

**DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF  
THE ESTONIAN LANGUAGE  
2004–2010**

**TARTU 2004**

Ministry of Education and Research  
Estonian Language Council

“Development Strategy of the Estonian Language (2004–2010)”  
has been approved by the decision of the Government of the  
Republic of Estonia as of 5 August 2004.

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## FOREWORD

On the following pages you will find the “Development Strategy of the Estonian Language (2004–2010)”. The document, which was approved by the Estonian Government on 5 August 2004, provides a research-based description of the situation of the Estonian language, objectives that need to be achieved, the necessary steps, and institutions, and people. The present strategy is the first development plan of the Estonian language covering all the major areas of language use. However, it will definitely not remain the last one: the text of the strategy entails the need for further development—both theoretically and practically.

The language strategy is a comprehensive general framework for drawing up specific action plans in conformity with the former. Their implementation allows assessing the successfulness of the implementation of the entire strategy. The strategy has been without doubt written in a positive key—while being critical of a number of aspects of the contemporary condition of Estonian, the authors of the strategy believe in the possibility of its implementation and the capability of the Estonian language. Without this belief there would have been no reason to draw up the strategy.

The main authors of the language strategy are the members of the Estonian Language Council. However, a large number of people, actually the entire nation, were able to express their opinion in the course of many discussions and approvals. It is only natural because language belongs to its people, and it can be preserved and developed only through the people.

People keep their language, but without the Estonian language the Estonian people would not be what they are. Being the most important component of self-determination of the Estonians, our mother tongue without doubt deserves a development plan of its own among many other fields that are important for the Estonian state. Nowadays people often ask how much does it cost. One can ask this question with regard to the language strategy, too. There are definitely such activities the price of which can be

calculated with precision. On the other hand, the daily activity of each person, Estonian society, and Estonian state reflects among other things his or her relation to the language, either supporting or inhibiting its development. Here it is impossible to make precise calculations. Who could say how much does the desire to be an Estonian cost?

The main emphasis of the language strategy is of course on Standard Estonian, a valuable treasure that has been developed from the home language of the Estonians into a means of communication in an information society. Different parts of the strategy deal with various aspects of study, development, use, and teaching starting with specific linguistic problems and ending with applications to language technology and language use by a local official. Following the democratic principles the authors have not forgotten the other varieties of Estonian beside the mainstream standard language—the strategy also covers the language use by the people of Võrumaa, Setu, and Mulgimaa as well as Estonians living abroad and sign-language users. They, too, are members of the Estonian language community and the present strategy is a strategy for the entire Estonian language—including all of its manifestations. Similarly to other countries that take care of the languages of these countries, the Estonian state has first and foremost to take care of the maintenance and development of the Estonian language.

The strategy lists those institutions that have to implement the positions and recommendations of the strategy. The listed institutions are only the principal ones. The number of implementers will increase when the action plans are prepared. In case this task falls on officials only and leaves the other language users cold, then the cause has failed before its start.

The development strategy of Estonian has reached the implementation stage at a remarkable time—for a few months Estonia has been a member of the European Union. This association puts to the test, causes hazards, and creates opportunities. One of its tenets is the preservation of a culturally and linguistically diverse Europe. By maintaining and developing our mother tongue for ourselves at home, we will at the same time contribute to the permanence of a European Europe.

I wish all of us every success in developing and implementing the “Development Strategy of the Estonian Language (2004–2010)”!

Tartu, 10 September 2004



Toivo Maimets  
Minister of Education and Research of the Republic of Estonia



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## PREFACE

By approving the “Language Teaching Strategy of Non-Estonian Population”, the resolution of the Government of the Republic of Estonia of 21 April 1998 (item 2) assigned the Ministry of Education the task of drawing up a development strategy of the Estonian language. Decree No. 91 of the Minister of Education of 6 April 2000 founded the Estonian Committee for the organization of the European Year of Languages (2001). One of the tasks of this committee was to draw up this strategy. Once the year of languages was over, Decree No. 963 of the Minister of Education of 28 December 2001 renamed the committee the Estonian Language Council and assigned the latter the task of drawing up the “Development Strategy of the Estonian Language (2004–2010)” (henceforth DSEL) by 31 December 2003.

The Estonian Language Council at the Ministry of Education and Research, which counsels the Minister of Education and Research, (the membership confirmed by the decree that established the language council was changed by Decree 5 of the Minister of Education and Research of 10 January and Decree No. 984 of 5 November 2003, as a result of which Urmas Sutrop and Martin Ehala became members) consists of the following members:

Martin Ehala (Professor of the Tallinn Pedagogical University), Mati Erelt (Professor of the University of Tartu), Birute Klaas (Professor of the University of Tartu), Irina Külmoja (Professor of the University of Tartu), Suliko Liiv (Professor of the Tallinn Pedagogical University), Anne Lind (Head of the Tallinn German Cultural Institute), Kristi Mere (Chief Inspector of the Ministry of Education and Research), Helle Metslang (Professor of the Tallinn Pedagogical University), Karl Pajusalu (Professor of the University of Tartu), Mart Rannut (Associate Professor of the Tallinn Pedagogical University), Urmas Sutrop (Director of the Institute of the Estonian Language), Tõnu Tender (Head of the Language Service of the Ministry of Education and Research), Jüri Valge (Adviser of the Department of Research and Higher Education of the Ministry of Education and Research, Chairman of the Estonian Language Council), Silvi Vare (Senior Researcher of the Institute of the Estonian Language), Enn Veldi

(Associate Professor of the University of Tartu), Jüri Viikberg (Senior Researcher of the Institute of the Estonian Language), Tiit-Rein Viitso (Professor of the University of Tartu), Haldur Õim (Professor of the University of Tartu, Member of the Estonian Academy of Sciences).

In 2001 and 2002 the Estonian Language Council (henceforth ELC) supervised condition studies of the Estonian language, which resulted in the following works that can be regarded as official appendices to DSEL:

1. Eesti keele uurimise analüüs (Analysis of Research into Estonian). Koost. Mati Erelt. Emakeele Seltsi aastaraamat 48. 2002. Eesti Teaduste Akadeemia Emakeele Selts. Tallinn, 2003. 262 p.
2. Eesti kirjakeele kasutusvaldkondade seisundi uuringud (Situation Studies on Domains of Standard Estonian). Toim. Maire Raadik. Tallinna Pedagoogikakooli eesti filoloogia osakonna toimetised 4. Tallinn, 2003. 240 p.
3. Tiiu Erelt, Arvi Tavast, Eesti oskuskeelekorralduse seisund (State of Estonian LSP Planning). Tallinn: Eesti Keele Sihtasutus, 2003. 128 p.
4. Eve Alender, Kairit Henno, Annika Hussar, Peeter Päll, Evar Saar, Nimekorralduse analüüs (Analysis of Name Planning). Tallinn: Eesti Keele Sihtasutus, 2003. 118 p.
5. Kadri Muischnek, Heili Orav, Heiki-Jaan Kaalep, Haldur Õim, Eesti keele tehnoloogilised ressursid ja vahendid (Language-Technological Resources of the Estonian Language). Arvutikorpused, arvutisõnastikud, keeletehnoloogiline tarkvara. Toimetaja Urve Talvik. Tallinn: Eesti Keele Sihtasutus, 2003. 86 p.
6. Vahur Laiapea, Merilin Miljan, Urmas Sutrop, Regina Toom, Eesti viipekeel (Estonian Sign Language). Tallinn: Eesti Keele Sihtasutus, 2003. 59 p.
7. Emakeel ja teised keeled IV. Eesti keele võõrkeelena/teise keelena ja võõrkeelte seisund Eestis (Mother Tongue and Other Languages IV. Estonian as a Foreign/Second Language and the State of Foreign Language in Estonia). Toim Birute Klaas ja Silvi Tenjes. Tartu Ülikooli eesti keele (võõrkeelena) õppetooli toimetised 3. Tartu, Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2004. 313 p.
8. Silvi Vare, Eesti keel vene koolis (Estonian Language in the Rus-

sian-medium School). Tallinn: Eesti Keele Sihtasutus, 2004. 127 p.

During the preparatory work for drawing up DSEL the following works were published, which, on the one hand, shape the viewpoints of DSEL, and, on the other, express them: Tiiu Erelt, *Eesti keelekorraldus* (Estonian language planning). Tallinn: Eesti Keele Sihtasutus, 2002. 456 p; Karl Pajusalu, Tiit Hennoste, Ellen Niit, Peeter Päll, Jüri Viikberg, *Eesti murded ja kohanimed* (Estonian dialects and place names). Toim. Tiit Hennoste. Tallinn: Eesti Keele Sihtasutus, 2002. 320 p; *Estonian Language*. Ed. Mati Erelt. *Linguistica Uralica. Supplementary Series, Volume 1*. Tallinn: Estonian Academy Publishers, 2003. 413 p; also two relevant brochures: *Euroopa keelteasta Eestis* (European Year of Languages in Estonia). Tartu, 2001. 31 p; *100 aastat akadeemilist eesti keele õpet Uppsala ülikoolis. Eesti keele ja keelepoliitika ettekanded* (100 Years of Academic Teaching of Estonian at the University of Uppsala. Reports on the Estonian Language and Language Policy). Uppsala, Tartu, 2001. 111 p.

The following international conferences were organized to work out the positions of DSEL:

1. Conference “Estonian Language in Europe”. Tallinn, 2001.
2. Second conference on applied linguistics. Tallinn, 2003.
3. Conference “National Self-determination and the Mother Tongue Teacher”. Tallinn, 2003.
4. Terminology conference “Estonian LSP 2003”. Tallinn, 2003.
5. Conference “Language and Identity”. Rõuge, 2003.
6. Conference “Mother Tongue and Other Languages IV”. Tartu, 2003.
7. Estonian–Finnish joint seminar “The Future of Estonian and Finnish”. Helsinki, 2003.

The first language forum in Tallinn on 13 December 2002 presented and supplemented the structure of DSEL, and during 2003 the text of DSEL was written on the basis of the former (on 27 June 2003 the writing of the strategy was discussed at the 32nd J. V. Veski Day in Tartu). On 25 September 2003 the text of DSEL was sent for familiarization and comments to all the ministries and to those institutions that are related to its implementation; in October 2003 the draft DSEL was sent to the following international experts: Prof. Pa’draig O’Riaga’in (Ireland), Dr Birgitta

Lindgren (Swedish Language Council), and Dr Pirjo Hiidenmaa (Research Centre for the Languages of Finland).

On 22 November 2003 the draft DSEL was published in the newspaper *Postimees* and was at the same time made available public on the home pages of the Ministry of Education and Research and the Institute of the Estonian Language and the portal *Delfi*.

The international experts made their presentations at the second language forum in Tallinn on 5 December 2003, and a survey of the results of the public discussion was made. When finalizing the text of DSEL efforts were made to take into account the critical remarks and suggestions.

The Estonian Language Council is grateful to all the individuals, associations, state and other institutions that contributed to the “Development Strategy of the Estonian Language (2004–2010)” as best as they could. We thank Tiiu Erelt, Peeter Päll, and Arvi Tavast for writing various parts of DSEL and Maire Raadik for editing the text. We also thank the benevolent but thorough reviewers Indrek Koolmeister, Marju Lauristin, Anu Reiljan, and Ilmar Tomusk.

The Estonian Language Council thanks the European Council and the expert Prof. Pa’draig O’Riaga’in funded by the European Council, the international experts Dr Birgitta Lindgren and Dr Pirjo Hiidenmaa for valuable comments and Dr Pirkko Nuolijärvi (Research Institute for the Languages of Finland) for cooperation in organizing a joint seminar.

## 1. INTRODUCTION.

### Principles of the development strategy of the Estonian language

“Development Strategy of the Estonian Language (2004–2010)”, approved by the resolution of the Government of the Republic of Estonia of 5 August 2004, determines the development priorities of the Estonian language for 2004–2010. The strategy proceeds from the needs of developing the Estonian language as the mother tongue of the Estonians does not deal directly with the language problems of the non-Estonian population in Estonia, the solutions for which are foreseen by the “Language Teaching Strategy of the Non-Estonian Population”, development plan of non-Estonian-medium education, and, and the state integration programme.

#### 1.1. Prerequisites

**The main prerequisites of DSEL are as follows:**

- **Estonian is the only state language of Estonia,**
- **Estonian is the bearer of Estonian identity,**
- **Estonian is the language that shapes the stable language environment in Estonia.**

DSEL was drawn up taking into consideration:

- Situation and other studies of the Estonian language carried out by ELC,
- the strategy “Sustainable Estonia 21”, especially its goal “Viability of the Estonian Cultural Space”; research and development strategy for 2001–2006 “Knowledge-based Estonia” and the “National Pact”,
- opinions of state institutions, local governments, non-governmental associations, and other institutions dealing with language,
- positions of international conferences and expert opinions,
- recommendations of the public discussion.

#### 1.2. Vision and objective

The objective of DSEL is to create such conditions that the Estonian language will be the main means of communication of the developing contemporary high-technological and open multicultural society on Estonian territory.

The implementation of the strategy ensures that

- the Estonian language will have means of expression in any important domain starting with arts and philosophy and ending with the exact sciences and information technology,
- the legal and social levels will be strengthened for influencing the Estonian language environment,
- the Estonian language will be quickly applied to innovative mass technologies based on information technology.

By 2010 the main domains of public use of the language will be predominantly Estonian; the used standard language will be of good quality and capable of development.

The implementation of DSEL will create the conditions that members of the Estonian multicultural society will consider it natural to participate in societal activities by means of the Estonian language and that speakers of Estonian will be justly proud of the fact that their language is one of the most developed civilized languages of the world.

#### 1.3. Key areas

**The key areas of DSEL are as follows:**

- **language planning and practical language planning,**
- **language protection,**
- **education and language teaching,**
- **linguistic research,**
- **creation of the linguistic engineering support.**

In order to develop the key areas of DSEL it is necessary to find opportunities for the launching and funding national programmes on a permanent

basis. In addition to the key areas, one needs to pay attention to the development of all the other areas that are necessary for the attainment of DSEL goals (e.g. compilation of scholarly dictionaries of Estonian, image-making with regard to the Estonian language, varieties of Estonian, Estonian and other languages).

#### **1.4. Implementation**

DSEL provides an opportunity to raise awareness of the assignments with regard to the Estonian language and to focus the resources of the state and the society for the attainment of the goals set. The Government of the Republic of Estonia, ministries, local governments, educational establishments, and research and development institutions devise and organize their language-related work in accordance with DSEL. On the basis of DSEL the Ministry of Education and Research will work out its annual action plans with regard to language.

DSEL sets the goals and activities that are necessary for achieving the objective of the strategy, the approximate cost of the activities, and the main implementers of the strategy (the principal persons responsible for the solution of the problems and the participating institutions will be determined in the course of drawing up the action plans). The Ministry of Education and Research supervises and coordinates the implementation of DSEL; the Estonian Language Council monitors and analyses the linguistic situation in Estonia and revises the strategy every two years. ELC submits major proposals for changing the strategy that are addressed to the parliament to the minister of education and research. ELC will draw up a follow-up strategy DSEL 2.

The development and fulfilment of DSEL also depends on the demographic, general, regional, educational, and politico-economic trends in Estonia.

## **2. LEGAL BACKGROUND TO THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF THE ESTONIAN LANGUAGE. LANGUAGES AND LANGUAGE USE IN THE REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA**

The development strategy of the Estonian language rests on Section 6 of the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia, which states that “the Estonian language is the state language of Estonia”. The preamble to the constitution expresses the same idea more indirectly but more generally and projected into the future, according to which the main objective of the Estonian state is to preserve the Estonian nationality and culture through time. At this the educational system performs a very important role because pursuant to Section 37 of the constitution each person is entitled to Estonian-language tuition, and the state is responsible for providing it.

The principles of the Estonian language policy are in conformity with the UN, European Council, and OSCE documents as well as with the principles of language use in the EU. The progress reports of the European Council for 1997–2002 state that Estonia continues to meet the criteria of Copenhagen democracy.

### **2.1. DSEL and the Language Act of the Republic of Estonia**

The language act regulates language use in the Republic of Estonia, proceeding from the public interests, which in terms of the language act include safety of society, public order, public administration, public health, health protection, consumer protection, and occupational safety. The language act and related legal acts regulate the knowledge and use of the Estonian language (and the possibilities to use foreign languages), including the required knowledge of the language for Estonian citizenship.

DSEL proceeds from the language as a corpus and covers in addition to the legally regulated language use also those instances of language use that remain beyond it. In the latter cases it is important to create preferential conditions for the development and use of the Estonian language. DSEL is the foundation document of the language policy of the Republic of Estonia; its positions serve as a basis for changes in the Estonian legal

system that ensure the development of the Estonian language in accordance with the legal acts of the Republic of Estonia and international principles of language law.

## **2.2. Use and teaching of other languages in the Republic of Estonia**

According to the 1925 act on cultural autonomy, before the Second World War the Republic of Estonia had four national minorities that were entitled to use their mother tongue in education, culture, and other cases as provided by the law. The Second World War and the Soviet occupation largely put an end to the historical national minorities in Estonia. The Republic of Estonia has joined the framework convention on the national minorities of the European Council, its language situation has been assessed by international teams for a number of times, and it sticks to the international requirements for language use that were valid at the time when DSEL was drawn up.

The language act allows in certain conditions to use foreign languages and the languages of the national minorities when taking care of business and in summonses of the local governments, in advertisements and notices, also on seals, rubber stamps, and stationery of an institution, business, non-profit organization, foundation, and self-employed person.

Estonia has adopted the law on the cultural autonomy of a national minority, on the basis of which those ethnic groups who wish it have ample possibilities to use their mother tongue in education, culture, as well as for internal communication. The cultural self-government of a national minority can use the language of the national for internal communication and add a translation into the language of the national minority to the official Estonian-language stationery, advertisements, notices, and rubber stamps.

Estonia has signed bilateral or trilateral agreements with Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Germany, the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Hungary and the Flemish community of Flanders and drawn up cooperation programmes for the representatives of these nationalities residing in Estonia (and for Estonians living in the respective countries) for teaching their mother tongue and culture. According to the parties concerned, the fulfilment of the

agreements and cooperation programmes proceeds successfully. There is a Jewish Gymnasium, Finnish School, and an international English-medium school.

The Estonian state has granted the possibility to obtain general education and partly also vocational education in Russian. For the Russian-language school Estonia has original textbooks for teaching the Russian language, literature, the Estonian language, and music (forms 1–3); educational literature translated from the Estonian is used for the teaching of the other compulsory subjects.

Regulation No 154 of the Government of the Republic of Estonia of 20 May 2003 “Conditions and order of creating opportunities for learning the mother tongue and national culture for those students at basic schools whose mother tongue is not the school’s language of tuition” has taken effect. Since 1 September 2004 this regulation has allowed to teach those students their mother tongue and culture.

The roundtable of the national minorities of the President of the Republic of Estonia has been working since. The state budget funds the Association of Estonia’s Nationalities that unites 22 national cultural associations, including the Union of Slavic Education and Charity Associations, restored in 1992 as a successor of the Union of Russian Education and Charity Association that was closed in 1940, and 11 Sunday schools (Tatar, Ukrainian, Korean, Moldovan, Kyrgyz, Georgian, Erzya, Ossetian, Circassian, Uzbek, Bashkir), where children of other nationalities residing in Estonia are taught their mother tongue and culture.

## **2.3. Integration policy of the Republic of Estonia**

In order to ensure the functioning of the Republic of Estonia and the Estonian society by means of a language that is understandable to all the inhabitants of Estonia and the linguistic human rights of the Estonians as the indigenous nationality of Estonia, according Section 6 of the constitution, the state language of the Republic of Estonia is the Estonian language. Observation of the constitution implies that the reorientation of the non-Estonian population from the Russian language as the general language of

communication to the Estonian language as the general language of communication and the creation of the opportunities for learning Estonian by the state.

Since 1991 the proportion of Estonian-medium teaching in non-Estonian general educational schools has been constantly increased (starting with 1998 in accordance with the development plan of the non-Estonian-medium schools). 1999 saw the adoption of the national programme “Integration in Estonian society for 2000–2007”, one part of which covers linguistic integration, including the transition of state and municipal secondary schools to Estonian-medium teaching that will begin in 2007. It implies 60 per cent of Estonian-medium teaching, whereas the present law on basic schools and gymnasiums allows applying for the continuation of non-Estonian-medium teaching (considering the previous development and the prevailing interest of pupils and parents one can predict that the need for the Russian-medium gymnasium will decrease). To this end, PHARE language teaching programmes and the resources of the Estonian state have improved the teaching of the Estonian language at non-Estonian schools (increased scope of teaching, publication of study materials, training and in-service training of Estonian language teachers, beginning of Estonian-medium teaching of subjects), various language teaching projects have been completed (language camps, language teaching in families, student and teacher exchanges), a number of maps, video films, etc. have been made available, and various events have been organized that promote the learning of Estonian.

Among adults Estonian language courses have been mostly organized for representatives of occupations with the greatest communicative needs (medical nurses, police officers) and for people applying for Estonian citizenship (tuition fees have been refunded to successful learners); TV courses of Estonian have been organized and are being organized.

### 3. STANDARD ESTONIAN

**Standard Estonian is the most important, unified, and standardized variety of Estonian that is used in the entire language area.**

Standard Estonian is the public use of language in all spheres of life in the entire Estonian state. Among many **domains** of the standard language the general condition of the language is most affected by secondary education, higher education and research, law and administration, the media, entertainment, economy, business, banking, information and advertising, and information technology.

The language level and attitudes acquired through general education lay the basis for the language use of all spheres of life; scholarly usage acquired by higher education is carried on by the most educated and influential part of society. Also, higher education and research are closely interrelated. The language use of the other domains is part of the general linguistic environment.

The establishment of the Republic of Estonia in 1918 created conditions for the comprehensive development of Standard Estonian with a centuries-old tradition and the use of the Estonian language in all spheres of life. Estonian became the language of instruction in general educational schools; in the course of ten years Estonian also became the predominant language of the national university. The Estonian-language legal system came into existence; most spheres of life received their own media publication. The demographic situation was favourable for the use and development of the Estonian language.

The Soviet period was accompanied by influences of the Russian language and the Soviet system and narrowed usage domain of the Estonian language. At the same time, systematic development of Standard Estonian continued for most spheres of life. The general and vocational education systems were split into the Estonian- and Russian-language systems. The Russian language was partly used also in higher education and research. On the one hand, Estonian shared the usage domain with Russian (e.g. in public information and administration), on the other, it adopted Russian

patterns. Russian acted as the model for systematizing terminology (e.g. in economics); texts and documents were translated from Russian (e.g. in law, administration, and journalism). The proportion of Estonians decreased in the population of Estonia.

By the time of drawing up DSEL the functions of the Estonian language had been legally restored; the development of the standard language continues. The era is characterized by reorientation to Western models, contacts with the rest of the world, information society, and globalization. Most fields have witnessed renewal and intensification of activities; conceptual systems and languages of influence have been replaced. In addition to Russian, English has emerged as the new and primary language of influence.

In general and vocational education, however, non-Estonian-medium schools play an important role. Even now the role of the Estonian language is marginal there, whereby the use of Estonian as a language of administration and public information is limited. The use of English in research and higher education is on the increase. Accession to the European Union will increase the impact of English also in law and administration, economy and banking, information and advertising. Economy, business and banking acquired their present look in the 1990s as a result of sweeping changes and on the basis of technological development and have now largely an international character. In information technology English has from the beginning acted as the leading language and the language that influences other languages. Entertainment is increasingly in foreign languages. The media is mostly in the Estonian language, but being profit-oriented its level and distribution is uneven.

At present the Estonian language is used in all spheres of life, but one can witness signs of domain loss (loss of a domain to other languages) and shortcomings in the quality of the language used. The development of the past decade in Estonia has been focused on openness; the position of Estonian has weakened against the background of globalization and the development of information society.

The development opportunities of the Estonian language have been adversely affected both by immigration of non-Estonian speakers and emigration of Estonians, as well as by the absolute decrease in the number of native speakers of Estonian. A certain increase in the number of people who know Estonian both in Estonia and the rest of the world does not compensate the latter.

The standard language and particularly its use have been adversely affected by such general **background factors** in society as

- increased multilingualism of the entire communication, the impact of other languages (especially English),
- rapid movement of Estonia into the sphere of influence of global mass culture and media environment, including the Internet, which has an especially impact on the language use of younger generations,
- explosive growth of linguistically uncontrolled text production and heterogeneity of authors caused by expanded needs and opportunities of language use (development of information technology, simplification of publishing, etc.),
- spread of careless attitudes towards language in society,
- deteriorating and even inadequate general literacy among school-leavers, accompanied by inadequate knowledge of specialized language among university graduates,
- increased proportion of specialists and students with a non-Estonian-medium educational background,
- a decrease in the number of native speakers of Estonian due to the low birth rate and emigration of young people,
- subjective and objective factors that hinder the acquisition of the Estonian language by non-Estonians,
- linking the application of the language requirement and legitimacy only with the criterion of public interests that is applied to the state language, neglecting the need to develop and protect the best language practice,
- inadequacy of activities supporting the standard language with regard to domains and in Estonia as a whole,
- decrease in official term standardization.

In order to reduce the unfavourable influence of these factors, it is necessary to work out and implement a purposeful language policy.

DSEL as a framework document of the national language policy foresees **strategic main objectives** in the primary domains of public use of the Estonian language and determines the state-supported activities that are needed to achieve these objectives. These objectives are to **ensure**

- **development capability of the Estonian language,**
- **prevalence of the Estonian language in public use,**
- **good quality of Standard Estonian and its use.**

The standard language has to be developed and its position has to be strengthened in all of its domains in order to avoid the aggravation of unfavourable tendencies.

### 3.1. Language planning in Estonia

**Language planning** is a conscious effort to develop, enrich, stabilize, and update the standard language. It involves search for the linguistic ideal and provision of linguistic recommendations and fixation of norms for the purpose of moving towards this ideal.

Language planning has a practical outlet in **practical language planning**—implementation of recommendations of language planning, practical activities for improving the language use and making it more efficient, explanation, dissemination, and teaching of linguistic recommendations. Both language planning and practical language planning are constant processes, the course of which is prompted by the specific requirements of society.

Language planning is based on the **theory of language planning** and results of **study of the Estonian language**. In order to be fruitful, language planning needs especially studies of actual usage, tendencies and factors of linguistic change, variation, differences and interaction between spoken and written language. Language planning makes use of **language collections**, especially: a) text corpora of written language (see 4.2 and 5) and word-slip catalogues, b) text corpora of spoken language (see 4.2 and 5),

c) text corpora of sub-languages, including text corpora of specialized languages, d) special word-slip catalogue of language planning.

Language planning consists of **three parts**: a) standard language planning, b) LSP planning, and c) name planning.

#### 3.1.1. Standard language planning

Standard language planning deals with general problems of language planning; it leaves aside specific problems of LSP planning and name planning.

Language planning has a tradition of at least 150 years and its own original theory. It is undergoing adjustment to the requirements of a democratic society. Nevertheless, efforts to make the entire society understand its rights, liberties, but also obligations concerning the use of Standard Estonian have not been fully successful as yet.

**Objective: to ensure the quality of Standard Estonian and to contribute to making Estonian a generally used language.**

#### Tasks:

- to develop language planning principles, to compile language planning resources (dictionaries and handbooks), and to maintain databases;
- to provide uniform linguistic norms and recommendations;
- to develop expressiveness of the Estonian language and to explain it to users;
- practical language planning (language advice and editing);
- to study and to plan Euro-Estonian (Estonian equivalents for Euroterms, style and comprehensibility of Eurotexts, etc.);
- training and continuing education in language planning.

#### Implementers:

Institute of the Estonian Language, University of Tartu and Tallinn Pedagogical University, Language Committee of the Mother Tongue Society.

### 3.1.2. LSP planning

LSP planning is the part of language planning that in addition to the general regularities, goals and tasks of the standard language takes into account the goals and tasks that arise from the peculiarity of sublanguage. Specialists are willing and ready to develop the specialized language of their field. In cooperation with linguists terminology has been systematized at universities, research institutions, professional associations, state institutions and elsewhere for textbooks and other publications, and dictionaries have been compiled both for in-house use and publication.

The Estonian Terminology Association (Eter) was set up for the coordination and methodological guidance of this work. Specialized dictionaries that can be further developed have been published in many fields. There is the tradition of terminological committees as a work format. Unfortunately, the working out of term standards has subsided.

**Objective: good Estonian specialized language that will meet the needs of specialists both in professional communication and the scientific cognition of the research object.**

#### Tasks:

- to develop the terminology of all the research fields, branches of technology and economics, and hobbies that are practised in Estonia;
- to provide state support to the terminological committees for the development of specialized language, compilation and publication of terminological dictionaries;
- to write textbooks of specialized language;
- to promote terminological work in educational and research institutions;
- to improve critical dictionary-using skills with regard to terminological dictionaries;
- to disseminate and exchange information about specialized language; to deal with dictionary criticism;
- to provide LSP training for specialists and philologists both as part of curricula in higher schools and in-service training;

- to develop legal and administrative languages, also to support the EU institutions in assuring high-quality translation of legal acts;
- to provide language training for Estonian officials working in EU institutions and to support their terminological cooperation with Estonian institutions;
- to participate in international terminological cooperation in order to secure for Estonian the same rights and development potential as in the case of the other official languages of the EU;
- to participate in international LSP research activities.

#### Implementers:

Institute of the Estonian Language, Ministry of Justice (including the Estonian Legal Language Centre), terminological committees of various fields, Estonian Terminology Association, higher schools, Estonian Centre for Standards.

### 3.1.3. Name planning

Name planning is a system of principles and practical measures that has to contribute to the functioning of names as identifiable linguistic forms in the interests of the state and society, guaranteeing clarity, precision, and unambiguity in the use of names. Name planning is divided into scientific name planning (elaboration of name planning principles) and state name planning (elaboration, application, and supervision of legal acts regulating the use of names).

A peculiarity of name planning in comparison with language planning is its higher degree of legal regulation. The rules governing Estonian personal, place, and business names are laid down by a number of legal acts; name committees (place-name committee at the Interior Ministry) and officials use them as a basis for their work. Name planning has yielded a number of name books and guidelines. The use of names in Estonia is characterized by openness and susceptibility to foreign influences, especially in the case of personal and business names. When fighting off foreign influences, one needs a sensible balance between the rights of an individual and the expectations of society.

The prerequisites to name planning are as follows: the place-name law took effect on 1 July 2004, the draft law on personal names was submitted to the Estonian Parliament on 11 May 2004, there are experienced onomastic scholars, name collections at the Institute of the Estonian Language, at the Võru Institute, etc.

**Objective: to protect and further develop the Estonian onomastic heritage as a bearer of the Estonian identity; to create a well-functioning name planning system with the cooperation of both the state and research institutions dealing with name planning.**

**Tasks:**

- to adopt the law on personal names, to draw up application acts, including guidelines for assigning and use of personal and place names;
- to evaluate the use of names by engaging the onomastic scholars and name planners of both the onomastic reference institution and other institutions;
- to supplement and update the name collections at the institutions dealing with name planning, to begin the digitization of the comprehensive place-name catalogue of the dialect archives at the Institute of the Estonian Language (see 4.2);
- to participate in international name planning activities, to explain the goals and tasks of name planning to the public at large, and to prepare handbooks of name planning.

**Implementers:**

Institute of the Estonian Language, Tallinn Pedagogical University, University of Tartu, Võru Institute, Interior Ministry.

### **3.2. Protection and monitoring of the Estonian language**

Language protection and monitoring brings together those activities that directly guide the use of the standard language towards the achievement of the strategic primary aims: legal regulation of public language use; monitoring the fulfilment of language requirements, stimulation of the activities that remain beyond the sphere of legal regulation (by means of

administrative and economic means, public recognition, selection criteria, etc.).

The Ministry of Education and Research (language service, adviser of language policy to the department of research and higher education) is responsible for the planning of language policy, and the Language Inspectorate is responsible for monitoring the fulfilment of the language act. The field of language enjoys a rather modest representation in the structure of the Ministry of Education and Research; apart from checking whether the Estonian language is used, the Language Inspectorate has extremely limited possibilities to check whether the Estonian usage corresponds to the norm of Standard Estonian.

**Objective: to create conditions for implementing all the activities foreseen by DSEL.**

#### **3.2.1. Legal regulation**

**Tasks:**

- to ensure that legislation will correspond to the primary aims of the language strategy;
- to establish Estonian-language requirements for public servants as part of professional requirements;
- to make the editing of legal and administrative texts compulsory for state and local government institutions and to establish the conditions and order for engaging a language editor in the editing of texts;
- to provide the requirement for using Estonian-language software on all levels of general educational school;
- to restrict the use of foreign languages in the names of Estonian businesses;
- to regulate the relation between a trademark and commercial advertising and product information;
- to specify the rules for displaying public information.

**Implementers:**

Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Eco-

onomy and Communications, local governments.

### 3.2.2. Supervision

#### Tasks:

- to improve supervision over the observance of the legal acts concerning the language, including checking whether the texts are in Estonian and their conformity to the norm of the standard language, paying special attention to administrative texts, product descriptions, and operational manuals, informational and advertising texts, and subtitles;
- to create an institution that will monitor the quality of media language and write professional criticism.

#### Implementers:

ministries, Language Inspectorate, Consumer Protection Board, local governments, professional associations.

### 3.2.3. Stimulation

#### Tasks:

- to motivate the use of good Estonian in all spheres of life, paying special attention to the maintenance and development of high-quality Estonian-language media environment;
- to apply Estonian-language criteria at job and other competitions and appraisals (general and professional language proficiency, publication of Estonian-language teaching materials in the case of university teachers, etc.);
- to continue the subsidization of Estonian-language cultural, professional, and peer-reviewed journals by the state;
- to motivate the preference of Estonian-language software in state procurements;
- to stimulate Estonian-medium education and research (including the publication of Estonian-language scholarly articles or their summaries);
- to support Estonian-language culture and entertainment (theatre, film, vocal music, literature, translation);

- to motivate the use of Estonian-language software both in established and emerging fields of information technology.

#### Implementers:

ministries, professional associations, local governments, higher schools, Estonian Science Foundation, council of research competence and councils or leading committees of national programmes, professional associations of journalists, Estonian Academy of Sciences.

### 3.3. Public image of the Estonian language

The task of language-related image-making is to enhance language awareness, to shape attitudes towards language, and to promote good usage in society at large in order to secure a positive image of the language among users and a high status in society as a whole.

At present in Estonia philologists, writers, and mother-tongue teachers take care of the image of the language out of their sense of mission. Nobody deals with it professionally and on a systematic basis.

**Objective: to create an image-building system for the Estonian language and to develop a research-based activity for image-building.**

#### Tasks:

- to launch the national programme “Estonian identity 2005–2009”;
- to work out the conception of identity shaping for general educational schools and to organize in-service training for mother-tongue teachers in the field of linguistic image-building;
- to cover language problems and events in the media;
- to create and disseminate text corpora and databases, television and video films, informational materials, etc on digital and laser discs for mass use that promote the Estonian language;
- to organize events promoting the image of the Estonian language in as many spheres of life as possible;
- to support the creation and activities of a students’ language maintenance organization;
- to support the development of the Estonian-language web environ-

ment and to improve the image of the Estonian-language web environment.

**Implementers:**

higher schools, research and development institutions dealing with the Estonian language, non-government organizations, Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Culture, Tiger Leap Foundation, public service media, and cultural journalism.

**3.4. Education and teaching of the Estonian language**

Education is one of the most important means of guaranteeing the development and position of a language. One of the roles of education is to provide general and professional literacy and to shape favourable attitudes towards the language. General education, especially compulsory general education, is of fundamental importance because it influences the language use most of all.

**3.4.1. General education**

According to law, any language can serve as the language tuition of a basic school. In order to improve the proficiency of Estonian of secondary-school leavers a requirement has been introduced to start the transition of Russian-medium state and municipal secondary schools to Estonian-medium teaching in 2007, retaining under certain conditions the right to apply for the use of any other language of tuition. At present two languages of tuition are used in general educational schools: three quarters of secondary-school students study in Estonian, and one quarter study in Russian.

**3.4.1.1. Estonian-medium general education**

The literacy of Estonian-medium general educational school leavers is in need of improvement.

**Objective: to ensure a good proficiency of Estonian among school-leavers of basic and secondary schools and their favourable attitude**

**towards the Estonian language.**

**Tasks:**

- to improve the teaching of the Estonian language in order to ensure the acquisition of all the component skills of Estonian;
- to introduce the teaching of practical Estonian into the curricula of teacher training and in-service training of all school subjects;
- to facilitate the linguistic integration of the children of new immigrants into the Estonian-medium school and thus into the Estonian society;
- to train teachers for the multinational Estonian-medium school.

**Implementers:**

Ministry of Education and Research, University of Tartu and Tallinn Pedagogical University.

**3.4.1.2. Non-Estonian-medium general education**

Many school-leavers of non-Estonian-medium general educational schools have an inadequate proficiency in Estonian in order to be able to continue their studies in the Estonian-language environment and/or to start working. School-leavers of secondary schools are required to know the Estonian language on the intermediate level (60 points at the national examination); however, at the same time it is also possible to finish secondary school with 20 points. The achievement of the required language level has been also hindered by the fact that most subjects are taught in Russian, and the Estonian language has been generally taught only in lessons of Estonian, which does not ensure the required scope of teaching and the Estonian-language environment at school. Also, the proficiency of Estonian of some teachers, including teachers of Estonian, is inadequate for performing job-related tasks. Knowledge of Estonian is better in those schools that have introduced partial Estonian-medium teaching of school subjects.

Preparations for the transition of Russian-medium secondary schools to Estonian-medium teaching in 2007 have been inadequate. The elementary level of the Estonian language, which is required from the school-leaver of a basic school, does not allow continuing one's studies in Estonian-medium

um upper secondary school. Without additional measures it is impossible to raise this level to a considerable degree in a few years. Possible arrival of new immigrants will further complicate the problems of teaching the Estonian language.

**Objectives:**

- to improve the image of Estonian in non-Estonian-medium schools;
- to achieve that students of non-Estonian-medium basic schools will acquire the Estonian language on the level B2<sup>1</sup>, which will create the opportunities for studying at an upper secondary school that will undergo transition to Estonian-medium teaching in 2007 and to cope in Estonian society;
- to achieve that all school-leavers of non-Estonian-medium upper secondary schools will know the Estonian language in accordance with the requirements set by the curriculum, which will enable them to continue their studies in Estonian, including the tertiary level and to work in the Estonian-language environment.

**Tasks:**

- to facilitate the introduction of Estonian-medium teaching of school subjects in Russian-medium basic schools and to work out the qualification requirements of teachers of non-Estonian-medium schools who teach in Estonian and the Estonian language (proficiency in Estonian on the level C2);
- to systematize the content and scope of teaching Estonian and Russian in order to ensure that students will reach the proficiency level B2 of Estonian by the end of the basic school and the level C1 by the end of upper secondary school;
- to bring the conditions and rules of the national examination of Es-

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<sup>1</sup> Language proficiency levels: the system of language proficiency levels of the European Council (A – basic use; B – independent use; C – proficient use; language proficiency levels can be further specified: A1, A1.1 etc.); language proficiency is described by means of skills: comprehension – listening and reading; speaking – oral communication and presentation; writing.

tonian for non-Estonian-medium upper secondary schools in conformity with the goals set by the curriculum, to improve the system of external assessment of study results and to ensure its objectiveness.

**Implementers:**

Ministry of Education and Research, Tallinn Pedagogical University, University of Tartu, including the Centre for Curriculum Development at the University of Tartu, National Examination and Qualification Centre, local governments.

**3.4.2. Vocational training**

According to law, the language of tuition of a vocational educational establishment is the Estonian language, but in exceptional cases the law allows to provide vocational training also through the medium of Russian. About 65 per cent of vocational students study in Estonian and about 35 per cent in Russian. The teaching of the Estonian language in Russian-medium vocational establishments or Russian-medium study groups of a vocational establishment is compulsory only those students who study on the basis of basic education (however, the scope of teaching is much less than in non-Estonian-medium upper secondary schools).

The state does not regulate the language of tuition of vocational subjects at Russian-medium vocational training establishments, and the vocational subjects are generally taught in Russian. The majority of graduates of Russian-medium vocational schools are unable to work and communicate in the Estonian-language environment.

**Objective: to ensure that all graduates of vocational schools will be able to communicate in Estonian and to work in the Estonian-language environment.**

**Tasks:**

- to considerably increase the scope of teaching the Estonian language and Estonian-medium teaching in Russian-medium and bilingual establishments of vocational training.

**Implementers:**

Ministry of Education and Research, establishments of vocational training, National Examination and Qualification Centre, employers.

**3.4.3. Higher education**

The Estonian language is supported by a long tradition of Estonian-medium higher education and research. However, internationalization has been accompanied by an increase in the proportion of teaching through the medium of foreign languages and the number of students and university teachers whose proficiency in Estonian is inadequate. Also, the specialized language is not taught sufficiently.

**Objective: to grant Estonian-medium higher education (to cover all the specialities with terminological dictionaries and Estonian-language educational literature, to essentially retain Estonian-medium teaching, and to publish the major research results also in the Estonian language), avoiding the full use of foreign languages in any field of science. To ensure a high level of proficiency in Estonian among university graduates.**

**Tasks:**

- to increase the number of state-funded student places for specialists in the Estonian language in a scope that will meet the national need and to base the calculation of a cost-based value of a student place on the need to apply new teaching methods and aids;
- to subsidize the preparation and publication of Estonian-medium teaching and reference materials by the state;
- to introduce the teaching of Estonian for specific purposes in all curricula;
- to extend the opportunities of those Estonians who have obtained a secondary education abroad and international students to study the Estonian language.

**Implementers:**

Ministry of Education and Research, higher schools.

**4. STUDY OF THE ESTONIAN LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE COLLECTIONS****4.1. Study of the Estonian language**

The study of the Estonian language is the obtainment of knowledge about the Estonian language, its varieties, structure, usage, variation, and change. The study is based on **language collections** (see 4.2). In addition to the purely scientific function, the study of Estonian has (national) cultural and applied functions.

Research has to provide material about the history, contemporary essence, and future trends of the Estonian language. The most important applications of the research results are **standard language planning** (see 3.1), **language teaching** (see 3.4), and **language technology** (see 5). Research has to ensure the solution of the linguistic problems that are related to applications.

Estonia has a long tradition of linguistic research, and there are linguists for all the principal research areas. However, many phenomena have not been studied as yet or they have not been studied on the contemporary level. There are few comprehensive treatments and studies that support applications.

**Objectives:**

- **to achieve a situation that the Estonian language will be studied on an internationally acceptable level in all the branches of contemporary linguistics, paying special attention to those branches that are important from the point of view of applications;**
- **to write comprehensive scholarly treatments of those areas of Estonian where they are lacking at present or are in need of updating;**
- **to pay more attention to the study of actual usage.**

**Tasks:**

- 1) study of the structure and usage of written and spoken language:
  - to further grammatical studies; to prepare scholarly descriptions of

Estonian phonetics and phonology;

- to study the vocabulary of written and spoken Estonian; to complete the “Explanatory Dictionary of Standard Estonian” and to begin the preparation of a single-volume explanatory dictionary;
- to study the theory and functioning of names, to provide a survey of the Estonian system of names; to continue the study of Estonian place names by regions; to study the evolution of Estonian first and last names;
- to study links between language use and social factors in various text types;
- to further studies of spoken language and to prepare a descriptive survey of spoken language;
- to carry out studies dealing with the theory of language planning;

2) study of Estonian dialects:

- to prepare comparative surveys of the phonetics and grammar of Estonian dialects;
- to continue the compilation of the “Dictionary of Estonian Dialects”;
- to study the contemporary regional varieties and sociolects;

3) study of the history, dynamics, relations and contacts of the Estonian language:

- to prepare surveys of historical phonetics and historical grammar of the Estonian language;
- to continue studies on the evolution of Standard Estonian;
- to compile an etymological dictionary of the Estonian language;
- to further the theoretical study of linguistic change;
- to study recent changes in Estonian vocabulary and grammar (since the 1990s) in order to keep them within limits that are favourable to the Estonian language;
- to study the use of the Estonian language by non-Estonians.

#### **Implementers:**

Institute of the Estonian Language, University of Tartu and Tallinn Pedagogical University, Võru Institute, Institute of Cybernetics at the Tallinn Technical University.

## **4.2. Language collections**

The existence of **language collections** is a vital prerequisite for the study and planning of the Estonian language. The most important traditional collections of the Estonian language include the archive of standard language at the Institute of the Estonian Language, the dialect archive and the sound archive and the dialect archive at the University of Tartu; the most important electronic collections include the text corpus of Standard Estonian at the University of Tartu, the text corpus of the old written language and the text corpus of spoken language, and the dialect corpus of the University of Tartu and the Institute of the Estonian Language.

**Objective: to ensure the preservation, enlargement, and usability of the collections.**

#### **Tasks:**

- preservation and constant supplementation of the existing collections and the creation of new collections;
- systematization and technological modernization of the traditional collections (digitization, storage on compact discs);
- enhancement of user-friendliness of the collections (including on-line access).

#### **Implementers:**

Institute of the Estonian Language, University of Tartu.

## **5. LANGUAGE TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT OF THE ESTONIAN LANGUAGE**

The language technology support of a language consists of linguistic resources and linguistic software and applications of the latter. **Linguistic resources** are electronic data collections that are used for working out linguistic software. **Linguistic software** entails methods of processing language materials, algorithms and computer programs that serve as a basis

for **linguistically engineered application systems**. The state has to support the elaboration of prototypes of applied language processing systems and order the elaboration of marketable finished products from software companies.

Estonia has its own specialists for the creation of linguistic resources, linguistic software, and their applications as well as opportunities for training new specialists in computational linguistics and language technology at the University of Tartu.

**Objective: to develop the language technology support of the Estonian language up the level that will enable the Estonian language to successfully function in the contemporary information-technological environment.**

**Tasks:**

- 1) to create the following language-technological applications:
  - automatic speech recognition;
  - speech synthesis;
  - grammar checker;
  - machine-translation programs;
  - information-search programs;
  - abstracting and summarizing programs;
  - interactive language teaching programs;
  - programs for compiling web-based dictionaries;
  - an intelligent enquiry system for using dictionaries and linguistic software as an aid in language learning and translation;
- 2) to develop the following linguistic resources:
  - general corpus of Standard Estonian; in order to work out linguistic software, there is a need for manually tagged test and training corpora;
  - corpus of spoken Estonian, which is required for working out speech recognition and telephone-based information systems;
  - multilingual parallel corpora for the elaboration translation software;
  - specialized corpora, first of all a dialogue corpus and a syntactically tagged corpus for the elaboration of communication programs

that allow the use of natural language;

- a database of excerpts of Estonian-language speech that is necessary for the elaboration of Estonian-language software of speech recognition;
- a standard system of electronic dictionaries, including bilingual dictionaries, for online use as well as in language-technology applications, for the compilation of new translation dictionaries, in language teaching and translation software;
- a lexical-grammatical database and a lexical-semantic database (thesaurus) of the Estonian language;
- formalized linguistic descriptions for the creation programs of morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic analysis and synthesis;

3) to refine the programs for automatic morphological analysis and synthesis and to work out programs for automatic syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic analysis and synthesis.

**Implementers:**

University of Tartu, Institute of the Estonian Language, Institute of Cybernetics at the Tallinn Technical University.

## 6. VARIETIES OF ESTONIAN

Varieties of Estonian include the regional varieties of the Estonian language (dialects and the corresponding written varieties; varieties of Estonian used by Estonians abroad who live in various countries), varieties of language use by social groups (sociolects, slang), and varieties used by people with special linguistic needs, including sign language.

The varieties of social groups are discussed in DSEL in connection with linguistic research, see 4.1.

## 6.1. Regional varieties of Estonian in Estonia

The spoken regional varieties of Estonian include the Estonian dialects and the corresponding written varieties. North Estonian and South Estonian dialects show the largest number of differences. Contemporary Standard Estonian evolved on the basis of North Estonian dialects and support of the South Estonian dialects.

**Objective: to create conditions for the use of regional varieties of Estonian, their preservation as a cultural treasure, as a development source of Standard Estonian, and the bearer of the local Estonian identity.**

### Tasks:

- to create opportunities for the teaching of dialects in general educational schools and other educational establishments and to prepare such teaching materials;
- to support the use of the dialects in the media and other culture by means of projects for the development of regional culture;
- to legally regulate the use of the regional varieties of Estonian in local administration, public signs, advertisements, notices, and advertising.

### Implementers:

Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Culture, Institute of the Estonian Language, University of Tartu and Tallinn Pedagogical University, Võru Institute, Centre for the Study of South Estonian Language and Culture at the University of Tartu.

## 6.2. Language of Estonians living abroad

The Estonian language of Estonians living abroad is the Estonian language (variety) used by native speakers of Estonian and people whose ancestors were Estonians, which is related to the area or country where they live. The mother tongue of expatriates develops separately from the language of the old country and is influenced by the main language of the country of residence. The state supports the learning of Standard Estonian

and in Standard Estonian as well as the collection and study of language materials of the Estonian language.

**Objective: to help the Estonian communities abroad and scattered Estonians to maintain the ability to communicate in Estonian, so that their repatriation will be easier and that there will be more opportunities to disseminate information that is favourable to Estonia.**

### Tasks:

- to support the teaching of Standard Estonian and teaching in Standard Estonian in schools abroad and the study in Estonia of Estonians living abroad;
- to facilitate the availability of Estonian-language information abroad (print and electronic media, television);
- to keep expatriate Estonians abreast of the development trends of the Estonian language and the Estonian language policy;
- to record and study the language use of expatriate Estonians and the Estonian-language material in foreign countries.

### Implementers:

ministries, Bureau of the Minister of Ethnic Affairs, Estonian Institute, Mother Tongue Society, Institute of the Estonian Language, University of Tartu and Tallinn Pedagogical University.

## 6.3. Sign language and language use by people with special linguistic needs

People with special linguistic needs include the deaf and people with impaired hearing, as well as the blind, the deaf-blind, dyslectics, aphasics, dysarthrics, and others. The Estonian deaf and people with impaired hearing and their attendants use the Estonian Sign Language (more precisely – the Estonian Sign Language and signed Estonian); the deaf-blind use tactile sign language (hand-to-hand signing).

**Objective: to guarantee sign language users and other people with special needs favourable conditions for study, communication, and work.**

**Tasks:**

- to determine the human groups with special needs;
- to guarantee people with special needs at least minimum communication possibilities for participation in society;
- to guarantee the blind every possibility to acquire and use Braille and to develop language-technological means (speech synthesis, screen readers), which enable the blind to use the computer and the Internet;
- to develop the Estonian Sign Language (to standardize the signs and sign syntax, to create new signs, to prepare a grammar and dictionary of the sign language);
- to train sign-language interpreters and to fund their work (in daily life, court, study, television and other fields);
- to guarantee deaf children the option for Estonian-medium or Estonian-medium and sign-language education;
- to guarantee people with special linguistic needs the possibility to call for assistance in an emergency (by technical means);
- to translate at least 10 per cent of Estonian television programmes into the sign language, to provide at least 10 per cent of Estonian-language original programming with Estonian-language subtitles, to develop text television; to use all the possibilities of digital television to this end;
- to supply for the blind a proportion of programmes of public service television with condensed newsreader text: to use the possibilities of digital television to this end.

**Implementers:**

Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Economy and Communications, Ministry of Culture, Interior Ministry, Rescue Board, local governments, Institute of the Estonian Language, University of Tartu.

## 7. ESTONIAN AND OTHER LANGUAGES

Foreign languages (English, Russian, German, French, Finnish, and others) influence the development of the Estonian language or are of especial importance to the Estonian state in international communication. In order to ensure the development of the Estonian language, it is vital for the Estonian language to be internationally represented, there have to be qualified interpreters and translators with an excellent knowledge of the Estonian language, and the Estonian population must have a good knowledge of foreign languages (two-three foreign languages).

**Objective: to work out and to carry out a language policy that will take into account the development needs of the Estonian language in the context of other languages; to secure the international representation for the Estonian language and international linguistic cooperation.**

**Tasks:**

- to work out a foreign language policy that will take into account the development needs of the Estonian state;
- to ensure such a level in the teaching of foreign languages that will enable: a) the school-leavers of the basic school to attain the level B1 in at least one foreign language; b) the school-leavers of upper secondary schools to attain the level B2 in at least one foreign language; c) the graduates of higher schools to attain the level B2 in at least two foreign languages; d) the teachers of foreign languages to attain the level C2 in the language that they teach;
- to work out the professional standard for interpreters and translators that will serve as a basis for the evaluation of interpreters and translators;
- to train university teachers, teachers, interpreters, and translators of foreign languages, to provide such a number of state-funded student places that will meet the national need, and to take into account in the calculation of the cost-based value of a student place the needs that arise from the introduction of new teaching methods and aids;
- to organize in-service training in the field of languages of influence that consists of a) coordinated system of in-service training, b) mar-

ket research for the identification of target groups and their needs, c) academic supervision;

- to update the teaching materials and curricula in the field of foreign language teaching and to publish bilingual dictionaries;
- to considerably increase the role of the Estonian language in the curricula of foreign philology;
- to support contrastive studies between Estonian and its languages of influence and the development of teaching materials that take into account the relations between Estonian and its languages of influence;
- to improve the framework of levels of language proficiency: a) to apply the language portfolio for recording the course of learning foreign languages and Estonian in Estonia since the school year 2006/2007<sup>2</sup>; b) to establish the national test development centre;
- to actively develop academic teaching of Estonian outside Estonia;
- to develop international linguistic cooperation.

#### **Implementers:**

Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, University of Tartu, Tallinn Pedagogical University, Estonian Institute, Estonian Association of Translators and Interpreters, Institute of the Estonian Language.

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<sup>2</sup> The language portfolio is a document that motivates language learners and facilitates the recording of linguistic and cultural knowledge, which is used also in Estonia on the initiative of the European Council; it consists of the language passport, language biography, and dossier.

## **8. FUNDING PRINCIPLES OF THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF THE ESTONIAN LANGUAGE**

DSEL will be funded from the state budget of the Republic of Estonia<sup>3</sup>, which already funds also the teaching of the Estonian language in general educational schools, the training of Estonian-language specialists, the study of Estonian, language planning and practical language planning, ensures the activities of the Ministry of Education and Research and the Language Inspectorate in the planning and protection of the language. The Estonian Parliament and the Government of the Republic of Estonia have approved and are funding the national programmes “Estonian Language and National Memory (2004–2008)”, “Collections in the Field of the Humanities and Natural Sciences (2004–2008)”, “South-Estonian Language and Cul-ture (2000–2004)”, and the “Programme for Kindred Peoples (2000– 2004)”. The government has also approved the “Programme for Compatriots (2004–2008)” (without funding) and the follow-up programmes of South-Estonian language and culture and supporting the kindred peoples. The “Academic Foreign Teaching Programme of the Estonian Language and Culture” in the process of being submitted for approval and beginning of funding.

In order to achieve the objectives of DSEL, it is necessary to launch the programme “Estonian Identity 2005–2009” and to start its funding, to find additional funding first and foremost for the increase in the number of state-funded student places in the fields that ensure the development of the Estonian language, to create Estonian-language terminology and the language-technology support of the Estonian language, and to publish Estonian-language teaching and informational materials.

The following funding principles have to be followed to implement DSEL:

- the needs of the language has to be considered to be a priority;
- the real increase in the funding of the language has to take place

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<sup>3</sup> The funding plan of DSEL, which is specified annually in the course of drafting the state budget, is not provided in the present publication.

in accordance with substantiated needs;

- to secure the funding of DSEL-related programmes to the extent devised and approved by the Government of the Republic of Estonia;
- to secure such a level and certainty that will allow devising and solving long-term tasks.

In order to achieve the objectives of DSEL, the Ministry of Education and Research will commission the Estonian Language Council annually to draw up the action and funding plan for the following year by March 1. The activities for 2004 are possible to the extent foreseen by this year's state budget.

## **APPENDIX 1. Principal participating institutions for the implementation of DSEL**

The **Ministry of Education and Research** (MER) designs and organizes the national language policy through its structural units and administered institutions, prepares the necessary draft legal acts to this end, and coordinates research into the Estonian language, relying on the positions of DSEL and guiding its implementation. The goal of the activities of MER is to ensure purposeful and efficient application of the language policy that is favourable to the development of the Estonian language, including the elaboration of national development plans in the field of language and the assurance of conformity with the other national development plans. The **Estonian Language Council** (ELC) works at MER; the task of ELC is to constantly monitor and analyse the linguistic situation in Estonia (including the draft legal acts dealing with language) and to submit proposals concerning the national language policy, including its funding. The Estonian Language Council will monitor the implementation of DSEL; it will review the positions of the latter after an interval of every two years and submit suggestions for important amendments to the Estonian Parliament through the minister of education and research. The Estonian Language Council will draw up DSEL 2.

The **Language Inspectorate** is a government body in the area of government of the Ministry of Education and Research. Its main tasks include supervision of the observance of the language act and other legal acts regulating the use of language, issuance of warnings and prescriptions, and imposition of fines if necessary.

The **University of Tartu**, one of the tasks of the Faculty of Philosophy of which is to provide postgraduate education and to conduct linguistic research into Estonian and other languages. Estonian-related activities are carried out mostly at the Department of Estonian and Finno-Ugric Linguistics.

**Tallinn Pedagogical University**, one of the tasks of the Faculty of Philology of which is to provide postgraduate education and to conduct linguistic research into Estonian and other languages. The main emphasis of

teaching and research is on the applied trend. Estonian-related activities are carried out mostly at the Department of Estonian Philology.

The **Institute of the Estonian Language** is a state research and development institution administered by MER, the task of which is research into Standard Estonian, Estonian dialects, and languages genetically related to Estonian, and the compilation of scholarly dictionaries. Its activities include also language planning and development of practical language planning.

The **National Examination and Qualification Centre** is an institution administered by MER that prepares assignments for national examinations in the Estonian language and conducts the examinations. The centre also tests the proficiency of non-Estonians in the Estonian language, issues language proficiency certificates, and keeps their register.

The **Estonian Legal Language Centre** (ELLC) is a state body administered by the Ministry of Justice, the main task of which is the development and protection of Estonian legal language, legal terminology, arrangement of the editing of legal acts, and the translation of legal acts. In connection with the main task ELLC will set up a data collection of legal terms and will ensure its good order and availability, provides terminological aid to government bodies, maintains the data collection of draft legal acts of language editors, and takes care of their qualification committee, puts together and edits the journal *Õiguskeel* 'Legal Language', organizes training in legal language for government bodies, carries out translation and terminological projects, publishes, if necessary, translations of legal acts, terminological publications and handbooks of legal language, and, if necessary, carries out evaluations of translations of legal acts.

The **Võru Institute** is a research and development institution administered by the Ministry of Culture, the activities of which cover the historical Võrumaa (Võru and Põlva Counties and parts of Tartumaa and Valgamaa) and helps to record and develop the local dialect and culture.

The **Mother Tongue Society** functions as a non-profit organization and is associated with the Estonian Academy of Sciences. The aims of the so-

ciety are to contribute to the research and planning of the Estonian language and to generate public interest in the Estonian language. The **Language Committee of the Mother Tongue Society** provides recommendations and norms concerning the standard language.

The **Estonian Terminology Association** (Eter) is a non-profit organization, the aim of which is to coordinate terminology work in cooperation with the Institute of the Estonian Language and the Estonian Legal Language Centre, to organize cooperation with the international network of terminological institution, to further develop the existing term collections, to render terminological services (term advice, evaluations, translation of specialized texts, dissemination of information about specialized language), to organize LSP training and the implementation of domestic and international terminological projects, to publish terminological dictionaries and other terminology-related literature.

The **Integration Foundation for non-Estonians** will implement the national integration programme and work out an action plan for the period after its programme is completed.

The **Association of Estonian-language Teachers** is a non-profit organization that brings together teachers of the Estonian language and literature as well as other people interested in the teaching of the mother tongue, practical language planning, and literature. The aim of the association is to promote and value the study and teaching of the Estonian language and literature, to raise the level of the knowledge of the mother tongue among its members, and to improve their professional knowledge and skills.

## **APPENDIX 2. Support programmes for the implementation of DSEL**

National programme “**Estonian Language and National Memory (2004–2008)**”. The programme provides a framework first and foremost for the development of language planning and LSP, scholarly dictionaries of the Estonian language and language-technology projects, as well as the shaping of linguistic attitudes. The 2004 budget of the programme amounts to 10 million EEK (6.7 m EEK have been received), and this amount has to increase up to 16 m EEK annually by the end of the programme. As a follow-up to the national programme “Estonian Language and National Culture (1999–2003)”, this programme acts at the same time as the basis for the national programme “**Estonian Language and National Memory II (2009–2013)**”.

National programme “**Collections in the Field of the Humanities and Natural Sciences (2004–2008)**”. The programme provides a framework for the creation of collections of the Estonian language (old and contemporary standard language, dialects of Estonian and its genetically related languages) and a material base for the long-term preservation of the collections and for making copies. Also, electronic databases will be set up; the collections of the Estonian language (both the catalogues and sound archives, collections of place, personal, and animal names) will be digitized and made available on the Internet.

The national programme “**South-Estonian Language and Culture (2000–2004)**” will continue and act as the basis for the follow-up programme “**South-Estonian Language and Culture (2005–2009)**”. The aim of the programme is to plan and to fund the development, study, teaching, and use of the varieties of South Estonian in the media and culture.

The “**Academic Foreign Teaching Programme of the Estonian Language and Culture (2005–2009)**”, which is in preparation, will outline a system for the teaching of the Estonian language and culture at those European universities that present most interest to Estonia. It involves the dispatch of lecturers of the Estonian language and culture, provision of scholarships, organization of summer schools, in-service seminars, and

conferences, and the preparation and dissemination of teaching aids.

The “**Programme for Compatriots (2004–2008)**” focuses on supporting those compatriots who live outside Estonia, promoting among other things their learning of the Estonian language and Estonian-medium teaching through Estonian schools, Sunday schools, and language courses. The programme has to allow paying attention to the language teaching of recent emigrants.

























