



— NLA RECOMMENDATIONS

# The Nordic Model for Military Mobility

Recommendations for Integrating Road Transport  
into Europe's Total Defence

# Contents

The Need for a Joint Strategy	03
Executive Summary	04
A Nordic Experience for Total Defence Mobility	05
Operational Principles of the Nordic Model	06
Remove Barriers to Military Mobility in the EU	09
Driver Training	10
Vehicle and Capacity Mapping	11
Driving and Rest Time	12
Dual-Use of Road Infrastructure	13
Energy Independence and Availability of Fuels	14
Digitalisation and Cybersecurity	15
Civil-Military Coordination	16
Commercial and Contractual Frameworks	17
Conclusions	18
Contact	19

# The Need for a Joint Strategy

Europe's security environment has fundamentally changed. Resilience is no longer a supporting concept but a strategic necessity – and the road transport sector is indispensable to it.

Today's threats extend beyond the military domain, requiring preparedness across all sectors of society. Hybrid challenges increasingly strain economic stability, energy systems, and supply chains. These vulnerabilities highlight the need for a more integrated approach to total defence, where infrastructure and logistics networks can withstand disruption and enable rapid responses.

In this context, the transport sector is indispensable. Acting decisively in times of crisis requires the removal of barriers that constrain both civilian and military logistics. This demands a clear legislative framework, streamlined procedures, and coordination between civilian and military actors.

The Nordic road transport industry stands ready to contribute. A survey among the **14,000 member companies** of the Nordic Logistics Association confirms strong

willingness to support civil preparedness and military mobility. The Nordic countries provide an operational model, integrating civil logistics into preparedness through structured public–private cooperation.

Across much of Europe, transport has been optimised for efficiency. The Nordic experience shows that **embedding resilience strengthens crisis response and everyday performance.**

This paper sets out concrete measures to better align the transport sector with defence structures across Europe. It identifies regulatory, operational and governance steps needed to enhance mobilisation capacity and civil–military coordination. The proposals draw on Nordic experiences to demonstrate how preparedness can be integrated without undermining market efficiency or climate objectives.

# Executive Summary

Hybrid threats, geopolitical instability and systemic disruptions increasingly challenge the ability of European societies to function under crisis conditions. Resilience, preparedness and rapid mobility are core requirements – not optional additions.

Transport systems – and in particular road freight transport – are central to this challenge. Road transport is the most flexible, scalable and rapidly deployable mode across Europe, and underpins defence logistics, emergency response, energy and food supply chains, and the functioning of the internal market.

Yet Europe's current framework for military mobility and crisis preparedness remains fragmented. Regulatory divergence, limited civil–military coordination, insufficient visibility of available assets, workforce shortages and energy

vulnerabilities continue to constrain effective mobilisation.

Drawing on Nordic experience, this paper demonstrates how resilience can be embedded into transport systems through a **dual-use approach**, in which civilian logistics capacity is systematically integrated into total defence structures.

In the Nordic countries, preparedness is treated as a design principle for transport governance, infrastructure planning and public–private cooperation. This approach enables rapid mobilisation in crisis while strengthening efficiency and competitiveness in peacetime.

# A Nordic Experience for Total Defence Mobility

Long distances, low population density, a demanding climate and a heightened security environment have shaped Nordic transport systems for robustness, continuity and rapid mobilisation.

The European Union is entering a new strategic phase in which resilience, preparedness and security of supply are becoming core pillars of competitiveness and stability. Recent geopolitical developments, hybrid threats and systemic disruptions have demonstrated that the functioning of society and the internal market depends on transport systems that remain operational under crisis conditions.

Road freight transport is a critical enabler in this context. As the most flexible, scalable and rapidly deployable mode, it underpins supply chains, emergency response and defence logistics.

The Nordic countries provide a highly relevant experience. Their conditions have required transport systems designed for robustness, continuity and rapid mobilisation. This has fostered a governance model where civil transport capacity is an integral part of national preparedness – public authorities and private operators cooperate within structured resilience frameworks.

In many other parts of Europe, transport systems have evolved primarily under

efficiency and market-integration objectives with shorter transport distances and denser infrastructure networks. Preparedness has typically been addressed through sectoral emergency planning rather than through integrated transport system design. As a result, resilience arrangements are frequently fragmented and dependent on ad-hoc coordination.

The Nordic experience illustrates the value of **embedding preparedness into the core architecture of transport policy** rather than treating it as an auxiliary function. Institutionalised public-private cooperation, predefined mobilisation mechanisms and infrastructure built for continuity under stress conditions enable faster response, lower systemic risk and more efficient use of existing civil capacity.

For the European Union, these lessons are directly relevant. As the EU advances its agenda on military mobility, crisis preparedness and strategic autonomy, integrating resilience requirements into transport governance, funding instruments and regulatory frameworks will be essential.

# Operational Principles of the Nordic Model

These principles reflect practical experience from transport systems designed to function under demanding geographic, climatic and security conditions, where civil logistics capacity forms an integral component of national preparedness structures.

While the Nordic countries share common institutional traditions and strategic approaches, their systems are not uniform. Some countries have developed more advanced mobilisation frameworks and operational structures, while others are earlier in the process of integrating civil transport capacity into preparedness planning.

Nevertheless, the shared direction of travel and accumulated regional experience provide a coherent model with valuable lessons for the European level:

---

## A

### **Dual-use by design**

Road infrastructure, vehicle fleets, energy systems and digital platforms are planned to serve both civilian and defence purposes. Investments are assessed not only for commercial efficiency but for their ability to support mobilisation and crisis response.

---

## B

### **Operational capability alongside infrastructure**

Infrastructure alone does not guarantee mobility. Equal emphasis is placed on available vehicle fleets, trained drivers, maintenance and repair, dispatch and control systems, and functioning logistics chains.

---

## C

### **Private operators as strategic capacity**

Most road freight capacity in the Nordic region is privately owned. Preparedness systems include transport companies as structured partners, with frameworks for cooperation, mobilisation procedures and compensation.

---

---

**D****Seamless cross-border functionality**

Nordic cooperation has prioritised the reduction of administrative and regulatory barriers that impede cross-border transport in crisis situations. Alignment of procedures, mutual recognition and digitalisation of documentation steadily improve the ability to move goods and equipment when time is critical.

---

**E****Energy and digital resilience as integral components**

Preparedness considerations extend beyond vehicles to fuel supply, energy infrastructure, backup power and the reliability of digital systems. Cybersecurity, data integrity and continuity of digital logistics platforms are core elements of resilience.

---

**F****Economic viability of preparedness**

Resilience entails additional costs – reserve capacity and higher robustness standards. Public policy and funding instruments seek to ensure that preparedness investments remain commercially viable so private operators can sustain long-term participation.

---

**STRUCTURED PUBLIC-PRIVATE ARRANGEMENTS**

Across the Nordic region, cooperation frameworks between public authorities and private operators have been developed to support mobilisation planning. Contractual mechanisms and compensation principles offer a constructive approach to addressing operational responsibilities and commercial implications.

# Recommendations

Nine priority areas where EU policy and implementation should be strengthened to ensure seamless civilian–military logistics in times of crisis.

---

01 Remove Barriers to Military Mobility

02 Driver Training

---

03 Vehicle and Capacity Mapping

---

04 Driving and Rest Time

---

05 Dual-Use of Road Infrastructure

---

06 Energy Independence and Fuels

---

07 Digitalisation and Cybersecurity

---

08 Civil–Military Coordination

---

09 Commercial and Contractual Frameworks

---

## RECOMMENDATION 01

# Remove Barriers to Military Mobility

The Commission's Military Mobility Package — aiming to establish a "military Schengen" by 2027 — is a timely step. Achieving this requires greater harmonisation of rules across Member States.

Removing barriers to military mobility requires coordinated action across regulatory, operational and commercial dimensions. The European Commission's Military Mobility Package, aiming to establish a "military Schengen" by 2027, is an important and timely step towards enabling the rapid and seamless movement of troops and equipment across Europe.

Military transport is highly specialised, often involving abnormal loads and vehicle combinations exceeding standard weight and dimension limits. The current European framework remains fragmented, with a patchwork of national regulations — covering signage, permitting procedures, and weights and dimensions — continuing to hinder cross-border operations. Such fragmentation is incompatible with the demands of crisis response and military readiness.

## Weights and Dimensions

The Military Mobility Package offers a crucial opportunity to harmonise the rules for road transport in general. This should reflect the Nordic dual-use approach, where infrastructure and regulatory frameworks are designed to serve both civilian and defence needs. Upgrading infrastructure for military purposes should be accompanied by a review of weights and dimensions limits for civilian transport, so that preparedness investments also benefit civilian transport efficiency.

Across the Nordic countries, dialogue between governments, armed forces, civil society, and industry is already underway. The priority now is acceleration: aligning initiatives, removing remaining barriers, and translating commitments into concrete action.

## RECOMMENDATION 02

# Driver Training

Closer alignment between military training and civilian workforce needs can address persistent driver shortages while reinforcing societal resilience.

Nordic hauliers stand ready to contribute to total defence and societal preparedness. Road transport companies already provide logistical support, equipment and personnel availability, while facilitating employees' service in reserve forces and home guard structures.

Close cooperation between the civilian road transport sector and the armed forces is essential to guarantee the availability of vehicles, drivers, and logistical capabilities, thereby enabling efficient and reliable military mobility.

The ongoing expansion of conscription presents a significant opportunity to strengthen driver recruitment. Many conscripts acquire valuable vehicle and logistics competencies that are directly relevant to the road transport sector.

**Finland provides a strong example.**

Military driver training schools serve as the

country's largest provider of heavy goods vehicle licences and Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) training, supporting both defence needs and the civilian transport sector through a dual-use approach.

EU-wide training requirements for drivers supporting military mobility should be based on shared responsibility between the armed forces and transport operators, reflecting the dual-use nature of these capabilities.

Operational effectiveness depends on continuity. **In most scenarios, the driver should follow the vehicle.** Vehicles made available for military mobility should, where possible, be operated by the drivers who manage them in daily operations. This enhances safety, efficiency, and readiness.

## RECOMMENDATION 03

# Vehicle and Capacity Mapping

Without clarity on what vehicle types and operational capabilities exist – and where – authorities cannot effectively plan mobilisation or match resources to operational needs.

NLA member companies are ready to support military mobility by providing vehicles, drivers, refuelling capacity, maintenance and repair services. However, the lack of a reliable and harmonised overview of available transport assets constitutes a structural weakness in total defence planning.

A comprehensive mapping of available vehicles and their capabilities is therefore long overdue and should be prioritised at EU level, with the aim of establishing a **common European standard for data collection, classification and updating**.

To ensure that armed forces have an accurate and continuously updated overview, Finland's motor vehicle register provides a relevant operational model.

Extending this approach across the EU would strengthen preparedness and situational awareness. Once established, regular updates could be integrated into existing mandatory roadworthiness inspections.

## Vehicle identification

Military transport operations can take place individually or in convoy. In the latter case, they are likely to be accompanied by a military escort. Individual military transport operations may be carried out by civilian vehicle combinations that benefit from certain exemptions and derogations. It will be important for enforcement authorities to recognise such vehicles to avoid unnecessary stops or roadside checks.

## RECOMMENDATION 04

# Driving and Rest Time

## Driving and Rest Time Derogations under EMERS

NLA notes that the European Commission proposes introducing temporary derogations from the rules on driving time and rest periods for military transport operations during the activation of the European Military Mobility Enhanced Response System (EMERS).

These proposed changes could create significant interpretation challenges. Adding a new set of rules on top of the already complex existing framework would also make the regulatory system more difficult to understand and apply.

NLA therefore proposes that **EMERS should instead be introduced as a separate exemption within the mobile workers' working time rules.**

This exemption should not be included in Article 13 of the Driving and Rest Time Regulation, which concerns national exemptions, as this would leave implementation to the discretion of individual Member States. At the same

time, EMERS should remain subject to the mobile workers' working time rules – and therefore should not be implemented under Article 3, which concerns international exemptions and would place it under the general working time framework.

## Cabotage Exemptions

With regard to proposed exemptions from cabotage rules, NLA considers it crucial to ensure that such exemptions do not lead to abuse or circumvention within the civilian transport market. Enforcement must remain feasible when the same vehicles perform both exempt and non-exempt cabotage operations.

This concern applies where civilian operators carrying out military transport are exempted from cabotage rules, including during EMERS activation. Such exemptions, particularly regarding limits on duration and frequency, may create enforcement challenges when the same vehicles perform both exempt and non-exempt operations.

## RECOMMENDATION 05

# Dual-Use of Road Infrastructure

NLA welcomes the Commission's focus on the resilience of transport infrastructure – including preparation of the network for dual use and identification of strategic dual-use infrastructure and its protection.

Preparing the transport network for dual use will accelerate road upgrades and benefit civilian use. It also aligns with the Nordic dual-use approach to infrastructure planning.

Unfortunately, insufficient consideration is given to the deployment of **alternative fuels infrastructure on the dual-use road network**. The proposal does not fully recognise that the civilian vehicle fleet will increasingly switch to cleaner fuels over time.

The upgrading of infrastructure will also have implications for the private sector involved in infrastructure projects, such as the establishment of fuelling facilities or safe and secure truck parking areas. The upgrading of infrastructure for dual-use or strategic importance may require additional obligations from private stakeholders for which they should also be duly compensated.

## WHY THIS MATTERS

Investments in dual-use infrastructure must look beyond pavement and bridges. Refuelling and charging hubs, secure truck parking and resilient power supply are equally critical to ensure the network can carry both civilian freight and military mobility under normal and crisis conditions.

## RECOMMENDATION 06

# Energy Independence and Availability of Fuels

Crisis situations may disrupt fuel supply chains, electricity networks and critical energy infrastructure – directly affecting the continuity of transport operations.

Transport resilience depends not only on vehicles and infrastructure, but on secure and reliable access to energy.

Preparedness planning must therefore ensure fuel security, diversified energy sources and resilient supply systems.

This includes maintaining strategic fuel reserves, ensuring priority access to fuel for critical transport operations, and safeguarding key distribution nodes such as depots, terminals and refuelling corridors. Disruptions affecting a limited number of facilities can have disproportionate system-wide consequences.

As the vehicle fleet gradually electrifies, resilience considerations must extend to charging infrastructure and power systems. **Grid capacity, redundancy in electricity supply, backup power generation and protected charging hubs**

**for priority fleets become essential.**

Electrification strategies should therefore incorporate contingency solutions such as mobile charging units, reserve generation capacity and priority grid access for critical logistics functions.

These considerations reflect the Nordic principle of energy and digital resilience as integral components of transport preparedness.

The issue is highly relevant across several ongoing EU policy files, including the revision of the TEN-T Regulation, the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR), EU energy security and grid resilience frameworks, and the Military Mobility Package. A balanced approach combining fuel availability, electrification resilience and contingency energy systems is critical.

## RECOMMENDATION 07

# Digitalisation and Cybersecurity

## **Military Mobility Digital Information System**

The Commission proposes establishing a secure and restricted Military Mobility Digital Information System. Digital systems are critical to transport continuity and crisis response. Military mobility and civil logistics both depend on reliable data flows, real-time information sharing and trusted digital documentation.

While the EU prioritises the digitalisation of civilian freight transport — particularly replacing paper documents with digital datasets — this ambition is not equally reflected in the area of military mobility.

**A stronger commitment from both the Commission and Member States is needed.**

For the system to function effectively, it must be interoperable and adopted by all Member States. Seamless data exchange between military and civilian logistics players is essential for effective coordination, rapid deployment and cross-border operations.

The system is also critical for digital customs clearance and permitting of military goods. Its implementation should therefore be prioritised — waiting until 2030 may be too late.

Practical requirements include secure digital transport documents, interoperable fleet management systems, protected communications networks, real-time situational awareness tools and digital customs and permitting procedures. These systems must remain operational under stress, including through backup servers, redundant communications and secured data environments.

## **Cybersecurity**

Such a system will be a high-value target for cyber threats. Its development should be accompanied by stronger cybersecurity measures across civil government, military institutions, and civilian transport and logistics providers. Increased digitalisation expands the attack surface, making cybersecurity a core resilience requirement rather than a supporting measure.

The Commission's proposal does not sufficiently address the need for research into efficient and affordable cybersecurity solutions. Greater awareness of existing EU legislation — such as the Cyber Resilience Act and the NIS2 Directive — is particularly important for road freight transport companies that could join the Solidarity Pool or support military mobility operations.

## RECOMMENDATION 08

# Civil–Military Coordination

In crisis situations, fragmented responsibilities and unclear communication channels can delay mobilisation and reduce operational effectiveness.

Effective military mobility depends on institutional cooperation between Member States and structured coordination between public authorities, armed forces and civilian transport operators.

The European Commission has proposed establishing a Military Mobility Transport Group to strengthen cooperation among Member States. While this initiative is welcome, **it does not foresee participation from representatives of the civilian transport and logistics sector.**

We strongly call on EU decision-makers to include the sector in this group so that the expertise of the civilian road transport and logistics industry can be fully utilised. In the Nordic countries, the sector already provides support and expertise to facilitate

military road transport operations – an approach that could be replicated at the European level to the benefit of all parties involved.

Preparedness frameworks should establish clear coordination mechanisms, defined roles and permanent dialogue structures between civilian logistics providers and defence authorities.

The issue is closely linked to ongoing EU initiatives, including the Military Mobility Package, the EU's Preparedness Strategy and civil protection coordination frameworks. Ensuring systematic inclusion of the civilian logistics sector within these structures would strengthen Europe's collective readiness.

## RECOMMENDATION 09

# Commercial and Contractual Frameworks

Resilient road freight systems cannot rely on voluntary or ad-hoc arrangements in times of crisis. Mobilisation requires predictable legal, financial and contractual frameworks.

Most of Europe's heavy-duty vehicle capacity is privately owned and operated in competitive markets, tied to long-term investments and binding customer contracts. Redirecting vehicles and personnel to defence or emergency tasks therefore creates real economic consequences that require structured compensation and risk-sharing mechanisms.

Effective preparedness frameworks should include **pre-agreed contractual models, clear activation procedures and transparent compensation schemes** — such as standby arrangements, availability payments and mechanisms to offset commercial losses.

This reflects an important feature of Nordic preparedness systems, where cooperation between authorities and the road freight industry increasingly builds on formalised agreements and shared-responsibility

models. Although national arrangements vary and remain under development, there is a growing understanding that preparedness entails commercial consequences that require structured solutions to sustain operational readiness.

At EU level, this commercial dimension remains underdeveloped. The Military Mobility Package focuses primarily on infrastructure and regulatory facilitation, while funding instruments such as the Connecting Europe Facility, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and relevant defence and resilience programmes could more clearly support dual-use fleet investments, standby capacity and risk-sharing mechanisms.

A credible commercial and financial foundation ensures that civilian truck capacity can be mobilised reliably, fairly and at scale when societal resilience depends on it.

## PART III – OUTLOOK

# Conclusions

The EU must move from fragmented and reactive arrangements towards a fully integrated, operational system for military mobility – shifting from viewing transport as an economic function to recognising it as a strategic capability within Europe's total defence framework.

**01 Adopt a dual-use-by-design approach**

across transport policy, infrastructure funding and regulatory frameworks, ensuring civilian systems can support defence needs without duplication.

**02 Deliver regulatory harmonisation at scale**

particularly through implementation of a functioning "Military Schengen", reducing administrative and legal barriers to cross-border mobility.

**03 Institutionalise civil-military cooperation**

including the formal inclusion of the road transport sector in EU coordination bodies and preparedness structures.

**04 Shift focus from infrastructure to full system capability**

vehicles, drivers, energy supply, digital systems and logistics operations all part of preparedness planning.

**05 Harmonise rules on weights and dimensions**

to enable cross-border movement of heavy military equipment while unlocking efficiency gains for civilian transport.

**06 Establish an EU framework for driving and rest time in crisis**

by introducing EMERS as a distinct exemption under the working time regime.

**07 Accelerate digital implementation**

prioritising interoperability, real-time data exchange and cybersecurity resilience across civilian and military systems.

**08 Integrate energy security and electrification resilience**

into transport and defence planning, ensuring continuity under disrupted conditions.

**09 Establish clear commercial frameworks**

including funding mechanisms and compensation models, enabling reliable mobilisation of private sector capacity.

**10 Strengthen workforce resilience**

particularly through dual-use training systems for both military and civilian driver needs.

Translating political ambition into operational capability must now become the central priority.

# Get in touch

For dialogue on the proposals in this paper, or to discuss the Nordic experience and its application at European level.



## Torsten Laksafoss Holbek

CEO, Nordic Logistics  
Association



+32 474 048 005



tlh@nla.eu



nla.eu/contact

## Nordic Logistics Association

Avenue des Arts 50  
1000 Brussels

ISSUED

2026

TITLE

The Nordic Model for  
Military Mobility

## About NLA

The Nordic Logistics Association (NLA) represents approximately 14,000 road transport companies across the Nordic region. Together, these companies operate more than 85,000 heavy-duty vehicles and employ over 160,000 people.

NLA's members are the Danish Transport and Logistics (DTL), the Swedish Association of Road Transport Companies (SÅ), the Norwegian Road Transport Association (NLF), and its associated member, the Finnish Transport and Logistics (SKAL).

## Contact us:

Oscar Hyléen: [oscar.hyleen@akeri.se](mailto:oscar.hyleen@akeri.se)

Chairman, Nordic Logistics Association (NLA)  
CEO, Swedish Association of Road Transport Companies (SÅ)

Erik Østergaard: [ee@dtl.eu](mailto:ee@dtl.eu)

CEO, Danish Transport and Logistics (DTL)

Knut Gravråk: [kg@lastebil.no](mailto:kg@lastebil.no)

CEO, Norwegian Road Transport Association (NLF)

Anssi Kujala: [anssi.kujala@skal.fi](mailto:anssi.kujala@skal.fi)

CEO, Finnish Transport and Logistics (SKAL)