: The county administrative boards of Gävleborg, Halland, Jönköping, Kronoberg and Södermanland.

<sup>28</sup> See, for example, the Swedish National Audit Office, *Länsstyrelsernas krisberedskapsarbete. Skydd mot olyckor, krisberedskap och civilt försvar* (RiR 2015:18), 2015, Appendix 5. *Iakttagelser om personal och kompetens*, p. 3.

a civil area. At the same time, one civil area administration expresses concern that it may be more difficult to maintain coherent operations if employees are based at several different county administrative boards within the civil area. Another civil area administration argues that such an approach would require specific planning in terms of how to deal with record keeping and handle encrypted documents, for example.

In an initial phase, some county administrative boards supported the establishment of the civil area administrations by providing staff before the administrations recruited their own staff. For instance, county administrative boards took over certain tasks and trained new employees at the administrations on how county administrative boards function. Many county administrative boards describe it as essential that the staff at the administration understand how the county administrative boards are governed so that they can perform their tasks.

## 4. Collaboration between county administrative boards responsible for civil areas and other county administrative boards

This chapter describes the collaboration between county administrative boards responsible for civil areas and the county administrative boards as specified in the Ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas (2022:525). We describe how collaborative structures have been established and how collaboration works. In particular, we describe how county administrative boards responsible for civil areas and county administrative boards work to distribute tasks amongst themselves.

### 4.1 Summary observations

- In 2023, county administrative boards responsible for civil areas focused on establishing procedures and plans for collaboration. They produced a structure for collaboration with the county administrative boards within the civil area. Extended collaborative structures have also been created that include military regions, police regions, the Swedish Transport Administration and other relevant regional actors. Work has begun within the joint working groups of the collaborative structure. Specific planning work in the new structure began in 2024.
- The introduction of civil areas has created uncertainty regarding the allocation of responsibilities between county administrative boards responsible for civil areas and other county administrative boards. Several county administrative boards argue that the mandate for county administrative boards responsible for civil areas is unclear, thereby leading to a need to interpret the ordinances.
- This lack of clarity has led to aspects such as the county administrative boards perceiving a need to clarify the collaboration between the 21 county administrative boards and the civil area structure.
- The county administrative boards state that their workload has increased, partly because more meetings are being held.

## 4.2 County administrative boards responsible for civil areas have established procedures and plans for collaboration

This section describes the new structure, focusing on collaboration between county administrative boards responsible for civil areas and county administrative boards.

### 4.2.1 County administrative boards responsible for civil areas have developed a joint collaborative structure

The new level of administration has created a need to find new forms of collaboration. The six county administrative boards responsible for civil areas have developed a joint collaborative structure. As shown in Table 5, collaboration between a county administrative board responsible for a civil area and other county administrative boards within the civil area takes place in what are known as the Civil Area Forum and the Civil Area Forum. There is also extended collaboration within the civil area – the Total Defence Council and the Total Defence Forum – which includes more actors such as the Swedish Armed Forces and police regions. Each civil area administration participates in civil area joint working groups that interact with the preparedness sectors, for example, and with LST 21, in instances where the county administrative boards are part of the preparedness sector. There are also various working groups within each civil area where collaboration takes place with various actors within the civil area.

Table 5 Joint collaborative structure for the civil areas

Level	Every civil area	Extended collaboration within the civil area
<b>Heads of agencies</b> □ <i>Council</i>	<b>Civil Area Forum</b> □ County governors and county directors within the civil area.	<b>Total defence council</b> Civil area head, military region head, county governors, county directors, heads of police regions, senior manager for other relevant regional actors. The civil area head and the military region head can adapt participation in consultation.
<b>Operational managers</b> □ <i>Forum</i>	<b>Civil Area Forum</b> □ Administration head, defence and preparedness directors or equivalent. Deputy or substitute as agreed within the group.	<b>Total Defence Forum</b> □ Administration head, defence and preparedness directors, representative from military region, police regions and operational managers for other relevant actors, as required.

Administrators <input type="checkbox"/> Working groups	Working groups	Working groups
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Source: Central Civil Area, *Tillsammans stärker vi det civila försvaret. Sveriges sex civilområden*, 20 February 2024; Northern Civil Area. *Välkommen till Norra Civilområdet – presentation för MTEA*, undated PowerPoint presentation, received on 22 March 2024.

Thus, formalised collaboration between the county administrative board responsible for the civil area and the county administrative boards takes place at different levels. Meetings of the Civil Area Forum and Civil Area Forum take place once a month. We have seen examples of county administrative boards receiving compensation for their participation in joint activities within the civil area in some cases on account of financial agreements corresponding to two full-time equivalents.<sup>29</sup>

According to several county administrative boards, efforts to develop the new collaborative structure for the civil areas has led to some cross-county collaboration coming to a standstill. In the spring of 2024, work began to get underway in several of the civil area joint working groups.<sup>30</sup>

#### 4.2.2 Interpreting the meaning of the ordinances has taken time

Both county administrative boards and civil area administrations report that the time since the introduction of a higher regional level has been characterised by the administrations seeking to identify their roles, both amongst themselves and in relation to the county administrative boards. One county administrative board reports that the ordinances leave plenty of scope for interpretation and there is therefore a need for the actors concerned to discuss the boundaries for roles and responsibilities. This has taken time and contrasts with the government’s message that civil defence should be established quickly.

Several county administrative boards argue that the interpretation of the ordinances is made more difficult by the fact that they have not been worded entirely in accordance with the structural inquiry’s proposals. There is also a lack of explanatory memoranda or other guidance on them. We have seen examples where the civil area administrations initially spent time

<sup>29</sup> For 2024, the Northern Civil Area has signed agreements for reimbursement of up to SEK 450,000 per county, which can cover salary costs, travel costs and other operational costs. County Administrative Boards Northern Civil Area, ‘*Överenskommelse*’, 23 May 2024.

<sup>30</sup> The civil area joint working groups convened by the administrations include: Planning Orientation, Training and Exercises, Support Function for County Administrative Boards in the Event of Serious Societal Disruptions, Host Nation Support, Support to the Swedish Armed Forces, Security Protection and Communications Security, and Situation Reports.

interpreting the ordinances with the assistance of the structural inquiry. The aim of this was to articulate the main tasks of the administration. One of the administrations that had an administration head in place at an early stage describes how a check was performed, in collaboration with the defence and preparedness directors, to find out whether the interpretations were reasonable. Sections 5 and 6 of the ordinance in particular gave rise to discussions, as these are tasks that the county administrative boards also have and so it may be more difficult to agree on interpretations.<sup>31</sup>

Our interviews revealed that there is a perception that the mandate for the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas is worded vaguely in the ordinance. Several county administrative boards argue that during periods of heightened preparedness and war, there may be problems if the vague mandate prevents county administrative boards responsible for civil areas from being able to set clear priorities.

MTFA notes that the terms civil area, civil area administration, county administrative board responsible for a civil area and ‘civo’ are used with slightly different meanings, but that it is not clear what is meant. For instance, it is unclear whether ‘county administrative board responsible for a civil area’ also refers to the county administrative board in its regular role, or just to the civil area administration. It is also unclear whether ‘civo’ refers to the administration, the county administrative board responsible for the civil area, or the civil area in its entirety.

### **4.3 The allocation of roles and responsibilities between county administrative boards responsible for civil areas and the county administrative boards is not always clear**

This section describes how the civil area administrations and the 21 county administrative boards’ collaborative structure (the LST 21 structure) work to divide the work between themselves.

#### **4.3.1 It will take time to identify which issues should be handled by the LST 21 structure and the civil area structure**

Work on categorising issues between the LST 21 structure and the new civil area structure is ongoing both within the civil areas and at a national level.

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<sup>31</sup> County Administrative Boards, Central Civil Area, *Kansliets uppgifter, främst kopplat till paragrafernas 5 och 6 i förordningen*, memorandum, 3 April 2023; County Administrative Boards, Central Civil Area, *Kansliets uppgifter, främst kopplat till paragrafernas 8, 9 och 10 i förordningen*, memorandum, 7 August 2023.

The 21 county administrative boards have extensive experience of agency collaboration as they are separate agencies with no superior county administrative board. The network of defence directors, which comprises the defence directors of the 21 county administrative boards, believes that the introduction of the reform has made the network's job less clear.<sup>32</sup> The civil area administrations also believe that difficulties in categorising issues and responsibilities have impeded joint work.

The heads of the civil area administrations meet regularly with the network of defence directors in order to avoid duplication of work and reduce the risk of friction between civil area administrations and other county administrative boards. The network discusses the allocation of roles, and its preparedness groups sort out what should continue to be handled by LST 21 and what should be handled at civil area level.

The lack of clarity has led to aspects such as the county administrative boards perceiving a need to clarify the collaboration between the LST 21 structure and the civil area structure. A joint guideline was adopted in May 2024 which proposed how coordination could take place between these two collaborative structures, issues for which collaboration should be implemented, and within which structure.<sup>33</sup> Both the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas and the county administrative boards argue that even with adopted guidance, there will always be issues that fall into borderline areas or are initially allocated incorrectly. Moreover, there is a perception that the guidance is not formulated in a manner that can resolve all boundary issues; rather, specific cases are required in order to determine the appropriate allocation.

MSB shares the view that it is not always clear how issues should be categorised between county administrative boards responsible for civil areas and the county administrative boards. The agency explains that this uncertainty means that it chooses to invite both the county administrative board and the civil area administration to certain meetings so as to ensure that all relevant actors are reached.

MTFA observes that county administrative boards responsible for civil areas face a particular challenge in that the county governor has to coordinate civil

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<sup>32</sup> All county administrative boards have a defence director or equivalent who is head of the Civil Protection and Preparedness unit or equivalent. Thus, there are 21 defence directors who together make up the network of defence directors.

<sup>33</sup> County Administrative Boards, *Riktlinje för samverkan mellan länsstyrelserna inom civilt försvar*, 29 May 2024.

defence within the county and also, as civil area head, coordinate civil defence within the civil area. As a county governor and civil area head, there is a need to be able to represent both the county administrative board and the civil area. MTFAs notes that these two perspectives are not always aligned.<sup>34</sup>

Furthermore, it has been common for consultation documents or invitations to be sent without a clear recipient. The lack of clarity means additional work for the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas, as they need to spend time clarifying which level has to address an issue. This is done through frequent coordination between the civil area administration and the preparedness unit (or equivalent) of the county administrative board responsible for the civil area. Regular meetings also take place with the county leadership.

#### 4.3.2 Civil areas can highlight the regional perspective

MSB and several county administrative boards argue that the introduction of civil areas may strengthen regional perspectives at a national level. The regional perspective can be strengthened by having the civil area administrations coordinate documentation and positions within each civil area; as opposed to if a document is prepared jointly by all county administrative boards, as has often been the case in the past.

MSB has increasingly begun to ask for coordinated responses from the civil areas in order to give the civil area administrations a clearer role. However, one civil area administration reports that delivering responses that are common to the civil areas can involve duplication of work, as both the county administrative boards and the civil area administrations produce responses that are then processed together. This is partly because it has been difficult to date to standardise the working methods applied within LST 21 with new ways of coordinating within each civil area.

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<sup>34</sup> See, for example, the County Administrative Boards, Northern Civil Area, *Redovisning av regeringsuppdraget om att bedöma konsekvenser av åtgärdsförslagen i Försvarsberedningens rapport Kraftsamlings*, 6 March 2024. Here, for example, there are proposals that are supported by the county administrative board responsible for the Northern Civil Area but rejected by the county administrative boards of Norrbotten and Västerbotten: see p. 23.

#### **4.3.3 Many county administrative boards report that their workload has increased since the new structure was introduced**

The overall perception among the county administrative boards is that the workload has increased since the new structure was introduced, due to the increased scope of their civil defence work, but also because the new structure creates extra work. Collaboration within the framework of LST 21 is continuing as before, while collaboration at a higher regional level with the county administrative board responsible for the civil area has been added.

The number of meetings at different levels has increased. Besides participation in the various meetings, it takes time to prepare issues internally at the county administrative boards prior to the meetings, and it takes time to work out which issues should be addressed in which forums, and how.

The preparedness function at a county administrative board responsible for a civil area describes how it is forced to deprioritise elements of its own operational planning when the civil area administration presents its planning at a late stage. For this reason, the operational planning of the preparedness function in question is continuously changing, which has a negative impact on planning conditions. The county administrative boards also state that the requirements for reporting have increased, including situation reports. According to some county administrative boards, doing a lot of parallel work risks impacting the quality of reporting.

Several county administrative boards state that in the long run, they can see how there may be advantages in having a civil area administration that relieves the burden on them, which may thus strengthen the work of the county administrative board. One county administrative board perceives a positive development since the civil area administration took over responsibility for leading some joint working groups. It is argued that it is easier to maintain coherence in the work when specifically designated individuals are responsible for it, rather than having staff to carry out this work alongside their regular duties.

#### **4.3.4 The county administrative boards are calling for more coordinated steering from the government**

Some county administrative boards perceive a need for more coordinated steering on the part of the government. The county administrative boards report to the Ministry of Finance, but many of the initiatives come from the Ministry of Defence or other ministries. Central government agencies such as MSB are sometimes assigned tasks that require consultation with county

administrative boards. Such assignments are not visible, and so no resources are provided to the county administrative boards. However, it imposes a workload on the county administrative boards as their participation is expected.<sup>35</sup> The resources invested by agencies and other actors in issues related to total defence is not transparent either. As pointed out previously by the Committee on Defence and others, it is difficult to obtain an overall view of funding for civil defence, partly due to the fact that funding is spread across a large number of expenditure areas. Another reason is that the additional allocations have occurred at different times, and for different periods of time. The fact that it is difficult to obtain an overview of the funding also makes it difficult to follow up the results of the allocated funds.<sup>36</sup>

#### 4.3.5 Municipalities and regions mostly liaise with the county administrative boards in the civil area

Regions and municipalities play an important role in national defence. They are not specifically referred to in the ordinance for county administrative boards responsible for civil areas. However, several of the regions we interviewed would like to see greater collaboration with the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas. Several civil area administrations also argue that there is a need to collaborate with the regions, and that appropriate forms for such collaboration must be developed.

The Southern Civil Area has set up a forum for dialogue with the regions and the six largest municipalities. Participation takes place at municipal and regional director level. The aim is to create support and legitimacy among major actors.

Several municipalities feel that the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas have not identified their role as yet. Our interviews with the preparedness function or equivalent in five municipalities<sup>37</sup> show that they generally have little contact with the county administrative board responsible for the civil area. As before, contact takes place via the county administrative board, which is also in accordance with how collaboration is intended to

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<sup>35</sup> This problem is already known; see, for example, Swedish National Audit Office, *Vanans makt – regeringens styrning av länsstyrelserna* (RiR 2019:2), 2019, p. 21.

<sup>36</sup> Ds 2023:34, *Kraftsamlång. Inriktningen av totalförsvaret och utformningen av det civila försvaret*, p. 328. See also Swedish Agency for Defence Analysis, *Att förbereda utvärdering av kommande försvarsbeslut. Avrapportering av regeringsuppdrag*, 2024, p. 3.

<sup>37</sup> All but one of these municipalities are in the same city as the county administrative board responsible for the civil area.

take place under the ordinances. Protecting the municipalities from requests directly from agencies is also viewed as an important task by several county administrative boards, as there is otherwise a risk that they will be overloaded. For instance, one county administrative board describes how it summarised various requests and then sent out a single request to the municipalities.

## 5. Collaboration between county administrative boards responsible for civil areas and central government agencies

This chapter describes the collaboration between county administrative boards responsible for civil areas and central government agencies. County administrative boards responsible for civil areas must take the initiative to coordinate planning between central government agencies and between these central government agencies and the Swedish Armed Forces, and coordinate civil defence measures during periods of heightened preparedness within the civil area.<sup>38</sup>

### 5.1 Summary observations

- MSB's national meeting structure has created the conditions for clarifying the allocation of roles and establishing cooperation between the agencies in the new structure.
- The civil area administrations have standardised their organisations and created working groups for each sector with a view to facilitating contact between the preparedness sectors and the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas.
- The preparedness sectors are at different phases, which is affecting the amount of progress made with the joint work.
- Many questions about the allocation of roles and responsibilities and the interpretation of the ordinances arise at the point of intersection between geographical area responsibility and the responsibility that follows from the division into preparedness sectors.

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<sup>38</sup> Section 8 and 9 of the Ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas (2022:525).

## 5.2 The agencies have built structures for collaboration between different levels of administration

This section describes the forums and structures created by MSB and the civil area administrations in order to facilitate collaboration between agencies and levels of administration.

### 5.2.1 MSB has established councils and forums for collaboration

When the new structure came into force, MSB established a civil preparedness council and created a meeting structure for sector-responsible agencies, preparedness agencies, county administrative boards responsible for civil areas and other county administrative boards. The aim is to focus, develop and follow up on common issues. Besides the council, a number of other forums exist to support the development of civil preparedness.<sup>39</sup>

The civil area administrations report that efforts were mainly made within MSB's forums to understand the point of intersection between the civil areas and the preparedness sectors in the initial period following the introduction of the structure. According to some civil area administrations, the focus of work within MSB's meeting structures has subsequently shifted. Increasingly, discussions concern difficult trade-offs and ambiguities, as well as driving preparedness planning between county administrative boards responsible for civil areas and the preparedness sectors. According to the administrations, the meeting structure has paved the way for clarifying allocation of roles and establishing collaboration. The administrations argue that there is still a need for a coordinating body for the structure at a national level. However, one challenge involves striking a balance between meeting to resolve common issues on the one hand, and creating space for their own work on the other.

### 5.2.2 The civil area administrations coordinate joint working groups for each sector

The administrations have standardised their organisation and created joint working groups for each preparedness sector in order to simplify and

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<sup>39</sup> Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, *Beskrivningar av forum med relation till det civila beredskapsrådet*, 26 March 2024.

streamline contact between the civil areas and preparedness sectors.<sup>40</sup> One staff member per administration holds primary responsibility for issues related to a particular sector and participates in the joint working groups for that sector. This normally provides a single point of contact between a preparedness sector and the civil areas, instead of six separate points of contact. However, if a sector-responsible agency has an issue that is clearly geographically delimited, contact should be made directly with the relevant county administrative board(s) responsible for the civil area.

### **5.2.3 The sectors have made different amounts of progress, which affects the administrations' efforts to coordinate planning**

According to the administrations, the work of the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas in coordinating planning between central government agencies is impacted by the amount of progress made in establishing the preparedness sectors. Some sectors are still primarily engaged with organising themselves internally. Much of the contact with civil areas then involves identifying appropriate meeting forms and determining which issues should be addressed jointly. Specific planning has begun with other sectors.

The civil area administrations report that work with the sectors is progressing, although different sectors are at different stages and so working methods need to be adjusted on an ongoing basis. Several interviewees emphasise that specific tasks and planning help to drive the work forward. The Swedish Transport Administration and the National Board of Health and Welfare are highlighted as examples of sector-responsible agencies for sectors where planning is beginning to take concrete shape. The administrations emphasise the fact that there may be a need to adapt working methods to the specific characteristics of each sector. Working groups that have made less progress can also learn from groups that are more advanced.

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<sup>40</sup> There are ten preparedness sectors and sector-responsible agencies: Health, Care and Welfare (National Board of Health and Welfare); Food Supply and Drinking Water (Swedish Food Agency); Security, Law and Order (Swedish Police Authority); Rescue Services and Civil Protection (MSB); Transport (Swedish Transport Administration); Economic Security (Swedish Social Insurance Agency); Electronic Communications and Postal Services (Swedish Post and Telecom Authority); Energy Supply (Swedish Energy Agency); Financial Services (Swedish Financial Supervisory Authority); Provision of Core Data (Swedish Tax Agency).

#### **5.2.4 The civil area administrations do not believe that their resources will suffice when the sectors are fully operational**

The civil area administrations consider that they currently have sufficient resources allowing them to work with the preparedness sectors, but that it may become more difficult to meet the sectors' needs in the long term. Thus, the administrations perceive that most preparedness sectors are in a phase focused mainly on internal organisation. Therefore, there is concern that the resources of both the civil area administrations and other county administrative boards will be insufficient to meet the needs of the preparedness sectors when they are fully operational. Several interviewees also highlight the fact that the burden on the municipalities is also expected to increase when the preparedness sectors are fully established.

### **5.3 The agencies are working together to interpret the allocation of responsibilities and roles in the ordinances**

This section sets out some of the issues related to the allocation of responsibilities and roles that have proven more challenging to resolve.

#### **5.3.1 Overlapping coordination responsibilities render the allocation of roles unclear**

There are different interpretations of how the geographical area responsibilities of county administrative boards responsible for civil areas are to be reconciled with the sector-responsible agencies' coordination responsibilities for the preparedness sectors. A common view among interviewees is that there is overlap between the coordination responsibilities of county administrative boards responsible for civil areas and the coordination responsibilities of sector-responsible agencies in the ordinances.<sup>41</sup> In several interviews, this was highlighted as one of the most difficult issues to resolve in the new structure. According to the administrations, some sector-responsible agencies limit their role to the central level and have indicated that they are unable to participate in the

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<sup>41</sup> According to section 8 of the Ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas (2022:525), county administrative boards responsible for civil areas are to take the initiative to coordinate planning between central government agencies, and between central government agencies and the Swedish Armed Forces. However, according to section 24 of the Ordinance on the preparedness of central government agencies (2022:524), sector-responsible agencies must ensure that the measures undertaken by the preparedness agencies are coordinated with the measures undertaken by other preparedness agencies, including county administrative boards and county administrative boards responsible for civil areas, as well as the Swedish Armed Forces.

preparedness planning being carried out by county administrative boards responsible for civil areas. However, other sector-responsible agencies are taking the initiative to coordinate actors at a higher regional level. One concern raised in a number of interviews is that confusion and duplication of work may occur if both sector-responsible agencies and county administrative boards responsible for civil areas take the initiative for coordination. Similarly, if central government agencies are unable to be involved in the work being done by the administrations at a higher regional level, this is problematic.<sup>42</sup>

### **5.3.2 The allocation of roles is made more complex by the fact that county administrative boards are preparedness agencies**

The county administrative boards are preparedness agencies and agencies responsible for geographical areas.<sup>43</sup> The interviews show that this may complicate communication channels and the allocation of roles between civil area administrations and county administrative boards.

There is consensus among the administrations and other county administrative boards that county administrative boards responsible for civil areas should function as a link between county administrative boards and preparedness sectors. However, there are differing views on how communication with individual preparedness agencies should be organised.

One view is that the administrations should also serve as a point of contact for individual preparedness agencies. This view is based on the fact that the Ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas states that county administrative boards responsible for civil areas are tasked with coordinating planning between central government agencies within the civil area.<sup>44</sup> The administrations have therefore regarded it as their role to liaise with individual preparedness agencies and coordinate matters with the county administrative boards within the respective civil areas.

Another view regarding who should deal with contact with individual preparedness agencies is based on the fact that the Preparedness Ordinance

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<sup>42</sup> MTFFA will focus on preparedness sectors in the forthcoming interim report on the present government assignment, and intends to return to the issue.

<sup>43</sup> See sections 7 and 7 b of the Ordinance on instructions for county administrative boards (2017:868).

<sup>44</sup> Section 8 of the Ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas (2022:525).

states that preparedness agencies should collaborate with one another.<sup>45</sup> As the county administrative boards are themselves preparedness agencies, therefore, one view is that contact with individual preparedness agencies should be handled by the county administrative boards, and not the civil area administrations.

According to one administration, the differing perceptions complicate the allocation of roles between administrations and other county administrative boards, which may result in duplication of work. This is particularly complex if the capacity in which the central government agency is acting is unclear. For instance, it is not always clear whether a sector-responsible agency is making contact as a representative of a preparedness sector, or in its capacity as a preparedness agency. There have been instances in which requests from a preparedness agency have been prepared both by civil area administrations and within the LST 21 structure due to uncertainty regarding the role in which the agency made contact.

The guidance for collaboration between county administrative boards in the field of civil defence, which was adopted in May 2024, indicates that the issue has been resolved in part. The guidance clarifies that collaboration with preparedness agencies takes place via the LST 21 structure and that collaboration with sector-responsible agencies regarding civil defence issues takes place with the civil area administrations. However, there is a perception that the guidance is blunt in nature and that the allocation of responsibilities is facilitated when actors work jointly on specific issues.

### **5.3.3 The fact that the county administrative boards are included in two preparedness sectors affects the administrations' contact with these sectors**

According to the interviews, a further issue regarding the allocation of roles related to the contact channels with the preparedness sectors in which the county administrative boards are represented. The county administrative boards are part of the sectors *Rescue Services and Civil Protection* and *Food Supply and Drinking Water*, respectively, and have a joint representative who represents all county administrative boards in each sector. Views have differed on whether information from these sectors should be shared by the county administrative board representatives with the other county administrative boards, or whether information should be transferred via the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas.

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<sup>45</sup> Section 10 of the Ordinance on the preparedness of central government agencies (2022:524).

This issue has been included in the development work carried out by the county administrative boards together with the civil area administrations. The issue is addressed in the guidance for collaboration between county administrative boards in the field of civil defence, which was adopted in May 2024. The guidance states that issues raised within the framework of the preparedness sectors which include the county administrative boards should be coordinated internally and externally<sup>46</sup> via the LST 21 structure.<sup>47</sup> That said, there is a view that it is difficult to create theoretical principles that are applicable in all situations, and that it may be easier to resolve specific individual cases.

#### **5.3.4 Some central government agencies are not used to having a geographical perspective on activities and responsibilities**

Some agencies are not used to having a geographical perspective on their activities, which has impacted their contact with the civil area administrations. The centralisation of central government agencies that has taken place in recent decades means that only the county administrative boards are regional central government agencies at the present time. Many agencies have a central organisation, while others, such as the Swedish Police Authority and the Swedish Transport Administration, have an organisation with geographical divisions. According to the civil area administrations, some central government agencies without a geographical division are not used to seeing the geographical context of their activities and structuring information on the basis of aspects of regional relevance. According to the administrations, some agencies state that they operate solely at a national level and have no knowledge of regional conditions. However, these agencies may be aware of the location of societally vital activities. In these cases, the administrations need to help the agencies to understand that such information has regional relevance.

A related problem identified by some administrations is that some agencies have been unclear on the meaning of geographical area responsibility. This has meant that some central government agencies were initially reluctant to share information with the administrations, as it was not clear to them that county administrative boards responsible for civil areas need to identify

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<sup>46</sup> The LST 21 structure coordinates externally with the sector-responsible agencies (MSB and the Swedish Food Agency) in the two sectors in question.

<sup>47</sup> County Administrative Boards, *Riktlinje för samverkan mellan länsstyrelserna inom civilt försvar*, 29 May 2024.

societally vital activities within the civil area as part of their geographical area responsibility.

### **5.3.5 Several geographical divisions in the field of civil defence**

At a central level, several agencies play a critical role in total defence, including the Swedish Transport Administration and the Swedish Police Authority.

To date, the Swedish Transport Administration is the only sector-responsible agency that has decided to apply its sectoral responsibility at a regional level. This is still at an early stage. As of 1 January 2024, the Swedish Transport Administration has adapted its regional division to the civil areas. The new division meant that some of the planning work had to be redone, as the geographical areas were not designed around the Swedish Transport Administration's activities. The agency emphasises the importance of harmonising work between regions so that the steering measures from the national level are not interpreted differently, and so that their working methods do not differ too widely. The Swedish Transport Administration participates only in the councils for the Western and Northern Civil Areas, not in all total defence councils within the civil areas. In other civil areas, therefore, collaboration between civil area administrations and the Swedish Transport Administration is limited.

The Swedish Police Authority has maintained its regional division and has chosen not to exercise its sectoral responsibilities at a regional level at the present time. The agency is divided into seven police regions, which differ from the divisions used for the civil areas and military regions. The police regions report that they participate in a large number of meeting forums. Besides the total defence council, there are also other regional collaborations for situation reports and incident reporting, including county administrative boards, military regions, the Coast Guard, Swedish Customs and several police regions, for example. One police region reports that they need to interact with three different civil areas. Besides the geographical division, the boundaries are not always clear with regard to which civil defence-related issues should be handled at a national level or at a regional level within the Swedish Police Authority.

## 6. Collaboration with the Swedish Armed Forces

This chapter is based on the tasks of county administrative boards responsible for civil areas prior to and during periods of heightened preparedness in accordance with sections 8 and 9 of the Ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas (2022:525). Particular attention is paid to the collaboration and planning carried out with the Swedish Armed Forces within the civil areas.

### 6.1 Summary observations

- The county administrative boards responsible for civil areas collaborate with the Swedish Armed Forces at both regional and national level. Both civil area administrations and military regions describe generally effective collaboration, although there are challenges in some civil areas.
- The county administrative boards are still the military regions' most important partners. The military regions are in favour of the introduction of civil areas, but consider that the civil area administrations have an unclear and weak mandate in relation to the county administrative boards, which has delayed their establishment.
- Collaboration is complicated – but not prevented – by differences in the geographical divisions between civil areas and military regions. These problems are most pronounced for the Central and Eastern Civil Areas, both of which have to deal with several military regions. Conditions differ so widely for the two county administrative boards in the Eastern Civil Area that certain challenges are encountered in their joint work.

### 6.2 Civil area administrations and the Swedish Armed Forces collaborate at both national and higher regional levels

This section describes how collaboration between the six civil areas and the four military regions, as well as the Gotland Regiment P 18, takes place at a higher regional level within each civil area. Collaboration also takes place at a national level.

### 6.2.1 The civil area administrations and the military regions report generally effective collaboration

The civil area administrations and the military regions report that collaboration works well in most cases, and that the relationship between them is good. The military regions are in favour of the introduction of civil areas and consider it beneficial that the administrations are maintaining coherence in civil defence work at a level that transcends county boundaries.

At a national level, there is collaboration between the six civil areas and the four military regions and the Gotland Regiment P 18. The first quarter of 2024 saw the introduction of a new recurring meeting between the civil area heads and the heads of military regions, as well as with the administration heads and the military regions' heads of planning. The aim is to develop common objectives applicable to all civil areas, which will then be broken down into the respective civil areas. These common objectives include standardising the basic regional and higher regional vision<sup>48</sup>, as well as creating standardisation to enhance understanding of regional total defence planning among relevant actors.

Collaboration between civil area administrations and military regions takes place at both administrator level within working groups and head level through total defence councils and forums. Military regions and civil area administrations argue that much of the initial work has involved internal organisation, particularly in terms of the relationship between county administrative boards and civil area administrations. However, some working groups, such as the one working with host nation support, have gone further and started to generate more specific results.

Several civil area administrations have worked together with the military regions to organise conferences, total defence days and exercises. These conferences were aimed at a wider audience such as municipalities, regions and voluntary defence organisations. Several county administrative boards highlight the fact that the civilian perspective has been given more prominence in the military regions' exercises thanks to the administrations. By way of example, the 2024 Total Defence Days will be organised jointly by the military regions and the county administrative board responsible for the civil area.

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<sup>48</sup> Högre regional grundsyn [Basic higher regional vision] is an orientation document for total defence that began to be produced by all county administrative boards together with the military regions and other actors, including the Swedish Police Authority, on the basis of the Swedish Armed Forces' and MSB's national basic vision in 2016.

However, some county administrative boards and military regions that already worked together effectively are unhappy that this has been discontinued and replaced by a new structure.<sup>49</sup> They argue that a substantial portion of their efforts has been devoted to establishing roles and building knowledge, instead that carrying out specific planning work.

Some civil area administrations report that it was unclear to them initially how the Swedish Armed Forces are organised and which part they should contact. It was not clear when contact should be made with the strategic level or the operational level, or the military region.<sup>50</sup> This was particularly true in respect of issues relating to the national level rather than the individual region. The civil area administrations also describe it as confusing that the Swedish Armed Forces were represented by the strategic and operational levels at the national meetings and not by the military regions, which they were used to meeting. The Swedish Armed Forces have since clarified that the administration should make contact with the military region.

### **6.2.2 The county administrative boards are still the Swedish Armed Forces' most important partner at regional level**

According to the Swedish Armed Forces, the main partner for the military region should be the county administrative board responsible for the civil area, along with its administration. However, it is clear from our interviews that in practice, the county administrative boards still operate as the military regions' main partner; mainly because the administrations have been undergoing an establishment phase, but also because resources are more readily available within the respective county administrative boards, rather than within the administrations. One military region reports that in future, it expects the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas to be their primary counterpart, but that there will probably always be a need to maintain direct contact with the county administrative boards.

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<sup>49</sup> The county administrative boards and the Swedish Armed Forces began collaborating in 2013 within the framework of the four military regions, which were newly established at the time. SOU 2021:25, pp. 330–331.

<sup>50</sup> The Swedish Armed Forces distinguish between capability-building activities (strategic level) and capability-utilising activities (operational level). Regional command is also exercised in the form of military regions.

### 6.2.3 The military regions are calling for a stronger mandate for county administrative boards responsible for civil areas

The military regions are in favour of the introduction of civil areas, but almost all of them perceive the mandate of the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas to be weak and unclear. The unclear mandate is said to have complicated and delayed the establishment of civil areas, as it meant that the allocation of roles between county administrative boards responsible for civil areas and other county administrative boards was not clear.

One military region considers that the purpose of civil areas is clear; namely, to coordinate resources shared across civil areas. However, the mandate is weak, as a county administrative board responsible for a civil area cannot demand allocation of resources by another county administrative board. Another military region argues that in certain situations, there may be a need to make rapid political decisions. The county administrative boards responsible for civil areas must be able to make such decisions without having to reach consensus with other county administrative boards. One military region advocates a structure in which the county administrative boards are instead coordinated through a strengthened mandate for county administrative boards responsible for civil areas, enabling them to steer development by being able to make decisions on processes, methods and goals within the civil area.

The matter of what is included in the tasks during periods of heightened preparedness is also linked to the mandate. There is a lack of consensus among actors on the type of operational tasks involved in *coordinating* civil defence measures.<sup>51</sup> Several military regions highlight the fact that the administrations are too small to handle critical tasks during periods of heightened preparedness, including reporting. This opinion is shared by a number of county administrative boards interviewed. In its annual report for 2023, the Swedish Armed Forces noted that to an extent, county administrative boards responsible for civil areas interpret their tasks and mandates in different ways. In view of this, the Swedish Armed Forces highlighted the need to clarify the mandate of county administrative boards responsible for civil areas, particularly during periods of heightened alert.<sup>52</sup> MTFAs notes that the Government considers that the mandate of county

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<sup>51</sup> Section 9 of the Ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas (2022:525).

<sup>52</sup> Swedish Armed Forces, *Tillsammans försvarar vi Sverige Försvarsmaktens årsredovisning 2023*. 2024, FM2023-9190:34, p. 51.

administrative boards responsible for civil areas needs to be strengthened, and that it intends to return to the issue.<sup>53</sup>

#### **6.2.4 Military regions attempt to support the establishment of civil areas**

MTFA notes that whether the Swedish Armed Forces have shared their defence plans and support needs with the administrations appears to be a key success factor for the civil area administrations in initiating specific work and planning. One military region has deliberately chosen to communicate its support plan only to the county administrative board responsible for the civil area, with the intention of ensuring that the county administrative board responsible for the civil area implements the plan together with the county administrative boards and municipalities, thereby strengthening the coordinating role of the administration. The military region describes this approach as deliberate risk-taking, as the administrations are small and not fully established. Nevertheless, the benefits of strengthening the administrations are deemed to outweigh the risks. Another military region states that they have attempted to help establish and garner support for the administration by asking the administrations to coordinate and convene meetings on issues that transcend county boundaries, rather than doing it themselves. The aim of this has been to enhance the legitimacy of the administration.

### **6.3 Differences in civil and military geographical division cause complications but do not define limits**

This section describes the consequences of differences in the geographical divisions between civil areas and military regions.

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<sup>53</sup> Prop. 2024/25:34, *Totalförsvaret 2025–2030*, pp. 112–113.



- At present, only the Northern Civil Area fully corresponds to a military region in geographical terms (the Northern Military Region).
- The county administrative boards that make up the Southern Civil Area are located in the Southern Military Region, but the military region is larger and also includes the South East Civil Area.
- The Western Civil Area has the Western Military Region to collaborate with, but the Western Military Region also includes county administrative boards in the Central Civil Area.
- The Central Civil Area includes county administrative boards located in both the Central and Western Military Regions.
- Besides the Central Civil Area, the Central Military Region also includes Stockholm, which belongs to the Eastern Civil Area.
- The Eastern Civil Area also includes the Gotland County Administrative Board, which collaborates with the Gotland Regiment P 18.<sup>54</sup>

Figure 3 Map of the military regions

### 6.3.1 Previously established contacts facilitate collaboration

MTFA notes that collaboration has been facilitated in instances where contacts had already been established, such as in northern and southern Sweden. The county administrative boards within the Northern Civil Area already had a functioning collaboration with the Northern Military Region, which the civil area administration could build upon. The Southern and South East Civil Areas are located within the Southern Military Region, which meant that established contacts also existed between the county administrative boards and the military region. Two of the county administrative boards in the Western Civil Area already collaborate with the Western Military Region.

### 6.3.2 The Central Civil Area needs to deal with two military regions and two working methods

According to our interviews, the Central Civil Area appears to be most affected by the differences in geographical division. The Central Civil Area is also the single largest civil region, with seven counties; which may further complicate cohesion.

The central civil area administration describes addressing two military regions as a challenge; partly because the military regions have different

<sup>54</sup> Ordinance containing instructions for the Swedish Armed Forces (2007:1266).

working methods and are perceived to have made varying amounts of progress in terms of joint planning prior to periods of heightened preparedness. When the military regions conduct briefings on operational planning or exercises on the same date, it is difficult for the administration to attend both. This issue may be particularly acute during periods of heightened preparedness if there is uncertainty as to which military region should be prioritised by the administration.

County administrative boards, administrations and military regions emphasise the importance of ensuring that the methods used in joint work are as consistent as possible. However, achieving this remains a challenge. The military regions express their needs in various ways, and the specific details also vary. The fact that working methods may vary is confirmed by the military regions, which describe themselves as having considerable discretion in respect of how they choose to perform tasks.<sup>55</sup> The Western and Central Military Regions describe how they have begun coordinating with one another in order to standardise their work in respect of the civil areas. However, they highlight the fact that different working methods are required because of the differing circumstances of the military regions.

The situation involving dual military regions is particularly complex for the two county administrative boards belonging to the Western Military Region but forming part of the Central Civil Area. The Örebro County Administrative Board collaborates with the Western Military Region, while the civil area administration at the same county administrative board collaborates with the Central Military Region. The county administrative boards of Värmland and Örebro report that they have an effective collaboration with the Western Military Region, but limited collaboration with the Central Military Region. That said, both county administrative boards work less with the Western Military Region than before the civil areas were established, largely due to the fact that the NOST total defence cooperation<sup>56</sup>, which was in place between 2014 and 2022, was discontinued.

Collaboration with the Swedish Armed Forces is complicated still further by the fact that the Central Military Region is described as being understaffed. The military region describes its most important partner as the two civil area

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<sup>55</sup> The Swedish Armed Forces refer to this command philosophy as ‘mission tactics’.

<sup>56</sup> A collaboration comprising the four counties within the Western Military Region: Halland (N), Västra Götaland (O), Värmland (S) and Örebro (T). See, for example, the County Administrative Boards and the Swedish Armed Forces, *Totalförsvaret i Halland, Värmland, Västra Götaland, Örebro län och Militärregion Väst. Högre regional grundsyn 2017–2020*, 8 June 2017.

administrations in the Central and Eastern Civil Areas, but the City of Stockholm is another major actor requiring substantial collaboration resources. The Southern and Central Military Regions, both of which include two civil areas, express concern about their ability to manage two civil areas when they are fully operational, although this is currently regarded as manageable.

The Western Military Region emphasises the need to adapt to the prevailing conditions. The military region sees nothing remarkable in the fact that different agencies, with different assignments, have different geographical divisions. That said, the military region believes that the Central Civil Area is too large, with seven county administrative boards, three police regions and two military regions. However, the military region also emphasises the positive effects of working with two civil areas, as this creates incentives for all parties to coordinate more closely.

### **6.3.3 Few common characteristics between the Eastern Civil Area's county administrative boards**

The Eastern Civil Area comprises two counties with very different conditions: Gotland and Stockholm. Moreover, the two county administrative boards are part of different military regions. These differing conditions mean that the preparedness divisions of the two county administrative boards perceive limited benefit with the civil area. The Gotland County Administrative Board feels that it would be more appropriate for them to constitute a separate civil area.

The civil area administration claims to be keen not to disrupt functioning collaboration structures, and therefore has relatively little contact with P 18. Therefore, contacts with P 18 are mainly handled by the Gotland County Administrative Board, as before. The administration reports that a few joint exercises in the form of workshops are the only collaboration it has had with the Central Military Region. According to the administration, this is due to the military region's lack of resources. The administration would like the Central Military Region to provide clearer information about its support needs, so that the administration can work towards specific tasks. This has now been done, according to a follow-up call with the Central Military Region in the autumn of 2024.

P 18 and the Gotland County Administrative Board report that they have been working closely together since the joint government assignment in

2017.<sup>57</sup> The risk of the island being cut off during an armed attack means that P 18's most important partner will always be the county administrative board. P 18 considers it positive that the civil area administration is able to handle issues at a more cross-county level, such as evacuating Gotland or bringing resources to the island. P 18 and the Gotland County Administrative Board agree that Gotland must be able to operate autonomously because of the risk of isolation. The Gotland County Administrative Board should therefore be given a special role and participate more extensively in various collaboration forums than other county administrative boards. The Gotland County Administrative Board considers that it would be more appropriate for Gotland, given its circumstances, to be a separate civil area, with P 18 as its own military region.

The Stockholm County Administrative Board also believes that the interfaces between Stockholm and Gotland are unclear. The county administrative board considers that Gotland has different circumstances, given the fact that the island has only one municipality, one region and one county administrative board, as well as its unique relationship with P 18. Consequently, working methods also differ substantially from those applied in the county of Stockholm.

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<sup>57</sup> Ministry of Defence, *Uppdrag till Försvarsmakten och Länsstyrelsen i Gotlands län om samverkan och organisation inom totalförsvaret i Gotlands län*, F62017/01726/MFI, 2017.

## **7. Work on ordinance-prescribed tasks among county administrative boards responsible for civil areas**

In 2023, county administrative boards responsible for civil areas worked primarily on establishing joint structures for collaboration with the county administrative boards. Specific planning work in the new structure began in 2024. This chapter describes how the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas have started working on some of their ordinance-prescribed tasks.

### **7.1 Summary observations**

- The civil area administrations consider host nation support to be one of the highest-priority tasks on account of the security situation and other factors. This is also a distinct task compared to several of the other ordinance-prescribed tasks.
- Standing responsible for providing a comprehensive situation report is also prioritised by the civil area administrations. It is hoped that it will be possible to streamline this reporting, which many actors consider onerous.
- The county administrative boards responsible for civil areas have prioritised work on civil defence over work on crisis preparedness. Crisis preparedness is another of the issues where the boundary between county administrative boards is most difficult to identify.

### **7.2 Work on host nation support among county administrative boards responsible for civil areas**

This section describes how the civil area administrations have been working on host nation support.

#### **7.2.1 Host nation support is a priority task for the civil area administrations**

All civil areas work on host nation support, both collectively at a national level and internally within each civil area. Host nation support is described as one of the highest-priority issues by the civil area administrations on account of the security situation and Sweden's accession to NATO, with the associated increase in exercise activities. One administration also describes

host nation support as the task that is easiest to pursue, as it is explicitly assigned to the county administrative board responsible for the civil area and not something for which other county administrative boards are responsible. Therefore, the issue of ambiguities in mandates and roles is less evident in this case.

### 7.2.2 It was difficult to agree on a definition of host nation support

The initial work on host nation support was made more complicated by the fact that the concept of host nation support was characterised by the fact that MSB and the Swedish Armed Forces used different definitions of what host nation support involved. The Swedish Armed Forces and MSB relied on two different sets of rules and had differing views of what the support involves and who 'owns' the task. The two different definitions meant that the agencies could not agree on a common approach and method. The two separate approaches made it difficult for the civil area administrations to define objectives and working methods for the task.

The Swedish Armed Forces use the NATO definition of *Host Nation Support*. NATO's definition is also used by the government in the 2015 Memorandum of Understanding between Sweden and NATO on Host Nation Support.<sup>58</sup> This defines host nation support as advance preparation of the practical arrangements required to enable a foreign force to operate on Swedish territory during exercises or military operations in Sweden or the surrounding region, for example. Host nation support in this sense is thus a task that the Swedish Armed Forces was required to perform for a long time before the new structure was introduced.

In slightly simplified terms, MSB previously based its approach on the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, for which the agency serves as Sweden's contact point. The EU defines host nation support<sup>59</sup> as the measures undertaken prior to and during crises by the country (or the European Commission) that either sends or receives support, with a view to eliminating obstacles to international support and ensuring that crisis management operations are executed as smoothly as possible.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Ds 2015:39, *Samförståndsavtal med Nato om världlandsstöd*.

<sup>59</sup> European Union, *EU Host Nation Support Guidelines. Commission Staff Working Document*, 1 June 2012.

<sup>60</sup> Lagerström, M. and Norén A., *Världlandsstöd vid höjd beredskap. Innebörd för civilt försvar*, 2015, FOI-R-4198--SE.

Several civil area administrations found it frustrating that the Swedish Armed Forces and MSB could not agree on a definition, and felt that it was inefficient to work with two separate approaches towards the municipalities. This was also considered onerous; particularly for municipalities, whose resources for preparedness work are often limited. The confusion surrounding the concept of host nation support was further complicated by the fact that according to its ordinance-prescribed task, the county administrative board responsible for the civil area is intended to work with 'civil aspects' and the 'civil element' of host nation support.<sup>61</sup> This created uncertainty about what exactly was intended.

MSB reports that the work on standardising the understanding of host nation support with the Swedish Armed Forces has taken time, but that there has been greater consensus in 2024 and is now good. The Swedish Armed Forces, together with the civil area administrations, participate in MSB's working group on the reception of international civil and humanitarian assistance. In turn, MSB is a member of the Swedish Armed Forces' working group on host nation support. It is hoped that the administrations, with the support of MSB, will be able to learn from the work done by the Swedish Armed Forces on 'military host nation support' in order to create a common approach to collaboration involving the reception of international and humanitarian assistance.

### **7.2.3 The Swedish Armed Forces work with host nation support together with the county administrative boards**

Host nation support is not an ordinance-regulated task for the county administrative boards, but all county administrative boards interviewed are working on the task together with the Swedish Armed Forces. Much of the joint work between county administrative boards and military regions has focused on supporting the Swedish Armed Forces, and that support has most often involved ensuring host nation support capabilities.

Because cooperation has taken place between the county administrative boards and the military regions, this has not been impacted by the differing perspectives of the Swedish Armed Forces and MSB; rather, planning has been based on how the Swedish Armed Forces want to conduct the work. Military regions also collaborate directly with municipalities in some cases. This is why several county administrative boards describe host nation support as 'support to the Swedish Armed Forces and the reception of

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<sup>61</sup> See the Ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas (2022:525).

foreign forces'. Work on developing the ability to receive international civil and humanitarian assistance has not yet begun as yet, for the most part.

#### **7.2.4 MSB supports the civil areas in receiving international civil and humanitarian assistance**

MSB has played a supportive role in the civil areas' work on the reception of international civil and humanitarian aid. The agency perceives this as part of MSB's task of coordinating and developing methodological support and guidance. MSB perceives that there was a demand from the civil area administrations to coordinate both elements of host nation support. MSB has set up a working group for the administrations, as well as a steering group for the civil area heads, which address the reception of international civil and humanitarian aid. These have jointly developed a strategy for reception.<sup>62</sup> MSB now defines host nation support as 'the civil or military support provided by a host nation to NATO and/or other military forces and NATO organisations, as well as to international civil actors for the purpose of receiving civil and humanitarian assistance'/<sup>63</sup>

### **7.3 Reporting and the task of compiling an overall situation report**

This section describes the work of county administrative boards responsible for civil areas with regard to reporting and the task of compiling an overall situation report.

#### **7.3.1 Actors consider reporting to be too extensive**

Reporting from other actors within the civil area is required for a county administrative board responsible for a civil area to be able to compile an overall situation report. According to the Ordinance on the preparedness of central government agencies (2022:524), the preparedness agencies must provide supporting material to the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas prior to and during periods of heightened preparedness so that they can perform their tasks.<sup>64</sup>

The civil area administrations are working together on the issue of what information to collect. According to several civil area administrations, structuring the flow of information between preparedness sectors and

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<sup>62</sup> Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, *Mottagandet av internationellt civilt och humanitärt stöd. Stärkt förmåga till världlandsstöd vid höjd beredskap och fredstida kriser*, 2024.

<sup>63</sup> Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, email containing comments on a draft report from MTFA, 11 November 2024.

<sup>64</sup> Section 22 of the Ordinance on the preparedness of central government agencies (2022:524).

county administrative boards is another task to which the higher regional level can contribute. Several of the county administrative boards interviewed describe the amount of information requested from them – and, by extension, from the municipalities – to be onerous. Furthermore, feedback on the material provided is often inadequate. All in all, this hampers the development work of the county administrative boards and municipalities. In this respect, a number of administrations argue that they have the potential to add value by structuring the flow of information. This includes attempting, to some extent, to protect county administrative boards – and, by extension, municipalities and regions as well – from being overloaded with requests and information from the national level. For instance, civil area administrations report that they can split information from sector-responsible agencies so that the county administrative boards only receive information relating to their own county.

### 7.3.2 Actors excluded from reporting

According to the Ordinance on the preparedness of central government agencies (2022:524), the preparedness agencies must provide MSB with the information needed for the agency to be able to perform its tasks in the event of peacetime crisis situations and during periods of heightened preparedness.<sup>65</sup> This obligation is applicable to all county administrative boards, but not in their role as county administrative boards responsible for civil areas. This means that the civil area administration only has to provide its situation report for the civil area to the government and the Swedish Armed Forces,<sup>66</sup> while MSB is excluded from the regulated reporting flow. Similarly, the county administrative boards are excluded from the statutory reporting flow from the preparedness agencies to the county administrative board responsible for the civil area. This may affect the ability of the county administrative boards to exercise geographical area responsibility at a regional level if they do not receive certain information.

### 7.3.3 Different regulations with different interpretations of the term 'prior to'

MTFA notes that there are a number of interpretations of ordinance-regulated reporting. In its instructions, the county administrative board responsible for civil areas has two sections linked with heightened preparedness: one with tasks *prior to* and one with tasks *during* periods of

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<sup>65</sup> Section 12 of the Ordinance on the preparedness of central government agencies (2022:524).

<sup>66</sup> Section 9 of the Ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas (2022:525).

heightened preparedness. The tasks prior to periods of heightened preparedness are formulated in more general terms than those during periods of heightened preparedness.<sup>67</sup> The tasks in the two sections are so similar in their formulation that *prior to* can be interpreted as meaning preparatory tasks; that is, capacity-building planning for how the county administrative board responsible for the civil area will be able to perform its tasks during periods of heightened preparedness. There is no preparatory task for the overall situation report in this interpretation of *prior to*. However, all administrations work on the task.

The Ordinance on total defence and heightened preparedness (2015:1053) contains provisions requiring preparedness agencies, sector-responsible agencies and agencies responsible for civil areas to submit documentation to the Swedish Armed Forces.<sup>68</sup> This must be done both prior to and during periods of heightened preparedness so that the Swedish Armed Forces can fulfil their duty to provide information to the government. MTFa notes that *prior to* is interpreted differently by the relevant actors. The different interpretations concern whether this constitutes a preparatory task over time, or a state on a preparedness scale that is followed by heightened or maximum preparedness and, if so, Sweden's position on that scale.

#### **7.3.4 Difficult to share classified information within the total defence system**

There is no common command and control support system within the total defence system, which constitutes an obstacle to effective collaboration between actors. The lack of a common system is not linked to the introduction of civil areas, but it does affect the implementation of the structure. Agencies responsible for preparedness can generally share classified information with one another at a basic level; over the telephone, by fax and using encrypted files, for example. Only a small number of agencies have the option of using more advanced functionality such as classified videoconferencing and shared data management and processing.

The military regions find it challenging to share classified information with municipalities and regions, for several reasons. On the one hand, the Protective Security Act requires the establishment of protective security agreements and arrangements, which is a time-consuming process. On the

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<sup>67</sup> Compare 'take the initiative to' and 'shall coordinate' in sections 8 and 9 of the Ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas (2022:525).

<sup>68</sup> Section 8 of the Ordinance on total defence and heightened preparedness (2015:1053).

other hand, many municipalities and regions still have insufficient capacity to handle classified information.<sup>69</sup>

## 7.4 Civil defence work has taken priority over crisis preparedness

MTFA's assignment focuses on civil defence. Therefore, we have not specifically examined how county administrative boards responsible for civil areas work with crisis preparedness. However, both county administrative boards responsible for civil areas and county administrative boards find it challenging to clarify what geographical area responsibility involves in more concrete terms at local, regional and higher regional level. This is particularly true of crisis preparedness.

The civil area administrations have worked together to produce a procedure on how crisis preparedness support to the county administrative boards should be organised. The work has generally only just begun, and there is no consensus on how the support should be organised or what it should include. One administration describes the discussion with the county administrative boards as grinding to a halt when they discuss tasks prior to and during peacetime crisis situations as set out in the ordinance of county administrative boards responsible for civil areas.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, the administration reports that they have prioritised civil defence work instead. Civil defence work also takes priority over crisis preparedness among other administrations. However, the county administrative boards in the Southern Civil Area have agreed on an arrangement to support one another during peacetime crises. A county administrative board affected by a peacetime crisis that is requesting support from the other county administrative boards with resources submits its request for these via the civil area administration. The administration is responsible for assessing whether there are any resources available at the other county administrative boards that would meet the stated need, and ensures that the information reaches the county administrative board affected.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Swedish Armed Forces, *Tillsammans försvarar vi Sverige. Årsredovisning 2023*, 2024, p. 50.

<sup>70</sup> Section 5 and 6 of the Ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas (2022:525).

<sup>71</sup> County Administrative Boards, *Överenskommelse om stöd i Södra Civilområdet vid fredstida krisituationer*, 5 February 2024.

## 7.5 The task of taking over responsibility for municipal rescue services within the civil area

The county administrative boards responsible for civil areas are assigned two tasks in the Civil Protection Ordinance (2003:789). One of these tasks concerns the assumption of responsibility for municipal rescue services.<sup>72</sup> If a particularly extensive rescue operation is required, the government may prescribe – or, in special cases, decide – that a county administrative board or other central government agency should take over responsibility for the rescue services in one or more of the municipalities affected. The mandate previously applied to all county administrative boards, but it has now been transferred to the county administrative board responsible for the civil area, which then takes over responsibility for the rescue services in the municipalities affected. This task is intended to improve conditions for coordination and agreements between different rescue service organisations when covering a larger geographical area.

The second task concerns the agency to reallocate personnel within a municipality's rescue service organisation during periods of heightened preparedness, if the measure concerns personnel in different counties within the civil area.<sup>73</sup>

Several county administrative boards query the need for county administrative boards responsible for civil areas to be able to take over responsibility for municipal rescue services. Following amendments to the Civil Protection Act (2003:778), the municipalities have established joint regional command and control systems for rescue services. These command and control systems are therefore expected to reduce the need for state takeover of responsibility for rescue services. Furthermore, the geographical organisation of the command and control systems often differs from that of the civil area, and a civil area may also contain several such command and control systems. One administration perceives a difficulty in the fact that the ordinance states that county administrative boards responsible for civil areas can *take over* responsibility for municipal rescue services. In fact, this involves coordinating the planning for it, which is something the county administrative boards have already been doing for a long time.

One county administrative board argues that the county administrative board responsible for the civil area lacks the capacity to take over rescue

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<sup>72</sup> Chapter 4(33) of the Civil Protection Ordinance (2003:789).

<sup>73</sup> Chapter 8(3) of the Civil Protection Ordinance (2003:789).

services. The county administrative board is also of the opinion that no such need exists. The county administrative board believes that the rescue service command and control system has evolved since the major forest fires, thereby rendering the task unnecessary. The Central Civil Area also does not think that county administrative boards responsible for the civil regions should take over responsibility for municipal rescue services during periods of heightened preparedness, as they and the rest of society would be busy with other activities in such a situation.

However, the civil areas have developed a common template to be used as a basis when the county administrative board responsible for the civil area develops a plan for taking over responsibility for municipal rescue services. This emphasises that responsibility may only be taken over in exceptional cases; in the case of a very complex rescue operation that the municipality is unable to handle, for example, or if rescue operations need to be coordinated between several municipalities and the municipalities are unable to do this themselves.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> *Plan för övertagande av ansvar för kommunal räddningstjänst Förslag till inriktning för ett gemensamt och enhetligt underlag*, p. 14. This document is a template to be filled in and customised for each civil area, together with the steering document *Plan för övertagande av ansvar för kommunal räddningstjänst* [Plan for the takeover of responsibility for municipal rescue services], customised versions of which should be available for each civil area. Template received on 4 September 2024 from the civil area administration at the Central Civil Area.

## 8. Conclusions

The purpose of this interim report has been to follow up and evaluate the agencies' work on implementing the civil areas. The overall question is whether the six civil areas are being established in accordance with the intentions of the reform.

Essentially, the intention behind the introduction of civil areas was to clarify leadership and responsibilities, and to create the conditions for more effective collaboration within civil defence, and between civil and military defence. MTFFA considers that the intentions behind introducing civil areas and a higher regional level have not been achieved to date.

In this concluding chapter, we begin by evaluating the results in relation to the original intentions. We then conclude by discussing some of the key findings and presenting recommendations to the government.

### 8.1 The intentions behind the civil areas have not been achieved to date

This section evaluates the findings from the interim report in relation to the assumptions about what would create clearer lines of responsibility and leadership and more effective collaboration within civil defence, and between civil and military defence. See chapter 2 for MTFFA's analysis of the assumptions.

An initial assumption underpinning the introduction of civil areas was the fact that the counties and county administrative boards are too small to effectively maintain coherence in preparedness planning and defence efforts. Larger regional areas would provide better conditions for coordination. MTFFA is unable to provide give a definitive answer as to whether the conditions for coordination are better now than before the introduction of civil areas. New forums for collaboration have been established, some have been discontinued, while others are continuing under new names. Several military regions consider that the civil area administrations are too small to be able to handle critical tasks during periods of heightened preparedness.

A second assumption was that collaboration would be more effective if the Swedish Armed Forces were to collaborate with fewer county administrative boards. However, MTFFA notes that the Swedish Armed Forces have largely continued to collaborate with individual county administrative boards. In

addition, collaboration with county administrative boards responsible for civil areas has been added, which means that the military regions now have more parties with which to collaborate, rather than fewer.

A third assumption was that leadership and coordination would be facilitated if the civil areas and military regions had the same geographical division. However, the military regions have not been reorganised to follow the divisions of the civil areas. MTFA considers that collaboration is complicated by differences in geographical divisions, although all agencies appear to be adapting to the prevailing circumstances. However, collaboration for the Central Civil Area appears to be more complex as there is a need to deal with two military regions that do not coordinate working methods and operational planning. The Central Civil Area is also the largest, with seven county administrative boards, three police regions and several rescue service command and control systems.

A fourth assumption was that central agencies of particular importance for total defence would adapt their regional organisations to the geographical division of the civil areas in order to facilitate collaboration between agencies. However, only the Swedish Transport Administration has adapted its regional division to match the civil areas. As a result, there have been no major changes in the geographical organisation of the agencies since the new structure was introduced.

A fifth assumption was that the introduction of county administrative boards responsible for civil areas and a civil area head for each civil area would provide clearer leadership and responsibilities. However, MTFA notes that there are several factors resulting in a lack of clarity for the roles and mandates of the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas. This, in turn, affects the conditions for establishing clear leadership of the civil areas. The coordinating responsibility for the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas is formulated in the ordinance in a way that gives rise to unclear expectations of the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas. Furthermore, there is an overlap in respect of coordination responsibilities between the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas and the sector-responsible agencies. There are also ambiguities between county administrative boards responsible for civil areas and other county administrative boards regarding the allocation of responsibilities. MTFA notes that work is in progress on categorising responsibilities between the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas and other county administrative boards.

## **8.1 A number of obstacles to the implementation of civil areas need to be addressed**

The evaluation shows that there are a number of barriers affecting the implementation of civil areas, and that these need to be addressed. Some of the obstacles are largely dependent on external factors and are not linked to the introduction of the new structure. These include difficulties in sharing security-sensitive information, competition for skills and a greater workload due to the growth of total defence, for example.

Other obstacles relate to conditions that are expected when a new level of administration is introduced. MTFA concludes that the new structure largely constitutes a regulatory framework for collaboration between central government agencies. Therefore, building arrangements for such collaboration is necessary but will take time, and the absence of explanatory memoranda has made the work more difficult. To date, most actors feel that their workload has increased in relation to available resources, as establishing civil defence is a priority and implementation involves a certain amount of duplication of work before issues are categorised. We assess such obstacles to be temporary; even if they are both time-consuming and resource-intensive initially.

Finally, there is one type of obstacle that MTFA considers to be attributable to the design of the structure and which is more difficult for the agencies themselves to overcome on their own. These obstacles include the wording of mandates, the allocation of roles and the lack of geographical alignment between civil areas and military regions.

In the light of the above, MTFA would like to highlight and recommend the following:

### **8.1.1 The mandate for county administrative boards responsible for civil areas needs to be clearer**

The evaluation shows that many people perceive the mandate of the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas to be both vague and weak. For this reason, MTFA would like to highlight the following.

The wording of the ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas provides them with a relatively vague mandate for their coordinating role. Expressions such as ‘take the initiative to coordinate planning between central government agencies, and between these and the Swedish Armed Forces’ and ‘during periods of heightened preparedness, provide guidance to county administrative boards within the civil area on the

focus of and priorities for the county administrative boards' activities<sup>75</sup> create unclear expectations of the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas. Consequently, it is also unclear to other agencies what mandate is held by the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas in terms of coordination.

MTFA also notes that the Swedish Armed Forces emphasise the fact that the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas have not only an unclear mandate, but a weak mandate as well. Several military regions also highlight the fact that the administrations are too small to be able to handle critical tasks during periods of heightened preparedness. MTFA considers that there is a need to clarify what type of tasks an administration is able to perform with the existing staffing levels. We also believe that the issue of the capacity of the administrations should be viewed in relation to the role to be adopted by the civil area administrations.

MTFA notes that the structural inquiry's proposals on the mandate of county administrative boards responsible for civil areas were formulated differently from the mandate set out in the ordinance. The structural inquiry's proposals included the civil area head's regulatory powers in respect of the county administrative boards and an explicit right to access relevant information from preparedness agencies and the Swedish Armed Forces. It also proposed a mandate to be able to prioritise healthcare resources within the civil area. As these proposals were not incorporated into the ordinance, the mandate of the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas was weaker than envisaged by the structural inquiry.

Overall, MTFA argues that the lack of clarity surrounding the mandate of the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas constitutes an obstacle to the work of the agencies. MTFA therefore assesses that the mandate of the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas needs to be clarified, but does not comment on how. The actors concerned are unaware of the reasons why the government did not proceed with some of the structural inquiry's proposals. However, MTFA recognises that the proposals rely on different parts of the structure – and the actors within it – being interlinked and working together. It is therefore impossible to disregard the fact that a weaker mandate for county administrative boards responsible for civil areas may affect the chances of creating the clear lines of responsibility and leadership at a higher regional level that the structural

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<sup>75</sup> Sections 8 and 9 of the Ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas (2022:525), MTFA's italics.

inquiry and the Committee on Defence perceived as necessary. However, MTFFA is aware that the mandate proposed by the structural inquiry was far-reaching. The implications of such a mandate therefore need to be considered carefully.

MTFA argues that the Government should review how the mandate for the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas can be clarified in order to create better circumstances for clearer leadership and responsibilities. In this review, the government should consider whether a clearer mandate will suffice, or whether the mandate needs to be strengthened as well.<sup>76</sup>

### **8.1.2 Work on the allocation of roles and responsibilities needs to continue**

The results of this interim report suggest that the agencies need to continue their joint efforts on the allocation of roles. MTFFA notes that a number of factors impact the role of the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas. We intend to monitor the work of the agencies on these issues within the framework of ongoing government assignments.<sup>77</sup>

One remaining issue affecting the role of the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas relates to how the overlapping coordination responsibilities between sector-responsible agencies and county administrative boards responsible for civil areas should function. There is uncertainty as to whether sector-responsible agencies can and should coordinate actors at levels other than the central level; and if so, what this involves in relation to the geographical area responsibility of the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas.

Another issue of allocation of roles relates to the allocation of responsibilities between the 21 county administrative boards and the six county administrative boards responsible for civil areas. Work is therefore ongoing on categorising issues between the two levels. One factor that complicates the allocation of responsibilities is that the county administrative boards are preparedness agencies. The role of the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas as a link between the central and regional levels becomes unclear when the county administrative boards, in their

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<sup>76</sup> MTFFA notes that the Government considers that the mandate of county administrative boards responsible for civil areas needs to be strengthened, and that it intends to return to the issue. Prop. 2024/25:34, *Totalförsvaret 2025–2030*, pp. 112–113.

<sup>77</sup> The final report on the assignment is to be submitted by 30 November 2025.

capacity as preparedness agencies, collaborate with other preparedness agencies.

A further factor affecting the role of the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas is that the terms *civil area*, *civil area administration* and *county administrative board responsible for a civil area*, as well as the abbreviation *civo*, are used both in the political discussion and by the agencies concerned in a manner that does not always clarify what is meant. The administrations provide support and are directly subordinate to the civil area head. MTFA's evaluation shows that the administrations perform the tasks set out in the ordinance. However, MTFA notes that it is unclear whether the administrations and their resources are to be equated with county administrative boards responsible for civil areas in the ordinance, or whether it refers to the entire county administrative board, or even all county administrative boards within the civil area. In turn, this impacts how tasks are interpreted and can be performed.

### **8.1.3 The consequences of differing geographical divisions need to be monitored**

One obstacle that makes collaboration difficult is the difference in the regional divisions between civil areas, the Swedish Armed Forces and other agencies. As things stand at present, the agencies consider the differences to be manageable. However, both civil area administrations and military regions have pointed out that as planning becomes more specific and the workload increases, it may become difficult to respond to multiple actors simultaneously. MTFA assesses that the negative consequences of different geographical divisions may increase during periods of heightened preparedness. A civil area administration cannot de-prioritise collaboration with a military region, and a military region cannot de-prioritise collaboration with a civil area administration. Therefore, MTFA believes that the government should monitor the consequences of these differences in divisions and take note of whether the problems are exacerbated when the reform is implemented in full. Additionally, other requirements may arise when Sweden is fully integrated into NATO defence planning.

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## Appendix 1. Intentions and assumptions linked to civil areas

This appendix sets out the background to the reform and our analysis of the assumptions on which the introduction of civil areas was based. See also chapter 2.

### Background to the structural reform

Planning for the re-establishment of Sweden's total defence began with the Riksdag's defence policy orientation decision in 2015.<sup>78</sup> The introduction of the new structure for civil defence and society's crisis preparedness is part of the ambition to strengthen total defence. It was preceded by an assignment to the Committee on Defence to perform an assessment of security policy developments and their consequences for Swedish defence and security policy. This was followed by an inquiry which was to work on the basis of the conclusions and proposals of the Committee on Defence and prepare a proposal for a new structure for responsibility, leadership and coordination in the field of civil defence.

According to the Committee on Defence, civil defence was lacking a number of the structures, processes and resources that may be required in the event of war or threat of war. The preparedness system designed to deal with peacetime crises was not dimensioned to respond to an armed attack. Unclear lines of responsibility and leadership at different decision-making levels in society and within different sectors of society were considered to have an adverse impact on the ability to coordinate civil defence actors, as well as on coordination between civil and military defence. In the long term, this was deemed to potentially make it harder to prioritise society's resources as may be necessary during periods of heightened preparedness and war.<sup>79</sup>

In view of the shortcomings identified, the Committee on Defence concluded that total defence was in need of restructuring. The organisation and command structures of total defence need to be able to allocate, prioritise, direct and coordinate society's collective resources in order to achieve the greatest possible defence effect. Moreover, the organisation and

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<sup>78</sup> Prop. 2014/15:109, bet. 2014/15:FöU11, rskr. 2014/15:251.

<sup>79</sup> Ds 2017:66, *Motståndskraft. Inriktningen av totalförsvaret och utformningen av det civila försvaret 2021–2025*, pp. 46, 50.

command structures need to be able to deal with what are known as grey zone issues in peacetime. According to the Committee on Defence, civil defence needs to be able to make decisions more quickly and efficiently. For this reason, the Committee on Defence considered that lines of responsibility and leadership, as well as civil defence structures, need to be clarified.<sup>80</sup>

The government appointed an inquiry tasked with developing a new structure for responsibility, leadership and coordination in the field of civil defence with a view to improving Sweden's ability to deal with situations involving heightened preparedness and, ultimately, war. In the inquiry's terms of reference, the government stated that there is a need for clearer lines of responsibility and leadership and stronger coordination in the field of civil defence, and that the inquiry should be based on the proposals in the report issued by the Committee on Defence. The structure is also intended to strengthen society's ability to manage peacetime crises.<sup>81</sup> The inquiry's proposals for a structure for responsibility, leadership and coordination in the field of civil defence was presented in its report *Struktur för ökad motståndskraft* [Structure for increased resilience] (SOU 2021:25) (hereinafter referred to as the structural inquiry).<sup>82</sup>

In May 2022, the government decided on a new structure for civil defence and societal crisis preparedness: this structure entered into force on 1 October 2022. The structural reform primarily comprises two new ordinances and a series of amendments to other ordinances.<sup>83</sup> The ordinances are not entirely consistent with the proposals submitted by the structural inquiry. The national security strategy presented by the Government in June 2024 clarifies that the structural reform aims to strengthen society's operational command capability in times of war and threat of war and in peacetime crises.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Ds 2017:66, pp. 46, 87. Prop. 2020/21:30, p. 125, states that the government shares the assessment of the Committee on Defence.

<sup>81</sup> Dir. 2018:79, *Ansvar, ledning och samordning inom civilt försvar*, pp. 5–6.

<sup>82</sup> SOU 2021:25, *Struktur för ökad motståndskraft. Slutbetänkande av utredningen om civilt försvar*.

<sup>83</sup> The structural reform comprises the Ordinance on the preparedness of central government agencies (2022:524), the Ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas (2022:525), the ordinances concerning amendments to the Ordinance on total defence and heightened state of alert (2015:1053), and the Ordinance containing instructions for the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (2008:1002), and certain adjustments to the instructions of a number of other agencies.

<sup>84</sup> Skr. 2023/24:163, *Nationell säkerhetsstrategi*, 4 July 2024, p. 26.

## **Assumptions behind the introduction of civil areas and a higher regional level**

There are no explanatory memoranda or other material describing the government's aims and considerations with the ordinances that constitute the structural reform. Based on the line of reasoning, problem scenarios and proposals for measures set out in *Motståndskraft* [Resilience] and the structural inquiry, we have therefore interpreted the assumptions that formed the basis for the introduction of civil areas and a higher regional level.<sup>85</sup>

## **Larger regional areas with clear leadership of the same provide better conditions for coordination**

The county administrative boards are the highest total defence agencies at regional level and hold regional geographical area responsibility. This means that county administrative boards have to work to coordinate actors within the county prior to and during periods of heightened preparedness.<sup>86</sup> According to the Committee on Defence and the structural inquiry, there are indications that counties and county administrative boards are too small to be able to handle the coordination and prioritisation of civil resources as demanded by total defence. Planning and measures within county boundaries to ensure the transport and supply of food, fuel and power are often insufficient as warehouses, transport routes and transport nodes may be located outside the county or extend across several counties. Regional areas larger than individual counties are assumed to provide better conditions for maintaining cohesion and focusing preparedness planning and defence efforts. Three to six counties is deemed to be an appropriate size.<sup>87</sup>

## **Collaboration between military and civil defence will be facilitated if the Swedish Armed Forces need to collaborate with fewer county administrative boards**

Collaboration and coordination between military and civil defence is made more difficult by the fact that every military region needs to collaborate with several county administrative boards in parallel. Ultimately, there is a risk that coordination of defence efforts will be impeded during an armed

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<sup>85</sup> Ds 2017:66; dir. 2018:79; prop. 2020/21:30, bet. 2020/21: FöU4, rskr. 2020/21:133–136; skr. 2023/24:163, *Nationell säkerhetsstrategi*, 4 July 2024.

<sup>86</sup> Ordinance on county administrative boards' crisis preparedness and tasks prior to and during periods of heightened preparedness (2017:870).

<sup>87</sup> Ds 2017:66, pp. 98–99; SOU 2021:25, pp. 339–340.

conflict.<sup>88</sup> One assumption is that collaboration will be facilitated if the military regions can use the county administrative boards responsible for civil areas as a common point of contact for the county administrative boards in each civil area.

### **A higher regional level will reduce the number of county administrative boards with which agencies need to collaborate**

Many central government agencies have no regional organisation at all and find it difficult to maintain contact and collaborate with 21 county administrative boards at a central level. This is particularly challenging for smaller agencies.<sup>89</sup> It is assumed that establishing six county administrative boards responsible for civil areas will make contact between the central and regional levels more effective.

### **A coherent geographical division of military regions and civil areas will provide better conditions for collaboration**

The inquiries indicate that alignment between the newly established areas and the Swedish Armed Forces' regional division is important for the coordination of military and civil defence. Moreover, it is assumed that geographical alignment will be a prerequisite for establishing effective lines of leadership and coordination. However, both the Committee on Defence and the structural inquiry emphasise that the new areas should not follow the current division of the military regions, as this division is not regarded as being sufficiently functional. Instead, the structural inquiry proposed that the regional organisation of the Swedish Armed Forces should be altered so that the military regions follow the newly established civil areas.<sup>90</sup>

The structural inquiry also proposed that the new division should follow the collaborative regions (previously referred to as healthcare regions). Avoiding the division of existing regional and municipal boundaries when dividing the civil areas is highlighted as an important parameter that needs to be taken into account when defining this division, as coordination between central government agencies on the one hand and regions and municipalities on the other is considered to be of major significance for total defence. The inquiry report also emphasises the fact that the healthcare provided by the regions is a vital pillar of total defence.<sup>91</sup> In summary, the structural inquiry proposed

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<sup>88</sup> SOU 2021:25, p. 339.

<sup>89</sup> SOU 2021:25, pp. 339–340.

<sup>90</sup> SOU 2021:25, p. 341.

<sup>91</sup> SOU 2021:25, pp. 342–344; see also Ds 2017:66, pp. 192 et seq.

that the civil areas should follow the division of the collaborative regions, and that the geographical division of the military regions should be altered to correspond to the civil areas.

There was no reorganisation of the military regions to bring them into alignment with the civil areas when the reform entered into force. The Swedish Armed Forces believe that NATO membership may involve changes for the military regions and their units. Therefore, according to the Swedish Armed Forces, a review of the current military and civil regional divisions should await Sweden's full integration into NATO's defence planning.<sup>92</sup>

### **Organisational division of some central government agencies in alignment with the civil areas will facilitate collaboration**

According to the Committee on Defence and the structural inquiry, coordination between different actors is impeded by the lack of consistent organisation of public activities at a regional level.

Other central government agencies follow neither the counties nor the military regions, insofar as they have a regional organisation. For instance, agencies of particular importance for total defence, such as the Swedish Police Authority, the Swedish Security Service and the Swedish Transport Administration, have their own geographical area divisions that do not align with the military regions and counties. It is assumed that the effectiveness of total defence as a whole could be improved if agencies of particular importance for total defence were to adapt their regional organisation to the civil areas.<sup>93</sup>

### **Designated leadership for each civil area will improve the chances of coherent orientation of total defence**

A key premise of total defence is that the command of total defence at regional and local level must work even if central leadership is not fully functional, or if communications are disrupted.<sup>94</sup> The structural inquiry proposed that each civil area should have a county administrative board responsible for the civil area, led by a civil area head. The aim is to create clear leadership and accountability at the higher regional level, which is

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<sup>92</sup> Swedish Armed Forces, *Försvarmaktens reviderade underlag inför kommande försvarsbeslut – bilaga 2*, 2023, p. 29.

<sup>93</sup> SOU 2021:25, p. 346.

<sup>94</sup> Ds 2017:66, p. 65.

expected to provide greater opportunities for a coherent approach to national defence and the effective use of civil and military resources.<sup>95</sup>

According to the structural inquiry, the civil area head is to bear responsibility for maintaining coherence in civil defence preparedness planning, maintaining coherence in planning and measures at a level that transcends county boundaries together with the head of the military region, and acting as a link between agencies at central level and the county administrative boards. It is further assumed that responsibility for preparedness planning being maintained by the civil area head will facilitate planning for sectoral agencies and other actors at a regional level.<sup>96</sup>

The Committee on Defence and the structural inquiry proposed that the civil area head should also have a mandate to coordinate and direct defence efforts during periods of heightened preparedness, and to ensure that the area's assets are allocated and utilised in such a manner as to promote those defence efforts. Regulatory powers would be attached to this. However, these proposals on the mandate for the civil area head have not been incorporated into the Ordinance on county administrative boards responsible for civil areas (2022:525).

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<sup>95</sup> SOU 2021:25, pp. 346–347.

<sup>96</sup> SOU 2021:25, pp. 346–347.

## Appendix 2. List of interviews

### Civil areas

Civil area	Agency/equivalent	Function/role <sup>97</sup>	Date
<b>Central</b>	Södermanland County Administrative Board	Director of preparedness	27 March 2024
	Swedish Police Authority, Bergslagen Police Region	Regional preparedness coordinator	4 April 2024
	Värmland County Administrative Board	Defence director	5 April 2024
	Uppsala County Administrative Board	Defence director; preparedness officer	10 April 2024
	Civil Area Administration at Örebro County Administrative Board	Administration head; administrator; functional manager; administration coordinator	11 April 2024
	Värmland County Administrative Board	County governor	15 April 2024
	Gävleborg County Administrative Board	Head of unit for civil protection and preparedness/defence director; deputy defence director	19 April 2024
	Swedish Transport Administration, Central Region	Head of the preparedness unit; preparedness coordinator for the preparedness unit	19 April 2024
	Örebro County Administrative Board	Director of preparedness; deputy director of preparedness	23 April 2024
	Swedish Armed Forces, Central Military Region	Head of division	24 April 2024
<b>Northern</b>	Västerbotten County Administrative Board	Assistant Head of unit/preparedness director; preparedness officer	20 March 2024

<sup>97</sup> Refers to the function or role held by the individual at the time of the interview.

	Region Västerbotten	Head of unit; preparedness consultant; preparedness coordinator	20 March 2024
	Municipality of Umeå	Head of preparedness; head of security	20 March 2024
	Civil Area Administration at Norrbotten County Administrative Board	Administration head; two operations coordinators	21 March 2024
	Swedish Transport Administration, Northern Region	Head of preparedness	21 March 2024
	Swedish Armed Forces, Northern Military Region	Head of division	21 March 2024
	Swedish Police Authority, Police Region North	Regional coordinator	3 April 2024
	Jämtland County Administrative Board	Defence director	8 April 2024
<b>South East</b>	Kalmar County Administrative Board	Director of preparedness	13 March 2024
	Civil Area Administration at Östergötland County Administrative Board	Administration head; civil area officer	15 March 2024
	Municipality of Linköping	Head of security; two security strategists	18 March 2024
	Swedish Police Authority, Police Region East	Chief Superintendent	19 March 2024
	Swedish Armed Forces, Southern Military Region	Head of division	26 February 2024
<b>Southern</b>	Swedish Armed Forces, Southern Military Region	Head of division	26 February 2024
	Skåne County Administrative Board; Civil Area Administration at Skåne County Administrative Board	County governor/civil area head; county director general; administration head	27 February 2024

	City of Malmö	Director of security; director of sustainability	27 February 2024
	Region Skåne	Head of preparedness and security protection, also head of the preparedness unit; employees at the preparedness unit	27 February 2024
	Swedish Transport Administration, Southern Region	Head of preparedness	28 February 2024
	Kronoberg County Administrative Board	Defence director	5 March 2024
	Blekinge County Administrative Board	Defence director	08 March 2024
<b>Western</b>	Swedish Armed Forces, Western Military Region	Head of division	15 April 2024
	Civil Area Administration at Västra Götaland County Administrative Board	Administration head; two administrators	16 April 2024
	Swedish Police Authority, Police Region West	Total defence coordinator	16 April 2024
	Västra Götaland County Administrative Board	Head of unit for civil protection and preparedness/defence director; head of civil preparedness planning function	17 April 2024
	Swedish Transport Administration, Western Region	Regional director	17 April 2024
	Halland County Administrative Board	Head of unit for preparedness matters/preparedness director	19 April 2024
	Västra Götaland Region	Head of the security and preparedness division	23 April 2024
	City of Gothenburg	Head of security, also head of security protection	24 April 2024

<b>Eastern</b>	City of Stockholm	Director of security, also head of security protection; security strategist	11 March 2024
	Civil Area Administration at Stockholm County Administrative Board	Administration head; deputy administration head; coordinator; administrator	15 March 2024
	Swedish Transport Administration, Eastern Region	Preparedness coordinator	22 March 2024
	Region Gotland	Acting head of the preparedness unit	26 March 2024
	Gotland County Administrative Board	Defence director	26 March 2024
	Stockholm County Administrative Board	Head of the civil defence unit; preparedness officer	5 April 2024
	Swedish Police Authority, Stockholm Police Region	Head of the preparedness planning group; operations development officer	22 April 2024
	Region Stockholm	Acting director for security and preparedness; head of unit for disaster medical preparedness; chief medical officer, also head of division	29 April 2024
	Swedish Armed Forces, P 18 Gotland Regiment	Head of division	07 August 2024

## Other interviews

Agency/equivalent	Function/role	Date
Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency	Deputy head of crisis preparedness and civil defence division, also chief of staff; strategist; head of civil preparedness planning unit.	15 August 2024
Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency	Acting head of the collaboration and command unit; administrator for the collaboration and command unit	15 August 2024

## Other meetings

Agency/equivalent	Function/role	Date
Örebro County Administrative Board	County governor/civil area head; county director	12 June 2024