



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
DEFENCE FORCES

Lieutenant General Jan Swillens
Commander of the Royal Netherlands Army
Royal Netherlands Army
Ministry of Defence
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53.07.2026 No 3.5-1/26/ 398

Dear General Swillens,

Dear Jan,

I am writing to you in order to support the organisers of the 2026 Annual Baltic Conference on Defence (ABCD) invitation to you to come and participate in the conference as a speaker. It will be held in Tallinn on 22-23 September 2026. The theme of the conference this year is „Choosing to Win: Building Confidence in Complexity“.

The International Centre for Defence and Security arranges such conferences every year in September and I would like to emphasize the importance of such events in the Baltic region, on NATO's eastern flank. The Estonian Defence Week that will be held during the same week complements perfectly regional defence discussions during the ABCD.

It would be a great honour, if you could come and speak at the conference. Your visit would also provide an opportunity to discuss the most recent developments and challenges in the region as well as issues of mutual interest.

We are looking forward to hosting you in Estonia in September.

Yours Sincerely,

Indrek Sirel
Major General
Commanding General
Estonian Division

*In addition to the
Def Min letter.
Looking forward to see
you
(will work on additional
items beside ABCD
during the visit) Indrek*

KV 003453



LtGen Jan Swillens
Commander
Royal Netherlands Army

01 July 2026
Tallinn, Estonia

Dear Lieutenant General,

It is our great pleasure to invite you to participate as a guest and a speaker at the **20th Annual Baltic Conference on Defence (ABCD)**, taking place on **22-23 September 2026** in Tallinn, Estonia.

ABCD is organised by the International Centre for Defence and Security (ICDS) and the Estonian Ministry of Defence. For two decades, ABCD has been a prominent regional forum bringing together policymakers, military leaders, and academics to discuss key issues in transatlantic, European, and regional defence.

Today, Europe is spending more on defence than at any point since the Cold War, yet the gap between defence needs and actual combat power has never been more consequential. ABCD 2026 titled "Choosing to Win: Building Confidence in Complexity" will examine what it truly takes to deter, defend, and prevail — drawing on battlefield lessons from Ukraine, taking account of the fractures in and strengths of the transatlantic alliance, and reflecting on the hard questions that surround escalation, endurance, and success.

For the second time, ABCD will take place as part of the [Estonian Defence Week \(EDW\)](#) - a week tying together series of events showcasing Estonia's defence sector. This year's Estonian Defence Week is titled "How to Win the Next War?" reflecting the changes on and off the battlefield. EDW takes place on 21-25 September and includes ABCD, Defence Exhibition by local and international exhibitors, NATO Open Innovation Conference (NATO ACT), Defence Innovation Day (Tehnopol and NATO DIANA), Estonian Defence Industry Symposium (EDIA), hackathons and other side events.

We would be grateful if you could accept the invitation to join us at this year's ABCD as a speaker. We kindly ask you to confirm your attendance to Ms Nele Loorents (nele.loorents@icds.ee), Director of the Conference. Nele stands ready to answer any questions you may have.

For more information, please visit our website: <https://abcd.icds.ee/>.

We hope to see you in Tallinn this autumn.

Yours sincerely,

Kristi Raik
Director
International Centre for Defence and Security

Hanno Pevkur
Minister of Defence