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## **National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21\***

**Estonia**

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



## **I. Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

1. The Estonian Government values the importance of ensuring and promoting human rights as enshrined in international instruments and cooperating in the field of human rights with international organisations and other States. Estonia is committed to fulfilling its reporting obligations to UN treaty bodies and other international organisations. Estonia has issued a standing invitation to the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) provides a good basis for States to review their human rights activities and plan for the future. This third UPR and the mid-term report of 2018 continue the dialogue of the second UPR of 2016.

### **Reporting process<sup>2</sup>**

2. The report gives an overview of legislation, national action plans, policies and practices pertaining to human rights. References are made to recommendations by States in the course of the previous UPR. It has not been possible to address all human rights and fundamental freedoms in detail, and thus the report covers the issues that have deserved particular attention at national or international level in recent years.

3. This report has been compiled under the coordination of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with other Ministries that provided an overview of developments in their areas of governance. The draft report was sent to human rights NGOs in Estonia for feedback. The Estonian Institute of Human Rights and the Estonian Human Rights Centre on behalf of the Equal Treatment Network provided their comments on the report. The Equal Treatment Network also presented its own report to the Human Rights Council. For the first time, the Chancellor of Justice as the body fulfilling the functions of a National Human Rights Institution, plans to submit a separate report.

4. The Estonian Government values cooperation with civil society organisations in the human rights review procedure and highlights their continuous efforts in raising public awareness. A discussion organised by the Estonian Human Rights Centre at the annual Opinion Festival in August 2020 focused on the UPR process.

## **II. Promotion and protection of human rights – Follow-up of recommendations from the previous cycle**

### **A. Developments in the legal framework and policies since the previous review**

#### **Accession to international human rights instruments and future plans<sup>3</sup>**

5. In 2017, Estonia ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), effective in respect of Estonia as of 1 February 2018.

6. In 2016, Estonia ratified the Protocol of 2014 to the ILO Forced Labour Convention adopted in 1930, effective in respect of Estonia as of 24 November 2017.

7. On 17 July 2018, the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court over the crime of aggression was activated. In 2013, Estonia was one of the first countries to ratify the amendments to Article 8 of the Rome Statute.

8. Estonia is continuing national consultations and preparations for accession to the following international conventions: UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

9. The competent authorities of Estonia have analysed the United Nations conventions on statelessness (1954 UN Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness) and have come to the conclusion that there is

currently no need to become a party to these conventions, as national legislation provides an extensive protection for stateless persons, who in Estonia are primarily persons with undetermined citizenship. Ongoing measures to promote Estonian citizenship are addressed below.

10. Possible accession to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, ILO Domestic Workers Convention No. 189, Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights is currently on hold pending further developments and analyses.

## **B. Developments in the institutional framework in the protection of human rights**

### **Establishment of a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI)<sup>4</sup>**

11. One of the most important developments in recent years has been the establishment of a national institution for the promotion and protection of human rights. The Chancellor of Justice was assigned the functions of a NHRI on 1 January 2019 in compliance with the Paris Principles. The Chancellor of Justice has applied for NHRI accreditation, and has expanded her Office to include a head of NHRI activities responsible for coordinating the work of the advisers to the Chancellor who contribute to fulfilling the mandate of the Office as an NHRI. In 2019 the Advisory Committee on Human Rights was set up by the Chancellor with the task of advising the Chancellor in the promotion and protection of human rights and in monitoring the human rights situation. The Chancellor has become a member of the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions, and participates in bilateral and multilateral international cooperation between NHRIs.

### **Establishment of a supervisory mechanism for the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>5</sup>**

12. Since 1 January 2019, the Chancellor of Justice has performed the functions of an independent mechanism to promote, uphold and monitor implementation of the Convention under Article 33(2). The Chancellor ensures that all persons with disabilities are able to exercise their fundamental rights and freedoms on an equal basis with others. The Chancellor of Justice has set up an advisory body to involve persons with disabilities in the performance of these functions.

### **Creation of a position of special human rights and migration representative**

13. In 2020, the Minister of Foreign Affairs appointed the first diplomatic representative with a special mandate in human rights and migration, tasked with active participation in various international human rights organisations to communicate official positions on the regulation of migration issues in cooperation with other countries.

## **C. Implementation of human rights**

### **Elections**

14. An important amendment has been introduced in Estonian election law whereby the voting age in local elections has been lowered from 18 to 16. This required amendment of the Constitution. Young people between 16 and 18 participated in local elections for the first time in 2017.

15. In 2005, Estonia was the first country to introduce nation-wide Internet voting (i-voting). I-voting is possible during advance voting with an ID-card or Mobile ID for voter identification. Over the years, i-voting has gained popularity and the trust of voters as an alternative to traditional voting. Everyone still has the right to cast a vote in person on the day of the election or during advance voting. Many measures have been introduced to make voting stations accessible to persons with reduced mobility, and an option to vote at home is

available for those who cannot go to a voting station for health reasons, if they so request in advance.

16. There have been a total of 10 elections with the option of i-voting. Whereas in 2005, 2% of voters opted for i-voting, by 2019 the share of i-voters had grown to 28% of eligible voters. In the 2019 parliamentary elections, 43.7% of the people who voted did so over the Internet from a total of 143 countries. In the 2019 European Parliament elections, 46.7% of votes were cast over the Internet from a total of 109 countries.

#### **Equality, prohibition of discrimination<sup>6</sup>**

17. The prohibition of discrimination is established in § 12 of the Constitution, whereby everyone is equal before the law. No one shall be discriminated against on the basis of nationality, race, colour, sex, language, origin, religion, political or other beliefs, property or social status, or on other grounds. Specific provisions are set out in various legislation, including the Equal Treatment Act, Gender Equality Act, Employment Contracts Act and Penal Code. § 152 of the Penal Code provides for punishments for violation of equality.

18. To combat discrimination on the labour market, efforts are made to raise the awareness of employers, where cooperation with civil society plays an important role. The Ministry of Social Affairs in cooperation with the Estonian Human Rights Centre has launched a Diverse Workplace label to recognise companies that systematically promote diversity. As of 2020, 130 organisations and companies have acceded to the Estonian Diversity Charter, thereby committing to promoting diversity and equal opportunities among their employees, partners and clients. Diversity is also in focus on the annual Diversity Day, with activities organised by the cultural associations of national minorities and others.

19. In 2019, the Government set up an accessibility task force as part of its 2019–2023 action plan. The task force focused on a large-scale mapping of issues, and proposals were made to the Government in October 2020. One of the conclusions was that non-compliance with current accessibility requirements continues to pose a challenge. The final report will be submitted to the Government in 2021 with proposals on how to improve accessibility.

20. In 2020, the Ministry of Social Affairs initiated an Equal Treatment Campaign to break stereotypes and prejudices regarding different minority groups, promote understanding and solidarity among various social groups and reduce discrimination by setting a good example.

21. An important role is played by both the Chancellor of Justice and the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner in promoting equality and ensuring and exercising supervision over compliance with current legislation.

22. The Chancellor of Justice reviews the compliance of acts of general application with the Constitution and laws and exercises supervision over the activities of representatives of public authority. The Chancellor ensures that the actions of authorities performing public law functions do not violate constitutional rights or freedoms. The Chancellor conducts conciliation proceedings in discrimination disputes between persons governed by private law, and promotes the principles of equality and equal treatment.

23. The Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner advises and assists people who believe they have been discriminated against.

24. The Commissioner monitors compliance with the requirements of the Gender Equality Act and the Equal Treatment Act. The Commissioner is an advisory body to the Government, government authorities and municipalities. The Commissioner promotes gender equality and equal treatment, and proposes amendments to legislation. The Commissioner also acts as the point of contact for EU Member States for the purpose of supporting the exercise of the right to free movement of workers of nationals of EU Member States, EEA countries and their family members.

25. State budget allocations for the activities of the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner have consistently increased, e.g. from EUR 167,116 in 2015 to EUR 506,956 in 2020.

### **Gender equality – achievements, challenges and measures<sup>7</sup>**

26. In 2016, the Government approved the “Welfare Development Plan for 2016–2023”, which aims to reduce social inequality and poverty, promote gender equality and increase social inclusion. One of four sub-goals is the promotion and achievement of gender equality. The gender equality policies of the Development Plan are implemented through four-year rolling Gender Equality Programme(s) (2019–2022 and 2020–2023 are the latest).

27. Measures planned in the Development Plan and the Programme(s) range from awareness raising to legislative initiatives, including both special measures to promote gender equality and activities that support the implementation of gender mainstreaming. To reduce gender inequality, prevent its resurgence and achieve gender equality in different spheres of life, attention is paid to reducing gender stereotypes that cause gender inequality and their negative impact. The measures are also aimed at enhancing the protection of rights and ensuring institutional capacity, including the analysis and management capabilities necessary for the promotion of gender equality. Implementation of the Development Plan and the Programme(s) is monitored through indicators. Activities are funded from state budget and foreign financing.

28. In 2015, a competence centre was established to support gender mainstreaming and implementation of equal treatment, including accessibility, in the use of EU Structural and Investment Funds. The centre has published information materials and guidelines for implementation agencies and intermediate bodies, and has provided training and counselling. In 2018, information materials were published for parents and science club instructors to support and raise interest among girls in natural sciences and technology. The centre coordinates cooperation of the equal opportunities network in promoting gender equality and guaranteeing equal treatment when using funding from the EU Structural and Investment Funds.

29. Norway Grants co-funding is being used to set up a virtual gender equality competence centre to make available a wide range of information, including data, studies, training materials, study programmes for teachers and other important stakeholders, including employers and policymakers.

30. There are less women than men in politics and among decision-makers, although the situation has recently improved. Whereas in 2020 women accounted for 29% of members of Parliament and 13% of members of Government, with the new Government in January 2021, 46.8 % of ministers, including the Prime Minister, are women.

### **Gender pay gap<sup>8</sup>**

31. The gender pay gap has been the subject of interest and wide discussions in society, involving various stakeholders, including organisations of employees and employers and civil society. Although the gender pay gap in Estonia is still the widest in the EU, according to Eurostat, it has slowly decreased over the last years, from 29.9% in 2012 to 21.8% in 2018.

32. On Equal Pay Day, the Ministry of Social Affairs in co-operation with civil society organisations has conducted various awareness-raising activities to draw attention to the unequal pay of men and women, reasons therefor and the need and possibilities to reduce the gap.

33. From 2019 to 2021, Tallinn University, TalTech and Statistics Estonia will carry out a project to analyse the still unexplained part of the gender pay gap. The project aims to identify further reasons for the pay gap, and to develop evidence-based tools and potential solutions for reducing the pay gap.

34. Gender segregation in education and the labour market remains high in Estonia. Women often dominate in professions that are of critical importance to society but that are not very highly rewarded financially, such as in the social and educational domains. At the same time, men tend to study and work in areas of greater growth potential and higher salaries, such as ICT.

35. In 2017, the Ministry of Social Affairs organised training for career counsellors working with young people to give them basic knowledge about gender equality. The

Ministry has commissioned a research project to be carried out from 2019 to 2021 with the aim of developing and piloting nudges to decrease stereotypes and segregation and increase the share of girls and women among ICT sector students and employees.

36. Mainly women carry the care burden, which is reflected in their position on the labour market and their income. The gender employment gap is the highest among parents with small children. The employment gap among men and women aged 20–49 with at least one child under 6 was 36.1 percentage points in 2019. In 2019, men accounted for less than 3% of people on parental leave.

37. Various measures have been taken to improve the reconciliation of work and family life, and to support a more equal sharing of the care burden between men and women. The parental leave and benefits system has been made more flexible to allow part-time work when receiving benefits without forfeiting part of the benefit. The planned changes will take effect gradually from 2018 to 2022. In July 2020, paternity leave was extended to 30 days. A media campaign was conducted in 2017 to draw attention to the important role of fathers in raising children.

38. With the help of the European Social Fund, the state has also supported municipalities in creating new childcare places, with special attention on care options for children with special needs.

39. Plans are being made for changes to the long-term care system, to reduce the care burden of informal carers through improving the availability of long-term care services and thereby supporting the reconciliation of work and care.

40. New family allowances were introduced in 2017 and 2018. Since the second half of 2017, families with at least three children receive an allowance for families with many children, and as of 2018, there is an allowance for multiple births of three or more children. The allowance for families with many children, caregiver's allowance, allowance for multiple birth of three or more children and child allowances have increased.

### **Human trafficking<sup>9</sup>**

41. Instead of a country of origin of human trafficking, Estonia is becoming a country of destination of prostitution and labour exploitation. There have been increasing cases of human trafficking in terms of both labour exploitation and sexual exploitation, the human trafficking hotline has been receiving more calls from foreigners, and the number of cases involving foreigners before the labour dispute committee has also increased. The number of foreigners involved in crimes of pimping has increased, and in nearly half the cases recorded in 2020, the women being pimped were from abroad.

42. Crimes related to human trafficking include trafficking in human beings (§ 133 of the Penal Code), support to human trafficking (§ 133<sup>1</sup> of the Penal Code), pimping (§ 133<sup>2</sup> of the Penal Code) and human trafficking with respect to minors (§ 175 of the Penal Code). In 2020, 84 crimes related to trafficking in human beings were recorded: 20 cases of human trafficking, 37 of pimping, 1 case of aiding prostitution and 26 cases of human trafficking with respect to minors.

43. The Government in cooperation with relevant stakeholders has taken a proactive approach towards identifying and assisting victims of human trafficking, and guidelines for identifying victims of human trafficking were enacted in 2019.

44. The Social Insurance Board operates a helpline to prevent human trafficking and help victims. The Strategy for Preventing Violence and its implementation plan serve as the basis for activities to prevent human trafficking, and related activities are also included in the Internal Security Development Plan for 2020–2030. Area-specific activities are included in the work plans of the relevant Ministries.

### **Domestic violence<sup>10</sup>**

45. A coordinated system has been created for tackling domestic violence, aimed at reducing gender-based violence and raising awareness of victims and the general public. The Ministry of the Interior has set up an interdepartmental steering group that involves ministries

and their subordinate authorities and municipalities. In 2019, a group of experts drafted a Memorandum on the Domestic Violence Action Plan for 2019–2023, focusing on five main goals: protection of victims, liability of perpetrators, knowledge and professionalism of specialists, tools in support of specialists and problem monitoring.

46. The police have introduced a new domestic violence information form that helps the police to better identify risks of violence. The Ministry of the Interior in cooperation with the Ministries of Social Affairs and Justice has launched a new model of cooperation to determine, assist and support victims of violence. Any call involving domestic violence is followed up by the police and a social worker to identify any risk of violence and prevent violence from escalating. Information days are organised for the police, municipalities, victim support workers and other key actors.

47. Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) specialist networks have been launched in all 15 counties to identify victims of high risk domestic violence and ensure their protection through reducing violence and its consequences. In 2020, a development team of 16 experts was formed to discuss progress made in regions where the model is being used and how to develop the system further.

### **Hate crimes<sup>11</sup>**

48. The Penal Code includes offences against equality (§§ 151 through 153). The Penal Code does not explicitly provide for the motive of hatred as an aggravating circumstance, but does recognise “other base motive” as an aggravating circumstance, under which hate crimes can be classified. The assessment of the court as to whether the motive for a criminal offence is a base motive will depend on the circumstances surrounding the specific act and the particular nature of the crime. Law enforcement agencies are obliged to apply the law in accordance with international obligations, for which they have received training.

49. Since 2016, Estonia has prepared annual reviews of recorded hate crimes. Guidelines on recording hate crimes have been prepared for the police. Victim surveys in recent years have shown that 1–2% of respondents believe that the victim became a victim because of their nationality, race, colour, religion, disability or sexual orientation. Representatives of Estonia participate in international working groups on reporting and recording hate crimes (e.g. EU Agency for Fundamental Rights) on a regular basis.

### **Equal access to education<sup>12</sup>**

50. Estonia highly values education and equal access to it as the key to success and an important factor in the development of a country. Everyone residing in Estonia legally and all beneficiaries of international protection or persons seeking international protection have the right to acquire an education under the conditions provided by law. Access to education is not dependent on a person’s language, cultural or ethnic background, religious beliefs or social or economic background, gender, place of residence or special educational needs. Students for whom school is compulsory can study in a basic school regardless of their legal status. Estonia therefore follows UNESCO’s recommendation on elimination of discrimination according to the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education.

51. Basic knowledge and skills for interacting with different people are acquired with pre-school education. Estonia implements the unity school principle, and there are no schools or classes in Estonia that differentiate on the grounds of social, ethnic or other characteristics. Roma children are ensured access to quality education on an equal basis with all other children living in Estonia, and are fully included in the common Estonian education system.

52. The recent OECD PISA test results confirm that the Estonian education system is effective and progress made by students does not depend on their social or economic background. The education system ensures a sound education in Estonian on all levels for all children while helping students belonging to national minorities preserve their language and identity. The Estonian education system is designed to provide basic education not only in Estonian but also in minority languages (Russian, English, Finnish) or a multilingual education through language immersion programmes, as decided by the municipality or manager of the school. The state provides funding for Sunday schools that promote the language and culture of national minorities.

### **Raising awareness of human rights – Human rights in the education system**

53. Since 2011, the Estonian Institute of Human Rights (EIHR) has organised an Annual Conference on human rights with the President of Estonia as its patron. In 2019 and 2020, one of the underlying themes was Estonia's membership in the United Nations Security Council. The EIHR has conducted public opinion polls on human rights in 2012, 2016 and 2020, a comparative survey "Human Rights in the Baltic States 2018" and a survey on newly arrived migrants in 2016. The surveys reveal an increase of awareness of human rights: in 2012 a total of 54% of the respondents found that human rights are protected in Estonia, and by September 2020 this figure had increased to 87%.

54. In celebration of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in 2019 the EIHR completed a project "United Nations 70". The EIHR has also organised touring exhibitions on human rights in Soviet society, Anne Frank and Estonia in the age of migration.

55. Under the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act, human rights are among the fundamental values of general education. Schools must create a school culture that respects democratic values and human rights. In the teaching process, human rights form part of the general competencies of the national curriculum, such as value and cultural competence; social and civil competence; self-determination competence; interaction competence.

56. Teaching human rights along with values education, media literacy and critical thinking are among the objectives of the General Education Programme for 2016–2019, which is part of the Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020.

57. The principles of the national curriculum for pre-school child care institutions include respect for human and democratic values, Estonian cultural traditions, and appreciation of other cultures. These principles serve as the basis for educational activities, shaping the educational environment and daily interactions in pre-school child care institutions.

58. The curriculum for basic schools sets out the following knowledge and skills in the sphere of social studies: a student knows and can use in context the notions of human rights and fundamental freedoms, social and economic rights, political rights and cultural rights; they are familiar with the principles of child protection and they recognize violations thereof (including violence, abuse, human trafficking, etc.); they know the relationship between rights and obligations, freedom and responsibility. This knowledge is acquired through study of the Constitution, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and Convention on the Rights of the Child.

59. In 2020, in honour of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Constitution of Estonia, a virtual exhibition about the history of human rights was put together for schools. The Estonian Institute of Human Rights carried out a project for students about understanding the UDHR.

### **Detention conditions – Prevention of torture and ill-treatment<sup>13</sup>**

60. The Imprisonment Act prohibits overcrowding, i.e. the population of a prison must not exceed the maximum number of prisoners foreseen for the prison. The number of persons detained in prisons and houses of detention has continuously decreased. At the end of 2015, there were 2,094 prisoners and 701 persons in custody in prisons or houses of detention; at the end of 2017 there were 2,136 prisoners and 571 persons in custody; and on 1 January 2021 prisons and houses of detention accommodated 1,882 prisoners and 466 persons in custody.

61. Various measures have been employed to ensure that prisoners are held in conditions that respect human dignity. Since the new Tallinn Prison was opened in December 2018, all prisons in Estonia provide at least four square metres of cell space per prisoner. Since 2000, Estonia has constructed three new prisons and has completely decommissioned the old prison infrastructure that did not meet current requirements. Work to modernise houses of detention continues.

62. Estonia operates three open prisons intended for prisoners who are finishing their sentences and who have demonstrated good behaviour and are prepared to lead a law-abiding

life after release, but also for prisoners who have been sentenced for less dangerous crimes. In November 2020, Estonian open prisons accommodated 152 inmates, which is 6.3% of the total number of prisoners (8% of the total number of persons in detention).

63. Health care in prison is part of the national health care system. If a prisoner requires treatment that the prison cannot provide, the prisoner will be referred to a civilian hospital for specialised medical care. Prisoners have 24 hour access to emergency medical services.

64. All prisoners have access to necessary medicines and medical equipment. Supervision over providers of health care services in prisons is exercised by the Health Board. Prison medical units are properly licensed. The cost of dental care for prisoners is covered by the state.

65. Rehabilitation services for imprisoned persons with disabilities are provided by the Social Insurance Board, and occupational rehabilitation services by the Unemployment Insurance Fund. Other rehabilitation services (assistants, equipment) are provided by the prison. The needs of prisoners with special educational needs are supported by the Ministry of Education and Research through educational institutions.

66. All deaths involving prisoners are thoroughly investigated to determine the circumstances surrounding the death, and criminal proceedings are initiated, if necessary. In 2017, criminal proceedings were initiated in one case for attempted murder when a prisoner attacked a guard. In 2018, no cases of manslaughter or murder were recorded. In 2019, one criminal case was initiated to investigate the death of a prisoner, but the proceedings were terminated. In 2019, there were a total of 15 deaths, four of which were suicides and 11 were caused by health problems. In 2020, there were a total of 13 deaths, three of which were suicides with the remainder caused by health problems. In 2020, no cases of manslaughter or murder were recorded. The use of force in detention facilities is also thoroughly investigated, and criminal or disciplinary proceedings are initiated if the use of force is found not to have been lawful.

#### **Freedom of expression – Internet freedom, cyber security**

67. Freedom of expression on and offline, and freedom of the media are under special focus both domestically and internationally. Estonia is committed to developing digital services in all areas of life, and the goal is to ensure that everyone has access to a fast and affordable Internet connection. An extensive range of services has been developed to give companies, organisations and residents a convenient way to communicate with the state and municipalities via the Internet. Estonia pays special attention to everyone's free and unrestricted access to the Internet on the international level and shares its experience in digitalisation. Since 2019, the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research has organised an annual media competency week to raise the awareness of children, young people, teachers and the general public of the possibilities and risks of the surrounding information space and to draw attention to the importance of critical thinking.

68. Estonia pays significant attention to issues of cyber security. In May 2020, during Estonia's Presidency of the UN Security Council, a virtual Arria-Formula meeting was held with focus on stability in cyberspace, cyber norms and international law. The objective of the meeting was to raise the awareness of the members of the Security Council and the wider range of members of the UN about cyber threats, and to discuss conflict prevention in cyberspace. The discussions addressed how to ensure a stable and peaceful cyberspace, and experiences were shared concerning the application of international law and norms in cyberspace.

69. Over the years, Estonia has consistently been ranked among the leading group of countries in the Press Freedom Index. The Reporters Without Borders index divides 180 countries of the world into five groups. In the past years Estonia has ranked between 11th and 14<sup>th</sup> place, including 14th in 2020. This is a testament to the strong position of the Estonian press and the quality work of Estonian journalists. Estonia was also ranked second among 65 countries in the 2019 and 2020 editions of Freedom House's annual Freedom on the Net survey.

70. Estonia is a member of the Freedom Online Coalition (FOC), established in 2011. As of 2020, the Coalition has 30 members, and serves the purpose of sharing information and coordinating activities in bilateral and multilateral meetings, such as within the UN, the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and regional organisations (OSCE, Council of Europe, etc.). The coalition also provides support to journalists, bloggers and human rights defenders in countries with limited Internet freedom, and cooperates with NGOs and private companies to develop ideas and solutions to effectively protect and promote Internet freedom globally.

71. In May 2020, Estonia joined the Forum on Information and Democracy which unites representatives of countries, civil society, web platforms, academic circles and the press to discuss binding and voluntary mechanisms to ensure the functioning of democracy in the online environment in the digital age. In 2019, Estonia also joined the Media Freedom Coalition which aims to promote freedom of the press and to protect the safety of journalists.

#### **Citizenship<sup>14</sup>**

72. Estonia has consistently taken legal and policy measures to reduce the number of persons with undetermined citizenship and promote Estonian citizenship. This issue has been a focus of national integration plans through the years.

73. The procedure for applying for citizenship has been simplified in the interests of vulnerable groups such as minors, older persons and disabled persons.

74. From 2016, children of parents with undetermined citizenship automatically acquire Estonian citizenship. Consequently, there will be no additional children with undetermined citizenship since all children born in Estonia and children who move to Estonia with their parents right after birth who would have undetermined citizenship because of their parents, automatically become citizens of Estonia by naturalisation as of the moment of birth.

75. The Police and Border Guard Board takes steps to raise the awareness of persons with undetermined citizenship. When an official is in contact with such a person, the official will provide information about the possibility to apply for Estonian citizenship and the benefits of Estonian citizenship.

76. The amendments to the Citizenship Act in force since 2019 enable free-of-charge language studies on the basis of a language training agreement for persons who want to apply for Estonian citizenship. The state offers free-of-charge Estonian language courses to achieve the level B1 required for citizenship for people who have resided in Estonia for at least 5 years and who meet the other requirements for citizenship. To promote language training while working, upon agreement with their employers, students can benefit from 20 days off per year, for which the state compensates their income. This agreement is deemed to be completed once the person has passed the required Estonian language courses, has passed the proficiency examination and has filed an application for Estonian citizenship.

#### **Refugees, beneficiaries of international protection<sup>15</sup>**

77. *Acceptance of applicants for international protection.* As of 2016, there are two accommodation centres in Estonia for applicants for international protection. Applicants have access to accommodation, Estonian language courses, translation services, health care services, including medicines prescribed by a physician, psychological counselling, toiletries, clothes and other necessities. The accommodation centres also organise various pastime activities.

78. *Support services for beneficiaries of international protection.* Beneficiaries of international protection are given financial support to rent accommodation, and have access to Estonian language courses. Language courses are designed with consideration for special needs, such as trauma or illiteracy. Various life skills workshops and group activities promoting mental health are also available. Children in accommodation centres are guaranteed a place in kindergarten, and school-aged children are guaranteed a place in school similarly to local children. Adaptation services and language training for children are provided by the educational institution.

79. Since September 2017, the Unemployment Insurance Fund provides beneficiaries of international protection with services that promote being and staying employed. In the

framework of a special project the Unemployment Insurance Fund pays employers a wage subsidy when they hire a beneficiary of or applicant for international protection who has been registered as unemployed. Employers of beneficiaries of international protection may be compensated for expenses related to acquiring a qualification, Estonian language training and translation services related to work or occupational mentoring. This service aims to increase the share of beneficiaries of international protection in employment, facilitate their integration into Estonian society, and increase their readiness to work. The Social Insurance Board supports and consults municipalities and service providers and assists in settling individual cases.

### **Cohesion in society, integration and rights of persons belonging to national minorities<sup>16</sup>**

80. Estonia designs its model of a multicultural society through integration programmes and activities. The implementation of the integration plans is constantly monitored and new plans are drawn up based on analysis of the experience gained in the execution of the previous plan.

81. Three integration development plans have been implemented since 2000. The Ministry of Culture commissions an Integration Monitoring every 4 years to assess the effectiveness of integration policies. The sixth monitoring was conducted in 2020.

82. The Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of the Interior are currently drafting a Population and Coherent Society Development Plan for 2021–2030. Consultations have been held with other ministries and partners, including representatives of cultural associations of national minorities. The objectives include promotion of employment of older persons and other vulnerable groups, supporting employers and employees in managing a multicultural environment, developing Estonian studies and a clear and reliable communication and information space. The plan will expand the range and availability of services that promote adaptation and integration, and equal access to public services.

#### *National minorities*

83. Approximately 300 cultural associations of national minorities are joined under 18 umbrella organisations that receive operating subsidies from the state budget through three-year framework agreements. State support has grown steadily from EUR 320,000 in 2014 to EUR 452,000 in 2019. Additionally, the cultural activities of national minorities are funded through the state budget through project support. The preservation and advancement of the language and culture of national minorities are also supported by municipalities.

84. Representatives of national minorities are involved in the development of national minority policies. The Cultural Council for National Minorities, Roma Council and Ida-Viru County Round Table of National Culture Societies operate through the Ministry of Culture. The Cultural Council makes proposals to the Minister related to the cultural life and activities of national minorities, and cultural and integration policy. The Roma Council analyses issues relating to Roma integration and makes proposals related to the integration of Roma. The Round Table organises meetings with social, cultural and political figures, representatives from embassies and foreign NGOs as well as national cultural societies from other regions. Annual cooperation days and trainings are held for representatives of umbrella organisations to increase their administrative capacity and promote cooperation.

85. The Ministry of Culture has funded various national programmes aimed at preserving the cultural heritage of national minorities: Preservation and Development of Places of Worship 2014-2018, which helped restore churches and temples; Traditional Cultural Environment of Islands 2015-2019, which supported Estonian-Swedish heritage culture in Western Estonia; Peipsiveere Cultural Space for the preservation of the regional cultural heritage in Eastern Estonia with emphasis on the preservation and promotion of the cultural heritage of Russians, Russian Old Believers and Votians.

86. The Ministry supports national minority professional and hobby theatres, concert organisers, bands, museums, publishing projects and the organisation of literary events, festivals and other cultural events in Estonia. The Russian Theatre and Estonian Public Broadcasting's channels and programmes in Russian (ETV+ and Radio 4) are funded from

the state budget. The Estonian Open Air Museum's Centre of Multicultural Estonia celebrates the culture, history and art of the ethnic minorities living in Estonia. Integration cooperation activities are also coordinated by the Estonian Folklore Council.

87. Several national minorities and ethnic groups have established museums to present their national culture: the Russian Museum, Coastal Swedish Museum, Chuvash and Jewish Museums, Russian Centre of Culture and Ukrainian Centre of Culture in Tallinn. The Ukrainian Museum was opened in Kohtla-Järve in 2019.

*Equal participation in cultural life*<sup>17</sup>

88. The State and municipalities continue to expand measures to facilitate participation in cultural life for people with disabilities, pensioners, families with many children and people whose native language is not Estonian. Many cultural institutions have used state support to acquire technical means for providing their services in different languages and for people with hearing or visual impairments. Most cultural institutions have been made accessible to people in wheelchairs. The Estonian Library for the Blind operates a web library. Estonian Public Broadcasting broadcasts news in sign language and provides audio subtitles for the visually impaired. Visually and hearing impaired people can enjoy important cultural events in Estonia, including the Estonian Song and Dance Celebration, thanks to special equipment.

**Women, peace and security**

89. Estonia has supported Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security adopted by the UN Security Council in 2000, and is a co-sponsor of its follow-up resolutions 1820, 1888 and 2242. Estonia has adopted two action plans for implementing Resolution 1325, the first in 2010 for 2010–2014 and the second for 2015–2019. The third action plan for 2020–2025 is currently being drafted. Issues relating to women, peace and security are within the competence of several Ministries. The relevant ministries in close cooperation with civil society organisations, institutions of higher education and research institutions participate in the drafting process. In 2020, Estonia endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration that aims to protect the right to education in conflict situations.

**Women in military service**

90. Estonia's national defence is based on the will of the population to participate in national defence, and everyone is equally welcome to participate. Although women are not required to perform mandatory service, they can contribute to ensuring the independence and security of the state. Gender equality is a key element of a modern military organisation's strategic personnel policies. There is a social and political need to increase the participation of women to better align the armed forces with wider social trends and values which, in turn, will help maintain the legitimacy of the armed forces.

91. In 2017, the first policy white paper on increasing the participation of women in military service was published. Its main objective is to encourage women to choose a military career to provide a broader recruitment base and incorporate valuable skills and competencies needed to achieve the objectives of the military.

92. The attitude towards women in voluntary military service is generally favourable. Women have served in the armed forces of Estonia since their re-establishment in 1991. In 2020, women represented about 10% of persons in active duty. Of these 336 women, 107 held a rank of officer and 226 were non-commissioned officers or soldiers. In all positions in military service, training opportunities and courses are open and accessible to all equally. Various measures have been applied with a view to encouraging more women to go into military service; these measures include campaigns aimed at the general public and women specifically to raise awareness of options for military service. Since 2013, a total of 248 young women have started service as conscripts in the Defence Forces, on average 30 per year. In 2020, 54 women enlisted, the highest number ever.

93. Women are also involved in voluntary national defence organisations. The Women's Home Defence with 2,666 members is a nation-wide volunteer organisation and part of the Estonian Defence League. The Estonian Defence League's youth organisation has 4,090

members. Both play a broader role in integrating civil society into national defence, educating citizens in crisis management and thereby increasing the cohesion of society.

#### **War crimes and crimes against humanity – The Holocaust memorial days<sup>18</sup>**

94. Estonia supports the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the Rome Statute becoming a universal instrument of international law. From 2018 to 2020, Estonia was a member of the Bureau of the Assembly of States Parties (ASP) of the ICC. Since 2013, Estonia has contributed to the Victims Trust Fund.

95. Estonia supports the drafting of an international convention addressing crimes against humanity based on the articles suggested by the International Law Commission.

96. On 8 May 2020 at the UN Security Council, Estonia held a virtual high-level informal meeting on the lessons of the Second World War and the current security situation, which was attended by other Member States of the Security Council and other States.

97. International Holocaust Remembrance Day, 27 January, has been commemorated in Estonia since 2003. The Ministry of Education and Research and the Jewish Community in Estonia traditionally organise a commemoration ceremony at the Rahumäe Jewish cemetery in Tallinn, attended by representatives from the Ministry, the Jewish Community and the diplomatic corps.

98. In cooperation with the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory, the Ministry organises an essay competition for high school students. In 2021, *Õpetajate Leht* (newspaper for teachers) will issue a special edition dedicated to the Holocaust. In 2020, “Recommendations for Teaching and Learning about the Holocaust” were translated into Estonian.

99. Each year on 8 May and in the last week of July, the Chaplain Service of the Estonian Defence Forces holds commemoration ceremonies in memory of all victims who lost their lives in the Second World War, honouring victims on both sides. On 5 September each year, the Jewish Community in Estonia commemorates the victims of the Holocaust at the memorial for the victims of Nazism at Kalevi-Liiva, with the participation of foreign diplomats and representatives of the state and municipalities and public organisations.

100. Estonia commemorates the Europe-wide day of remembrance for victims of totalitarian regimes on 23 August. On 23 August 2018, a Memorial to the Victims of Communism in Estonia was inaugurated in Tallinn, with the participation of persons who were repressed by the communist regime and their families, the President of Estonia, members of the Government and of the Parliament, the diplomatic corps, church leaders and senior government officials.

101. Since 2013, the Estonian Institute of Human Rights and other organisations have organised events to remember the victims of the June Deportations to Siberia in 1941 and the March Deportations to Siberia in 1949. Since 2020, events have also marked the Great Escape of 1944 when at a critical point during the Second World War over 75,000 people were forced to flee Estonia by sea in small boats.

#### **Children – The rights of the child<sup>19</sup>**

##### *Enhancing the child protection system*

102. The Child Protection Act of 2016 explicitly prohibits all forms of abuse and violence against children, including corporal punishment, with special emphasis on prevention. A special evidence-based programme, for parents of children 2 to 8 years of age is financed by the state and municipalities.

103. The best interests of the child must come first in all actions related to children. Under Estonian law, separation of a child from his or her family must be a measure of last resort. In 2018, alternative care was reformed to give preference to family-based forms of alternative care over institutions.

*Tackling violence against children*

104. Prevention of violence against children is coordinated under the “Strategy for Preventing Violence for 2015–2020”. In all cases of domestic violence involving children, the police will inform the municipal authorities to ensure assistance to every child who needs protection. For easier access to information, the databases of the police and municipalities were joined in 2020 to exchange information about children in need of assistance automatically. A special service for children includes a helpline and a website where children can ask for help from specialists.

105. Child protection workers participate annually in in-service trainings and counselling to recognise and help abused children. Since 2017, comprehensive services have been provided to victims of child sexual abuse through the cooperation of specialists in different fields based on the Barnahus model. Estonia also implements eight different anti-bullying programmes in kindergartens and schools.

*The rights of the child in criminal procedure*

106. Several amendments have been made to legislation as well as work practices to ensure special treatment for juvenile offenders. The Code of Criminal Procedure was amended in 2016 to make proceedings pertaining to minors more child-friendly and reduce the time that a suspect or accused person who is a minor can be held in custody in pre-trial proceedings, such that detention over two months is allowed only in special cases.

107. In 2018, the legal and organisational framework governing the treatment of juvenile offenders was substantially changed, providing a wider range of sanctions applicable to minors. Placement of a minor in a closed child care institution is possible in lieu of detention, and sanctions applicable to minors can be applied in respect of young adults. A minor can be referred to conciliation or be subjected to some other appropriate obligation. In 2019, the procedural guarantees for children suspected or accused in criminal proceedings were expanded. A regulation issued by the Minister of Justice sets out the form of the declaration of rights of minor suspects and accused persons in criminal proceedings with the aim of explaining criminal proceedings and the rights of persons subject to criminal proceedings to minors in a simple and understandable manner.

*Awareness-raising and training of employees*

108. The public has been informed of the changes made regarding juvenile offenders through the press and social media. In the interests of forming uniform and child-friendly practices in the treatment, in the framework of criminal proceedings, of minors who have committed a criminal offence, guidelines and training materials have been issued, and projects have been developed. An agreement between prosecutors specialised in juveniles was made in 2018 in cooperation with the Office of the Prosecutor General and other partners. In 2019, a project to develop the system of handling juvenile offenders was initiated by the Ministry of Justice to support the reform of special treatment of juvenile offenders. Seminars, awareness-raising campaigns and conferences on treatment of juvenile offenders are organised on a regular basis. In July 2019, a state prosecutor specialised in juveniles and the treatment of victims was appointed.

*Promotion of the principle of restorative justice*

109. Restorative justice has been in greater focus in recent years in terms of the treatment of juvenile offenders and victim rehabilitation. Several events relating to restorative justice and conciliation were held in 2018 and 2019. The Ministry of Justice finances projects to support restorative justice initiatives. The Social Insurance Board is currently setting up a system of voluntary conciliators for juvenile offenders.

110. Estonia is part of many international networks engaged in promoting restorative justice in the criminal justice system. In November 2018, the Ministry of Justice joined the European Restorative Justice Policy Network (ERJPN) which unites representatives from ministries of EU states. The Ministry is a partner in the international project “Restorative Justice Strategies for Change” to support the implementation of the new restorative justice guidelines issued by the Council of Europe.

### **Protection of personal data**

111. The processing of personal data is governed by the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Estonian Personal Data Protection Act.

112. The GDPR and Personal Data Protection Act impose requirements on the processing of personal data, supervision over compliance with the requirements and liability for violations. Personal data are processed based on the principle that personal data may only be processed where there is a legal basis and to the extent strictly necessary for achieving a specific and legitimate objective. Everyone has the right to access data collected about him/her. Everyone who considers that their rights have been infringed has the right to file a complaint with the Estonian Data Protection Inspectorate or a court. The Data Protection Inspectorate is an independent supervisory authority which monitors compliance with the law in the protection of personal data.

113. Estonia has ratified Protocol (ETS No. 223) amending the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to the Processing of Personal Data (ETS No. 108) and has declared its readiness to implement the provisions of the Protocol in the interim before the entry into force of the Protocol.

114. Statistics Estonia collects, processes and disseminates statistical data pursuant to the Official Statistics Act, which prescribes strict requirements for the confidentiality of data. Data are collected on the basis of the Act, and the consent of the individual is therefore not required. As censuses are mandatory, a person cannot contest (not give consent for) the collection and processing of data. No one is required to disclose data about his or her beliefs.

115. Data collected in the course of a population and housing census are subject to data protection requirements and therefore cannot be disclosed without the person's consent. Without the person's consent, personal data may be communicated to another producer of official statistics if they are marked as confidential, and may be communicated to Eurostat, national statistical institutes of the Member States of the EU and the members of the European System of Central Banks to the extent provided for in the relevant European Union legislation, if they are marked as confidential. To ensure the protection of personal data, data must be processed on the conditions prescribed in the Official Statistics Act. Access to confidential data may be provided for scientific purposes only if the requirements provided by law are met.

### **Legal aid<sup>20</sup>**

116. State legal aid provides people with legal services at the state's expense. State legal aid is provided by an attorney in pre-trial proceedings, in court proceedings, in enforcement proceedings, in administrative proceedings, in proceedings for review of a judicial decision that has entered into force, for drafting legal documents, and for other legal counsel and legal representation. State legal aid means that the cost of legal aid services is initially covered by the state, but the recipient may be obliged to pay part of the costs or to reimburse the legal aid in part or in full after the termination of proceedings.

117. In collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, OÜ HUGO offers Estonian residents legal aid free of charge or on favourable conditions. Estonian residents with an average gross monthly income under EUR 1.700 qualify for legal aid. A person who receives legal aid must pay EUR 5 per calendar year (except for minors), while the first two hours are free and the subsequent thirteen hours of legal aid cost EUR 40 per hour. With a few exceptions, legal aid is provided in all legal matters and in all forms in person or online. The Estonian Chamber of Disabled People provides free legal aid to people with special needs. The Estonian Association of Pensioners' Societies provides legal aid to older persons. The Estonian Union for Child Welfare, in collaboration with the Estonian Bar Association, has provided free-of-charge legal aid for 10 years to nearly 1,600 persons, and will continue in 2020–2022.

### **Healthcare**

118. The public health development plan for 2009–2020 is based on the principles of solidarity, equal opportunities and justice, access to high-quality healthcare services and empowerment of civil society. The plan was developed with the involvement of various

organisations, ministries, municipalities, non-profit associations, the private sector and other stakeholders. The Ministry of Social Affairs is working on a public health development plan for 2020–2030 which seeks to maintain and improve people’s health, prolong life expectancy, reduce premature illnesses and mortality as well as health inequality among different groups of the population.

119. All persons in Estonia are provided with emergency health care irrespective of their health insurance or citizenship. IT solutions, such as the Electronic Health Record and E-Prescriptions, have been introduced in health care to facilitate access to health services and render them more efficient.

#### **Social services and social benefits – Pensions, pension reform<sup>21</sup>**

120. The responsibility for welfare services is divided between different levels of government. Municipalities are responsible for community services, services to help elderly and disabled persons live independently and 24-hour general care for the elderly. Municipalities also pay subsistence benefits and other benefits financed from the municipal budget. Technical devices, rehabilitation services and special welfare services for people with special mental needs are organised by the state.

121. Assistance in terms of social protection is organised under the Social Welfare Act which provides that social services must be provided based on generally accepted quality principles. The Act further provides minimum requirements for thirteen types of social services provided by municipalities, minimum requirements for five types of special care services organised by the state and a general obligation to carry out an assessment to determine a person’s needs and to offer assistance based on the outcome of such assessment.

122. Citizens and permanent residents living in Estonia, and aliens living in Estonia on the basis of a fixed-term residence permit are eligible for social services and social benefits. State pensions are indexed on 1 April each year using the index provided by law. In 2020, old-age pensions were increased by EUR 45 on average.

123. In 2018, Parliament adopted a pension reform, which will enter into force in 2021, to address the adequacy of pensions of people with low incomes and the sustainability of the pension system. As 77% of insured persons have a salary below the average and as pensions based on the first two pillars of the system largely depend on contributions based on income, many people will receive low pensions in the future. In order to reduce the impact of contributions on future pensions, changes were made to the pension formula.

124. Another important development is the linkage of the pensionable age with life expectancy from 2027 when the previous increase in the pensionable age will be achieved (65 years for men and women). The change in the pension formula and the rise in the pensionable age will increase pensions, especially for people with low incomes, in the future. The flexible retirement concept will take effect in 2021, which allow people to retire up to five years before the legal pensionable age. It will be possible to increase a pension by suspending and subsequently restarting payments and it will also be possible to take out only half a pension, which will make later pension payments higher.

125. Reform of the second pillar will enter into force in 2021, which will make contributions to the second pillar voluntary and create new options:

(a) People will be free to decide whether or not they want the II pillar, including people who have and have not joined the II pillar by the time the changes take effect;

(b) In addition to using pension funds people will have the option of opening a pension investment account;

(c) People will be granted the right to start using the money they have saved in the II pillar already before reaching pensionable age, subject to certain conditions;

(d) Upon reaching the pensionable age, every person can decide for himself or herself how to use the money they have saved.

## **Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals**

126. The Estonian national strategy on sustainable development sets out the development goals of society up to 2030. This Strategy focuses on the sustainability and successful functioning of the state in the long term, and it is implemented through a range of industry strategies and development plans, the outcomes of which are measured based on Sustainable Development Goal indicators.

### **Climate and environment**

127. Estonia ratified the international Paris Climate Agreement in 2016. A national development paper on the General Principles of Climate Policy sets the long-term vision of Estonia's climate policy and industry and cross-industry policy trends. In 2017, the Government approved the "Climate Change Adaptation Development Plan until 2030", which addresses the main issues of climate change adaptation, the future climate in Estonia based on climate scenarios, and the effects of climate change.

128. The Development Plan sets out adaptation measures for the foreseeable future until 2030 as well as measures in the long term up to 2050 and 2100. An Implementation Plan has been drawn up to carry out the Development Plan. The general objective of the Development Plan is to raise Estonia's national, regional and local readiness and capacity for adapting to the impact of climate change.

### **Human rights and business<sup>22</sup>**

129. Estonia supports the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, as well as compliance therewith in Estonia and throughout the world. The Minister of Foreign Trade and Information Technology is tasked with developing initiatives for implementing internationally agreed principles and standards of corporate social responsibility.

130. The principles of corporate social responsibility will be addressed in the Research and Development and Innovation and Entrepreneurship Strategy 2021-2035, which will be a joint strategy between the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications and the Ministry of Education and Research. In 2021, an Entrepreneurship Programme will be launched, which will include specific actions to help companies conduct their everyday business and strategic management with emphasis on social and environmental aspects, and support entrepreneurs in contributing to Sustainable Development Goals.

131. In 2020, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications organised a seminar in order to collect feedback and suggestions from companies about the support they expect from ministries and public authorities in adhering to corporate social responsibility principles in their organisation. Since corporate social responsibility is a horizontal topic across different ministries, establishment of a governmental structure between ministries is under consideration.

### **COVID-19 measures and the emergency situation in Estonia in 2020**

132. The emergency situation in Estonia to effectively tackle the COVID-19 outbreak lasted from 12 March to 17 May 2020. Some restrictions were imposed during the emergency situation: restrictions on movement and gatherings, distance learning was introduced, the opening hours of shopping centres were shortened, visiting hospitals, care homes and detention facilities was limited, etc. The restrictive measures were continuously reviewed and they were eased progressively. The measures were temporary, lawful, necessary for the protection of public health and proportional to the legitimate aim.

133. As stipulated by the European Convention on Human Rights and the ICCPR, Estonia notified the Council of Europe and the United Nations respectively of the declaration of an emergency situation, measures adopted and the termination of the emergency situation. The OSCE was also informed of the emergency situation.

134. During the emergency situation, Estonia benefited from its comprehensive digital experience that made it possible to transfer activities flexibly to the electronic environment, for instance teleworking and a quick transition to e-learning in educational institutions.

### **III. Voluntary international commitments**

#### **Preservation and promotion of biological diversity**

135. Estonia is a country of very rich biodiversity, species-rich grasslands, forests and well-preserved wetlands. In order to preserve biodiversity, large-scale restoration activities of the degraded grasslands and wetlands have been carried out during the last decades, which have contributed significantly to their protection and preservation. Our nature is a national asset to which everyone is entitled. Everyman's rights (the freedom to roam) ensure free access to nature, support nature education, tourism and recreation as well as picking berries and mushrooms as part of the traditional lifestyle. Visiting conservation areas is free of charge for everybody. Everyman's access to natural waterbodies is provided by law. Based on the development paper on the General Principles of Climate Policy adopted in 2017, Estonia has set ambitious goals to reduce, by 2030, GHG emissions by 70% compared to 1990. This means that 42% of gross final energy consumption should come from renewable sources.

#### **Principles of development cooperation, including respect for human rights**

136. In terms of development cooperation, Estonia has set the goal to help end global poverty and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Development cooperation is based on the "Principles of Estonian Development Cooperation", which determines the general goals and priorities of Estonian development cooperation. The Strategy for Estonian Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid 2016-2020 serves as the basis for the public sector in the field of development cooperation and humanitarian aid. Estonia has steadfastly increased development assistance and continues to make efforts to attain a level of 0.33% of GNP within the deadlines for achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

137. The Estonian development cooperation goals by area are as follows: 1) supporting the quality of education; 2) supporting the development of health care; 3) guaranteeing peace and stability; 4) supporting the development of democracy, introduction of good governance practices and guaranteeing human rights; 5) promoting economic development; 6) fostering environmentally friendly development; 7) raising the awareness of the Estonian public, particularly younger people, concerning development cooperation and humanitarian aid, as well as global development issues.

138. Estonia promotes more extensive application of information and communication technology (ICT) in the framework of development cooperation. The Estonian Development Cooperation Centre is currently being set up to promote development cooperation and humanitarian aid.

### **IV. International commitments in international organisations and associations**

139. From 2020 to 2021, Estonia is an elected member of the United Nations Security Council. During this time, Estonia will focus on ensuring the rule-based international order and enforcing international law, including the protection and promotion of human rights, the rule of law and combating impunity.

140. Estonia is a founding member of the International Religious Freedom Alliance established in 2020 to protect everyone's right to any religion or belief.

141. Estonia has presented its candidacy for the Human Rights Council from 2026 to 2028. The current UPR will be an important part of this process. Estonia's human rights policy focuses on the protection and promotion of the rights of women, children and indigenous peoples, freedom of expression online and offline, freedom of the media, supporting civil society and combating impunity.

*Notes*

- <sup>1</sup> Recommendation 122.45.
  - <sup>2</sup> Recommendation 122.44.
  - <sup>3</sup> Recommendations 122.1–122.14, 122.87, 123.1–123.19, 123.20–123.21.
  - <sup>4</sup> Recommendations 122.15–122.34, 123.22–123.24.
  - <sup>5</sup> Recommendation 122.38.
  - <sup>6</sup> Recommendations 122.46, 122.117, 122.55–122.66, 123.28, 123.29, 123.30–31.
  - <sup>7</sup> Recommendations 122.108, 122.36–122.37, 122.43, 122.47–122.49, 122.85, 123.25.
  - <sup>8</sup> Recommendations 122.50–52, 123.46.
  - <sup>9</sup> Recommendations 122.98–122.103, 123.42.
  - <sup>10</sup> Recommendations 122.86, 122.87, 122.89–122.95, 123.41.
  - <sup>11</sup> Recommendations 122.61–122.82, 123.32–34, 123.37.
  - <sup>12</sup> Recommendations 122.109–122.112, 122.118–119.
  - <sup>13</sup> Recommendations 122.106–107.
  - <sup>14</sup> Recommendations 122.124, 122.125, 123.53–123.54.
  - <sup>15</sup> Recommendations 122.123, 123.55.
  - <sup>16</sup> Recommendations 122.53–122.54, 122.82, 122.120–122.123, 122.73–122.78, 122.114, 123.44, 123.47–52.
  - <sup>17</sup> Recommendation 122.114.
  - <sup>18</sup> Recommendation 123.35.
  - <sup>19</sup> Recommendations 122.35, 122.39–122.42, 122.86, 122.87, 122.93–122.97.
  - <sup>20</sup> Recommendation 122.104.
  - <sup>21</sup> Recommendation 122.108.
  - <sup>22</sup> Recommendation 123.26.
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