

THE ERA-MORE
visiting researcher's
guide to Estonia



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guide to Estonia

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Published by Archimedes Foundation

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INTRODUCTION



The aim of “The ERA-MORE Visiting Researcher’s Guide to Estonia” is to help researchers from all over the world who plan to come to work or study in Estonia. The information provided herein is relevant and applicable for researchers, academic personnel and doctorate students, but is not necessarily applicable to other mobile workers.

Our aim is to make your mobility experience as easy as possible. This guide offers you guidelines for arranging employment and work formalities and also for managing the practical matters of everyday life in Estonia. We have tried to provide information for a short visit as well as for long-term research work in Estonia, so that you can get the most from Estonia’s excellent, although not very well-known research landscape.

“The ERA-MORE Visiting Researcher’s Guide to Estonia” will lead you to various sources on the Internet, where you can find more detailed information. The Estonian Researcher’s Mobility Portal www.smartEstonia.ee provides updated information on all of the topics covered in this guide.

If more personalised assistance is needed, please feel free to contact our ERA-MORE mobility centres. ERA-MORE – the European Network of Mobility Centres – is a Europe wide service providing mobile researchers and their families with customised assistance in all matters relating to their mobility experience. This Guide has been prepared by members of the Estonian ERA-MORE network and with the network’s support.

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ESTONIAN ERA-MORE NETWORK



ERA-MORE, the European Network of Mobility Centres, is designed to assist researchers to take up training and working positions abroad. In spring 2007, the Estonian ERA-MORE Network consists of 2 bridgehead organisations and 4 local mobility centres in the 4 largest universities.

**BRIDGEHEAD ORGANISATIONS:****Archimedes Foundation**

(All queries are welcome, especially from researchers intending to stay in Tartu; queries concerning Marie Curie Actions)

Väike-Turu 8, 51013 Tartu

Contact persons: Ms. Kristin Kraav & Mr. Märt Miljan

Tel.: (+372) 730 0337

E-mail: mobility@archimedes.ee

**Estonian Academy of Sciences**

(All queries are welcome, especially from researchers intending to stay in Tallinn; queries concerning scientific exchange programmes between Academies)

Kohtu 6, 10130 Tallinn

Contact persons: Ms. Anne Pöitel & Ms. Lehti Veeväli

Tel.: (+372) 644 8677, (+372) 504 2659

E-mail: mobility@akadeemia.ee



ESTONIAN ERA-MORE NETWORK

LOCAL MOBILITY CENTRES:**University of Tartu**

(All queries are welcome, especially from researchers intending to work at the University of Tartu)

Ülikooli 18, 50090 Tartu

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RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The higher education and research potential in Estonia is concentrated in two main cities – Tallinn and Tartu. In Estonia R&D is closely connected to the universities. There are also several independent research institutes performing research at a high level.

1.1 R&D strategy

At present the main guideline and document for Estonian R&D policy is *Knowledge-based Estonia*, the Estonian Research and Development and Innovation Strategy for 2007–2013, that was approved by the *Riigikogu* (Parliament) in February 2007. The strategy outlines the aspiration of Estonia to become a knowledge-based society where R&D are valued highly as one of the preconditions for the functioning and development of the entire society.

The strategy sees Estonia as an innovative, highly competitive, successful country within the European research and economic area. The document emphasizes the necessity for a long-term perspective in R&D investments, in order to better weigh the impacts and requirements arising from external factors (global trends in scientific, technological and economic development; the internationalisation of research, etc.) as well as internal factors (the implementation analysis of the previous strategy document, the need to apply scientific knowledge to meet socio-economic challenges, etc.). The strategy highlights the key role of human resources and the transfer of knowledge in raising the quality of R&D and building the innovative capacity of industry. It also devises the instruments for achieving the identified aims.

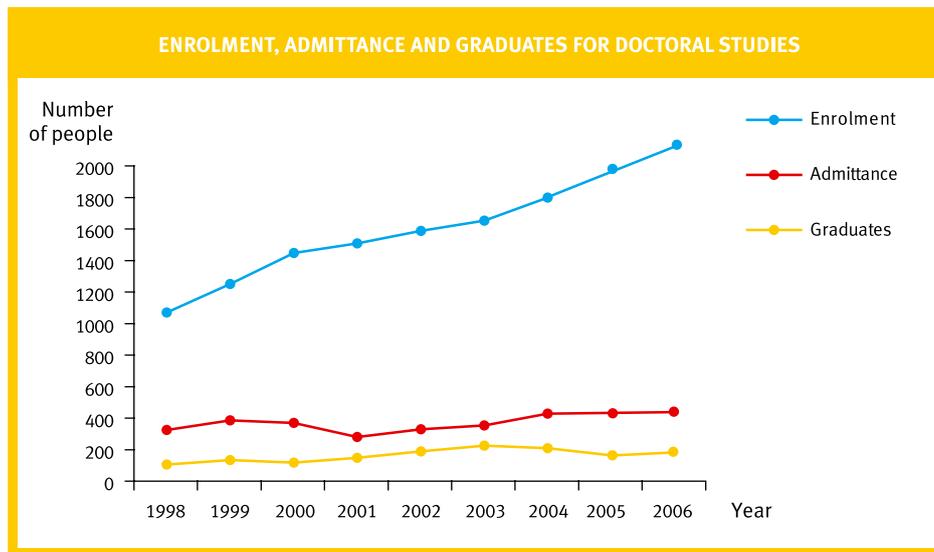


Estonian Research and
Development and Innovation
Strategy for 2007–2013
[http://www.hm.ee/index.
hp?0&popup=download&id
=5961](http://www.hm.ee/index.hp?0&popup=download&id=5961)



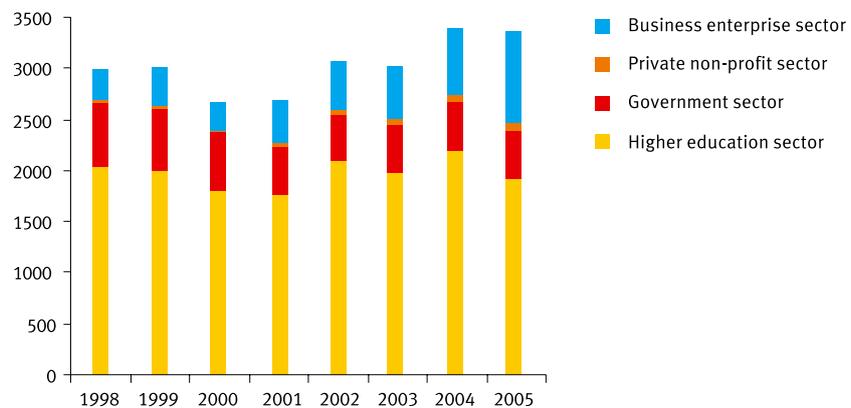
1.2 Estonian R&D statistics

In 2005, total spending on research and development represented 0.94% of Estonia's GDP. The number of researchers (full-time equivalent) has remained roughly the same in recent years, and at the end of 2005 was 3331, comprising about 0.55% of the total employed workforce. The number of doctoral graduates has grown from 106 in 1998 to 226 in 2003 and then dropped to 143 in 2006. The number of doctoral graduates constitutes 9.3% of the master level graduates.



RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

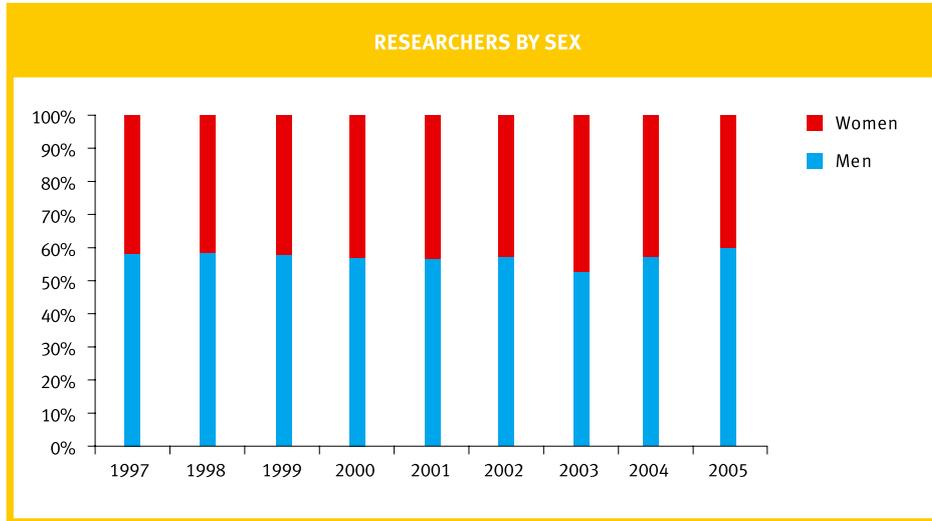
RESEARCHERS IN FULL-TIME EQUIVALENTS



RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURES AND THEIR FINANCING FROM STATE BUDGET

	Expenditure on research and development, million kroons	Expenditure on research and development as % of GDP	Public financing of research and development, million kroons	Public financing of research and development as % from general government expenditure
1998	451.0	0.58	284.0	0.92
1999	572.8	0.70	370.9	1.06
2000	579.4	0.61	342.8	0.98
2001	763.5	0.71	397.3	1.05
2002	871.5	0.72	469.6	1.09
2003	1 046.2	0.79	508.4	1.08
2004	1 294.0	0.88	570.8	1.14
2005	1 627.6	0.94	708.0	1.23

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT



1.3 R&D Funding

Instruments of the Estonian R&D funding system are:

- Targeted financing;
- Baseline funding;
- Research grant funding;
- National research and development programmes;
- Funding of research and development infrastructures.

Targeted financing is decided by the Minister of Education and Research following the recommendation of the Estonian Research Council. The aim is to ensure a competitive basic structure for scientific research. Both basic and applied research is funded. Evaluated and registered research institutions may apply. The funding period for approved research topics is up to 6 years, subject to periodical assessment of progress. All of the research topics that have been approved for targeted financing are assessed each year.

34 new research topics with a total budget of 58.5 million kroons were approved for targeted financing in 2007. The targeted financing of 180 research topics is continued with 241.2 million kroons.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Baseline funding was introduced in 2005. The purpose is financing R&D institutions on the basis of research quality in order to support the development and initiative research of R&D institutions. Also, it is aimed for co-financing of cooperation projects, international and local, between academia and industry. There are not any specific guidelines for spending, thus making the institutions responsible in this matter. The proportion of baseline funding in overall public financing will increase gradually.

The Estonian Science Foundation (ETF) awards **research grants** to individuals and research teams on a competitive basis. Project applications are evaluated by expert commissions and approved by the ETF Council. In the year 2007 ETF finances 630 research projects (144 new and 486 continuing) with the overall amount of 101.6 million kroons. Grants for post-doctoral studies are also awarded by ETF.

National **research and development programmes** are launched and funds allocated by the ministry responsible for the implementation of the programme. As of 2007, Estonia has four national R&D programmes:

- “The Estonian Language and National Memory”;
- “Collections of Humanities and Natural Sciences”;
- “Language technology support for the Estonian language”
- “Agricultural applied research and development activities 2004–2008”.



RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Through Enterprise Estonia and its sub-units, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications finances R&D programmes that involve product development, co-operation with enterprises and entrepreneurs, and technology programmes for priority areas.

Estonia participates actively in European Union Framework Programmes. By the end of 2006, Estonian organisations had participated in the submission of more than 1200 project applications for FP6.

EU's Structural Funds are an additional financing instrument to provide support to the development of research infrastructures and human resources, and to raise the competitiveness of enterprises. The implementing agencies for measures concerning research and development are Enterprise Estonia, Archimedes Foundation and the Foundation for Life-Long Learning Development Innove.



Data on targeted financing and ETF grants is available from the Estonian Research Portal, ETIS <http://www.etis.ee/>

EU's Structural Funds
<http://www.strukturifondid.ee/>

Ministry of Education and Research
<http://www.hm.ee/>

Estonian Science Foundation <http://www.etf.ee/>

Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications
<http://www.mkm.ee/eng/>

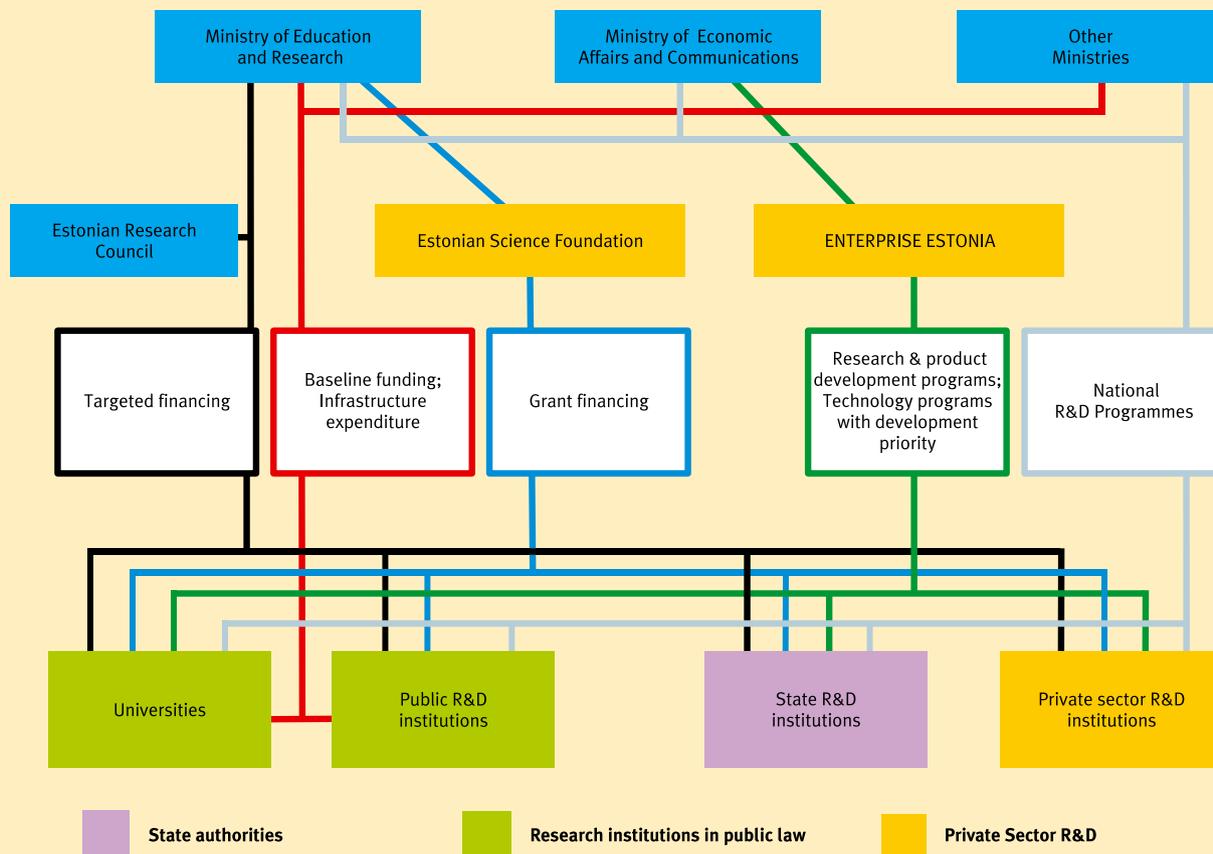
Enterprise Estonia <http://www.eas.ee/>

Archimedes Foundation <http://www.archimedes.ee/>

Foundation for Life-Long Learning Development Innove <http://www.innove.ee/en/>

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

R&D funding system in Estonia



1.4 Institutional framework for R&D

The science reform implemented in the 1990s led to the integration of research institutes (former institutes of the Estonian Academy of Sciences, also institutes subordinated to various ministries) into universities. Nowadays, most research and development in Estonia is performed at universities. The largest public research university is the **University of Tartu**, followed by the **Tallinn University of Technology**, the **Estonian University of Life Sciences** and **Tallinn University**.

There are, however, also several independent research institutes that perform research at a high level, for instance the **National Institute of Chemical Physics and Biophysics** and the **Estonian Biocentre**.



University of Tartu <http://www.ut.ee/>

Tallinn University of Technology
<http://www.ttu.ee/>

Estonian University of Life Sciences
<http://www.emu.ee/>

Tallinn University <http://www.tlu.ee/>

National Institute of Chemical Physics
and Biophysics <http://www.kbfi.ee/>

Estonian Biocentre
<http://www.ebc.ee/EBC/>

The list of Estonian R&D institutes is
available at the Estonian Researcher's
Mobility Portal

<http://www.smartestonia.ee/>
in the Higher Education and Research
Institutions section

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT



Research and technology policies are developed by the Government and proposed to the Parliament for approval. The Government is advised in R&D issues by the **Research and Development Council**.

The **Estonian Ministry of Education and Research**, which receives advice from the Research Policy Committee, is responsible for the planning, coordination, execution and surveillance of research and education policy.

The **Estonian Research Council (ERC)** is an advisory body to the Minister of Education and Research. Its main responsibilities are:

- To develop the principles and strategy for the targeted financing of R&D institutions;
- To make proposals concerning the opening, amendment and termination of applications for targeted financing and the efficacy of previously granted funding;
- To make recommendations concerning the funding of research (long-term projects, infrastructure expenditures of R&D institutions, PhD and postdoctoral study programmes).

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Members of the ERC are nominated for three years by the Government by recommendation of the Minister of Education and Research. The Council is supported in its activities by nine expert groups composed of internationally recognised Estonian scientists, and the Administration Unit based in Archimedes Foundation.

The **Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications** is responsible for the planning, coordination, execution and supervision of innovation policy. The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications is advised by the Innovation Policy Committee and assisted by Enterprise Estonia.

The **Estonian Academy of Sciences (EAS)** unites 57 top-level Estonian scientists and scholars (as of June 2006) and acts as an umbrella organisation for a number of associated societies, one research institute and the Estonian Academy Publishers. The primary mission of the EAS is to advance scientific research, providing high-level expertise and science policy advice, disseminating knowledge and promoting scientific co-operation at national and international levels. The EAS represents Estonian science internationally, supports Estonian membership in international scientific unions and funds, and operates a scientific exchange programme with 23 partner organisations abroad.



The Estonian Academy of Sciences

<http://www.akadeemia.ee/>



RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The **Estonian Science Foundation** (ETF) is an expert research-funding organisation. Its main goal is to support the most promising research initiatives in all fields of basic and applied research. ETF uses state budget appropriations to award peer-reviewed research grants to individuals and research groups on a competitive basis.



Estonian Science Foundation
<http://www.etf.ee/>

Enterprise Estonia is one of the largest institutions within the national support system for entrepreneurship in Estonia, providing financing for products, advice, partnership opportunities and training for entrepreneurs, research and development institutions and the public and third sectors.



Enterprise Estonia
<http://www.eas.ee/>

R&D institutions are supported in their activities by several foundations and science parks that aim to create a favourable environment for research in Estonia. The **Archimedes Foundation** is an independent organisation founded by the Ministry of Education and Research that coordinates and implements programmes and projects for education and research. The Archimedes Foundation is the national contact point for EU Framework Programmes.



Archimedes Foundation
<http://www.archimedes.ee/>



1.5 Researchers and research projects

The **Estonian Research Information System** (ETIS) concentrates information on researchers, research projects, R&D institutions, and various research results. The search fields can be easily found from the top right corner at www.etis.ee. You can search the database for researchers, biographies, granted projects, publications, etc.

ETIS is a channel for submitting and processing grant applications and for submitting and confirming project reports. Estonian Research Portal is the public section of the ETIS consolidating information and news on Estonian R&D and offering an environment for operative information exchange.



Estonian Research Information System

<http://www.etis.ee/>



CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE

In 2002, the Centres of Excellence Programme was launched in Estonia. The first ten centres, covering a wide range of research disciplines (gene and environmental technologies, analytical spectrometry, non-linear studies, behavioural and health sciences, physics, chemistry and material sciences, molecular and clinical medicine, basic and applied ecology, dependable computing, cultural history and folklore) were selected on the basis of open competition and foreign assessment. The next competition for centres of excellence will take place in 2007.

A centre of excellence consists of internationally recognised research groups working in close or complementary areas and performing research at a high level. A centre of excellence has a clearly defined common research goal and a positive impact on doctoral studies in its field of research. Research groups within a centre aim for synergy between different research disciplines.



For more information on the centres of excellence, see <http://www.akadeemia.ee/en/activity/publications/>

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

COMPETENCE CENTRES

The general objective of the Competence Centre Programme run by Enterprise Estonia is to improve the competitiveness of enterprises through strategic cooperation of science and industry sectors in Estonia. Competence centres are small R&D organisations jointly established and operated by a number of companies and universities. The main characteristic of such centres is a strong focus on applied research, which is needed for the product development of the founders of these centres.

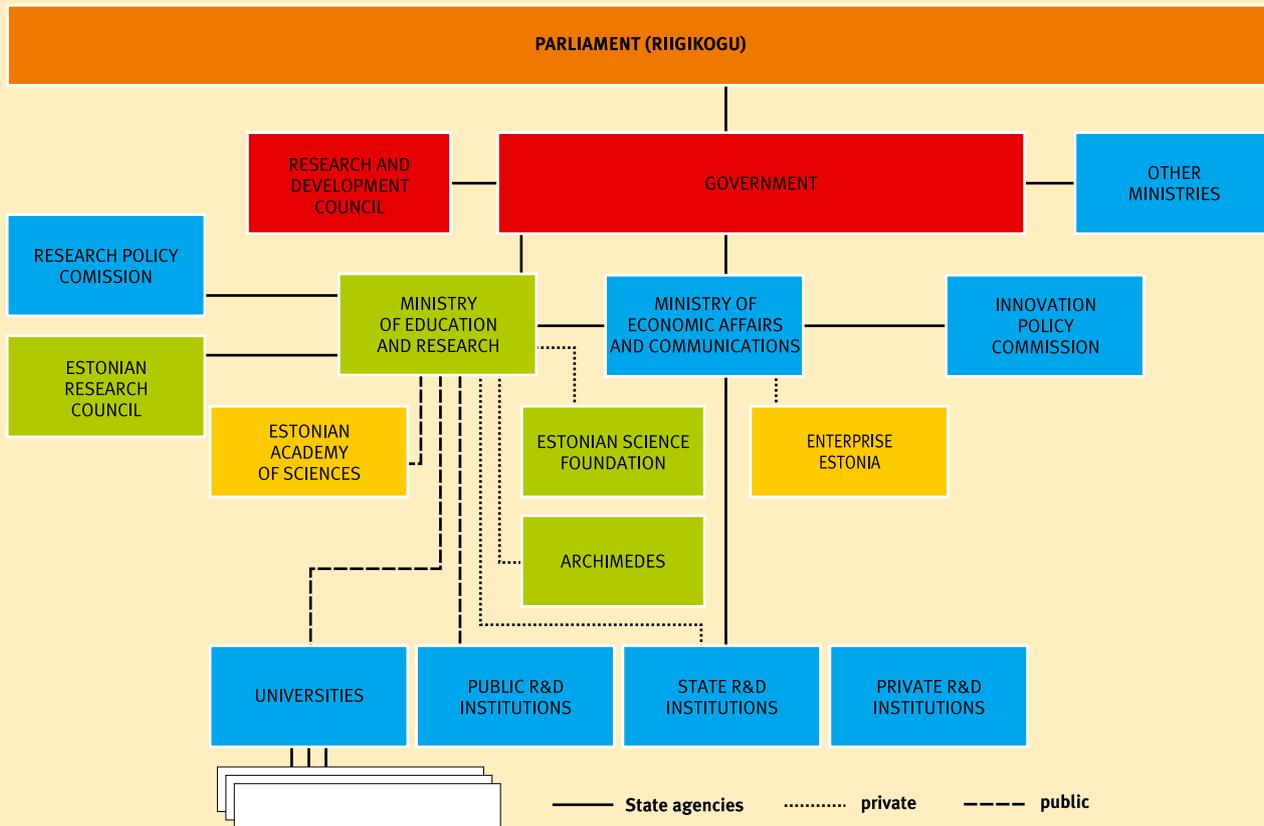
As of spring 2007 there are five competence centres: Electronics, Information and Communication Technologies; Food and Fermentation Technologies; Healthy Dairy Products; Nanotechnologies; and Cancer Research.



For more information on Competence Centres see
<http://www.eas.ee/?id=1225>



R&D structure



ESTONIA

Whoever bothers to examine the world map, discovers that Estonia lies on the same latitude with Northern Scotland and Alaska's southern tip. And if an occasionally encountered Estonian adds by way of explanation that in summer months the Estonian beaches are full of sunbathers, you may well suspect that he is pulling wool over your eyes. In fact, far from it.

Thanks to its geographical position, Estonia has four clearly distinguished seasons: at least a month of cold and snow in winter, suitable weather for bathing in summer, returning migratory birds in spring and trees sporting colourful leaves in autumn.

The area of Estonia is a bit bigger than Belgium or Denmark, but the population is a modest 1.4 million. The number of towns is over 30. These are rather like dogs: the word dog can denote tiny creatures as well as Great Danes. The capital Tallinn accommodates about one third of the population, and the smallest town is probably no bigger than a largish village. What lies between the towns is mostly forest: almost 50% of Estonian territory is covered with forests. Thanks to this, Estonians can enjoy vast quantities of space and fresh air – a luxury in many parts of the world today.

For an Estonian, the rush-hour traffic jam starts with a five-minute halt, and if he cannot reach a forest after half an hour's drive, this constitutes a violation of human rights. Estonians are fond of stressing that they are small in number, but resourceful.

It is true that when we compare the number of Olympic gold medallists or for example writers with the total population, the coefficient would probably be very impressive. Statistics allows other nice juxtapositions: compared with other European countries, we have more lynx, wolves and bears per person. And the largest number of Internet banking transactions.



2.1 Estonia in brief

Estonia is the northernmost of the three Baltic States and has an area of 45,000 square kilometres. It is bounded on the West and North by the Baltic Sea and on the East by Lake Peipsi and the Narva River. On the East and South-East it is bordered by Russia and on the South by Latvia. Tallinn is only about 85 km south of Helsinki, the capital of Finland, across the Gulf of Finland. Sweden is Estonia's nearest Western neighbour across the Baltic Sea.

Estonia stretches 350 km from East to West and 240 km from North to South. Islands form one tenth and lakes about one twentieth of Estonia's territory. Almost half of Estonian territory is covered by forest and woodland.

According to the Constitution, Estonia is an independent and sovereign democratic republic wherein supreme state power is vested in the people. The Estonian parliament, the **Riigikogu**, has 101 members who are elected for a period of four years.

The head of state is the **President**, elected by the Riigikogu for a five-year term. In addition to symbolic functions, the President has representational tasks and formal duties. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, the President of Estonia at the time of the publication of this book, was elected on 23 September 2006 and inaugurated on 9 October 2006.

The **Government** carries out the country's domestic and foreign policy, which is shaped by the Riigikogu; it directs and coordinates the work of government institutions.



ESTONIA



The head of the Government, the Prime Minister, is appointed by the President and approved by the Riigikogu.

Estonia joined the **European Union** on the 1st of May 2004 together with nine other new member states. Estonia has 6 representatives in the European Parliament. The Estonian Commissioner Siim Kallas is the Vice President of the European Commission responsible for Administrative Affairs, Audit and Anti-Fraud.

The **national currency** of Estonia is the kroon (abbreviation EEK), which was introduced on 20 June 1992. The smaller unit is called the sent, and 1 kroon = 100 sents. The Estonian kroon is pegged to the Euro; 1 EUR = 15.64664 EEK. According to current predictions (as of spring 2007), Estonia will join the Euro zone in 2010. The Euro and other currencies are not accepted in shops, etc., but in most places prices are shown in Euros in preparation for joining the Euro zone.

Major foreign currencies can easily be exchanged in banks and exchange offices. There are exchange offices in the port of Tallinn, at the airport, the railway station and at almost every step in the centre of the city.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<http://www.vm.ee/estonia/>

Eesti Pank, National Bank of Estonia
<http://www.bankofestonia.info/>

2.2 History

According to archaeological finds, the first settlements in Estonia emerged 11,000 years ago. Thus on the one hand Estonians like to refer to themselves as one of the oldest nations in Europe, and on the other there are lively disputes about whether or not the people fighting against the 13th century crusaders were in fact Estonians. It is sometimes said that Estonians have not fared well in the course of history. After conquering Estonia, which was part of the Viking culture and lay at the junction of trading routes, the German-Danish armies and merchants seized power here and laid the foundation for the Baltic nobility, whereas Estonians remained peasants. Under the German, Swedish and Russian crowns, the land was ravaged by wars in which Estonians were onlookers.

The 150 years popularly known as the “good old Swedish time”, brought a longer interval of peace. Another such period followed the devastating Great Northern War in the early 18th century when Estonia was seized by the Russian tsarist empire. Nevertheless, we must admit that not all nations have been so lucky: in the 19th century Estonia’s own culture was so well established that, following the national awakening movement, an independent state was declared in 1918. This twenty-year period of national statehood in turn produced a foundation strong enough for the re-establishment of independence in 1991, even after the 50-year Soviet occupation.



ESTONIA

IMPORTANT DATES

11, 000 years ago	First settlements
1030	Tartu is mentioned for the first time in written documents
13th century	The Baltic region falls into the hands of the Teutonic Knights; Christianisation of Estonia by crusaders from Denmark and Germany
1248	Tallinn receives its city charter
14th century	The Baltic region comes under the control of the Hanseatic League
16th century, first half	Reformation reaches Estonia
1558 – 1583	Livonian War; involving Denmark, Sweden, Russia and Poland
1583 – 1721	Estonia under Swedish rule
1632	The University of Tartu is established
1700 – 1721	Great Northern War, Estonia comes under Russian rule
19th century	Period of national awakening
24 February 1918	Republic of Estonia is proclaimed
1918 – 1920	War of Liberation
1918 – 1939	Republic of Estonia
1940	Soviet occupation
1941 – 1944	German occupation
1944	Estonia forcibly incorporated into Soviet Union
1988	Beginning of Singing Revolution
20 August 1991	Estonia regains its independence
29 March 2004	Estonia joins NATO
1 May 2004	Estonia joins European Union



For more information on Estonian history see Estonica
<http://www.estonica.org/>



LENNE-ANN SAVILA

2.3 Nature and climate

The Estonian natural environment is influenced by the low population density, its proximity to the Baltic Sea and its position between the Eastern and Central European bio-geographical area. That means there is a borderline of occurrence for many species and types of landscapes here. Bogs and forests, little lakes and islands offer the opportunity to experience silence and pristine nature.

The Estonian climate is temperate and mild, characterised by warm summers and fairly severe winters. The weather is often breezy and humid due to the proximity of the Baltic Sea. Seasons in Estonia vary widely. Average temperatures range from 20.9° C in summer, with July usually being the hottest month, to -8° C in winter, although occasionally the temperature may rise to 30° C and above in summer or fall below -23° C in winter. The longest day of the year is June 21, with 19 hours of full daylight.



For more information on Estonian nature see Estonica <http://www.estonica.org/>

For current weather conditions and forecasts, see <http://weather.ee/>

ESTONIA

2.4 Life style



The life-style of Estonians is directly linked to the character of Estonians, the weather and different seasons. In winter Estonians tend to be more home- and work-centred, while summer is a time for active open-air activities and vacations in the countryside. Estonia has an excellent infrastructure of cultural, social and sporting facilities. Throughout the year there is a wide range of activities and events that can be enjoyed both indoors and outdoors.

The Estonian character has been shaped by their country's history, natural environment and its long dark winters and white summer nights. Like all natives of a northern country, at first glance Estonians seem friendly but reserved, polite and calm but serious.

Estonians blame the various seasons and weather conditions for their changing nature – the dark and cold winter makes them self-absorbed and grim, but the first rays of sunshine bring out their easygoing and carefree side.

There are many qualities that have helped Estonians through rough times and to achieve high goals in different walks of life – an ironic sense of humour, stubbornness, curiosity, patience, etc. There are, of course, as many different qualities and personalities as there are Estonians.



2.5 Customs and holidays



TOOMAS VOLMER



St. John's Day and Christmas are the most important festivals in Estonia. On the evening of 23 June, Estonian cities become half-empty. Everybody who can do so travels into the country in order to celebrate St. John's Eve. On that night darkness lasts for only a few hours. Hundreds of bonfires are lit all over Estonia, people sing and dance around them, and when the flames have died down a bit, those who are brave enough leap through the fire to shake off the last year's evils. St. John's (Midsummer's) Day marks the longest days of the year, and the customs relating to it go back to pre-Christian pagan times.

Christmas falls in the darkest period of the year and is primarily a family-centred holiday. On Christmas Eve both the old and the young sit down to a festive dinner, which usually consists of roast pork, black pudding with cowberry jam, and sauerkraut with roast potatoes by a ornamented, candle-lit Christmas tree; decorated gingerbreads are typical sweets. Afterwards Father Christmas will deliver presents, expecting a song or a poem for each present.

Other ancient customs which relate to the time of year are still practised. On Shrove Tuesday, in February, adults seize the chance to go sledging together with their children, on the pretext of the old custom. On St. Martin's Eve (9 Nov.) and St. Catherine's Day (25 Nov.), children in costumes go from house to house, earning sweets with their singing and dancing.

The most important national holiday falls on 24 February, when Estonia celebrates the declaration of independence in 1918. Regardless of the weather, which in February may vary between mild thaw and fierce frost, a military parade takes place in the morning. In the evening, the majority of Estonians gather in front of their television sets to watch the President's reception – if they are not invited to attend themselves, that is.

ESTONIA

2.6 Culture

Estonians love culture. Even those not too familiar with culture do not dare confess that they have not attended some sort of cultural event in a long time. If we include the innumerable summer activities with music, such as beer-, sea- and grill festivals among cultural events as well, there should be no reason to worry about culture in Estonia.

Theatres organise successful summer seasons, when the performances take place in the streets, old hay barns, and bog islands that are difficult to access. A cinema bus travels around the country, offering a chance to both make and watch films in places far away from towns.

However, this is summer, when the entire rhythm of life is different and people are more open.

Winter is the time for more refined culture, when theatre competes with film, and not too poorly. Cinema prices equal those in major European cities, and most films are shown in their original language with subtitles in Estonian.



KAIDO HAGEN

The essence of Estonian culture can be found in literature: throughout history, the written word has always been the force keeping Estonian culture together, and concern for the survival of the official language has been nation-wide. The folklore collection at the Estonian Literary Museum is, alongside the Irish collection, among the largest in the world, and the folk music festival in Viljandi breathes new life into heritage that is otherwise dormant under the dust of the archives.

An experienced consumer of culture will find plenty that is of interest; people who wish to do something themselves can obtain vivid insights and impressions Estonian culture. Try taking part, for example, in a choir at work!



For more information on Estonian culture see Estonica <http://www.estonica.org/>

2.7 Media



The Estonian media system involves both private and public media channels. Estonian Public Broadcasting (*Eesti Rahvusringhääling*, ERR) was established in June 2007 by merging two public service broadcasting organisations – Eesti Televisioon and Eesti Raadio. Eesti Televisioon (ETV) is the national public television broadcaster, and was established in 1955. ETV supports Estonian national culture and keeps an archive of the unique aspects of Estonian culture. ETV is responsible for the information needs of the whole society and thus the programme is versatile and offers something interesting for various tastes. The films and imported programmes mostly have subtitles and are broadcast in the original language. This applies also to private television stations in Estonia.

Eesti Raadio is the Estonian public radio broadcaster. Eesti Raadio has assumed the responsibility of chronicling, upholding and introducing important events of Estonian national culture and history; of satisfying the needs of all of the country's population groups for information, culture and entertainment; and to offer varied and balanced programmes. Eesti Raadio offers 5 different programmes, having different target groups and complementing each other, one of them in Russian.

The Association of Estonian Broadcasters (AEB) unites most Estonian private broadcasters and protects the interests of radio and television broadcasters. The AEB has 17 members: 3 TV organisations, 3 radio organisations, and 1 video production company.

The Estonian print media is mostly owned by private companies. 7 daily nationwide newspapers are published in Estonia: Postimees (in Estonian and Russian), Eesti Päevaleht, Äripäev, SL Õhtuleht, Molodezh Estonii (in Russian) and Vesti Dnja (in Russian). The biggest weekly newspapers are Eesti Ekspress, Maaleht and Den za Dnjom (in Russian). Several other weekly newspapers and 22 regional newspapers are published. Estonian and international newspapers and magazines are sold in bigger shopping centres and R-kiosks.



Estonian Public Broadcasting <http://www.err.ee/>

ETV <http://www.etv.ee/>

Eesti Raadio <http://www.er.ee/>

The Association of Estonian Broadcasters <http://www.ringhliit.ee/>

Estonian Newspaper Association <http://www.eall.ee/>

For Estonian news in English, see <http://www.baltictimes.com/>



ESTONIA

2.8 Economy

Estonian economy is considered to be liberal and innovative. Information technology (IT) is one of the most popular areas of business and also “the thing” to study. Everybody knows the internet telephone Skype, but only a small number of skypers know that the software was and still is developed in Estonia.

The use of IT has infiltrated services as well as industry, and has thus greatly changed the way things work nowadays. The main trend is towards simplification, innovation and customer friendliness.

The fact that companies do not have to pay income tax for re-invested profits is considered to be an effective method of enhancing entrepreneurship and for the promotion of innovation and new business solutions. Income tax must be paid only on the profits that are paid out to shareholders.

Estonian GDP has grown constantly since 1997, dropping only slightly in the year 1999. The growth of GDP in the year 2006 was 11.4% being the second fastest in the European Union and mostly influenced by the strong domestic demand. As of spring 2007, the economic growth is still fast but the growth rate has somewhat decelerated compared to the previous year. Estonia's main business partners are Finland, Sweden and Germany.

The extremely fast economic growth in 2006 had also a great impact on labour market indicators. The increasing demand for labour spurred the employment growth to 6.4% and brought unemployment rate down to 5.9%. The decreasing supply of labour and the integration of the labour market with the EU were reflected in fast wage growth which accounted for 16.2% in 2006.



ESTONIA

Among industrial branches, the production of wood products is one of the best established industries. That is due to the fact that Estonia has a lot of forests, which has led to long traditions in carpentry and log-house making.

Large industrial sectors are the food industry, light industry, machinery and engineering.

The service sector plays an important part in the Estonian economy, employing more than 60% of the work force. Banking and sales have developed significantly in the last ten years. The banking sector went through some turbulence at the beginning of the 1990s, but has now gained trustworthiness and stability. Banking has become very IT-related, quick and flexible.

Tourism is the driving force in the economy of several regions, for instance the island of Saaremaa and the resort town Pärnu. Spas and health resorts have become tourism attractions for people from Finland and Sweden, but also from many other countries in Europe. The number of foreign visitors staying overnight in Estonia is growing constantly, reaching 1.94 million in the year 2006.

Agriculture does not involve very many people in Estonia, giving employment to 4.6% of the workforce (as of 2006). Nevertheless, it is an important sector, providing resources for the food industry. Estonians themselves tend to prefer food produced by local companies. Joining the EU has had a positive impact on Estonian agriculture, as the area of cultivated land has increased. The main agricultural export articles are fish and fish products, milk products and eggs, and meat and meat products.



For more information about the Estonian economy, visit:

Bank of Estonia <http://www.bankofestonia.info/>

Estonian Ministry of Finance <http://www.fin.ee/>

Monthly Survey of Estonian Economy, Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
http://www.mfa.ee/eng/kat_198/

Statistics Estonia <http://www.stat.ee/>

Estonica <http://www.estonica.org/>

ENTRY, RESIDENCE AND WORK PERMITS

Different rules about residence and work in Estonia apply to citizens of the EU and to persons from third countries. The length of your stay also influences which rules you must follow.

EU citizens are free to enter Estonia, but in the event they stay for more than 3 months, they should register their residence with the local government.

Citizens of third countries may need a visa for short-term visits (up to 6 months). Citizens of third countries need a residence permit for employment for long term work (more than 6 months) in Estonia.

3.1 EU citizens

EU citizens are free to enter Estonia and can work and live here without work or residence permits. The same applies to the nationals of Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland. The only requirement is that EU citizens should register their residence at the local government authority within 3 months of arrival.

The registration of the place of residence gives the right to temporary residence for 5 years.

The family members of an EU citizen, who come from a third country, will have the right of temporary residence if the EU citizen is employed in Estonia or has sufficient legal income to ensure the subsistence of him/herself and the family. The third country family members of an EU citizen are required to follow the visa requirements for entering Estonia that are described in the section for Citizens of third countries. After the arrival in Estonia, the family members

TOOMAS VOLMER



TOOMAS TUUL



ENTRY, RESIDENCE AND WORK PERMITS

of an EU citizen can apply here for the right of temporary residence at the Citizenship and Migration Board (CMB) customer service centre.



Contacts of customer service centres of the CMB <http://www.mig.ee/eng/contact/>
The town government registers service **in Tartu** is situated at K uuni 5, Tartu 51004,
tel. (+372) 736 1143; (+372) 736 1141.

In Tallinn, there are registers services in all districts. Further information can
be found at Tallinn's official web page <http://www.tallinn.ee/eng/g3231>

Within a month after the place of residence has been registered and the right to temporary residence has been obtained, you must apply for an ID number and an Estonian ID card at the Citizenship and Migration Board customer service centre. The ID number enables you to obtain health insurance through the Estonian Health Insurance Fund when employed by an Estonian organisation. The ID card can be used as identification and for giving digital signatures, and it certifies your right of temporary residence. ID cards can be used for a wide range of electronic services.

An EU citizen who has resided in Estonia permanently for five successive years on the basis of the right of temporary residence shall obtain the right of permanent residence.



Further information and the necessary forms are available at the CMB web page
http://www.mig.ee/eng/residence/ELkodanik_eng/



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ENTRY, RESIDENCE AND WORK PERMITS



3.2 Citizens of third countries. Short term (up to 6 months)

ENTRY

If you are not a citizen of the EU, EEA or Switzerland, you should first check whether you need a visa to enter Estonia. Information on visa requirements and the contact information of all of the embassies can be found at the web page of the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is useful to check the website of the Estonian embassy in your home country for specific information.

You can apply for a visa at a diplomatic representation of the Republic of Estonia. If you plan to stay in Estonia for less than 90 days, a **short-term visa** can be applied for. If you wish to work in Estonia for 3 to 6 months, you will need to apply for a **long-term visa**. Both short-term and long-term visa applications are processed in 30 days.

If there is no embassy in your home country you should approach the embassy nearest to you. In that case you will have to follow the visa regulations of that country, so if another visa is necessary, additional time should be planned for. If there is no embassy in your home country you can also apply for a visa by mail or through a representative. You may still be asked to appear personally at the diplomatic representation if there are any additional questions that need clarification. As a rule, it is not possible to apply for a visa at the border of Estonia.

ENTRY, RESIDENCE AND WORK PERMITS

If you come to Estonia through another country, do not forget to check whether a transit visa is required. Your employer will usually provide a visa invitation. This is necessary for the visa application, as it is proof of the purpose of and reason for the visit.

Citizens from a number of countries do not need a visa to enter Estonia for stays of no more than three months in a 6-month period. However, if you wish to work in Estonia for 3 to 6 months, you still need to apply for a long-term visa; for a longer stay you must apply for a residence permit for employment.



Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<http://www.vm.ee/eng/>



WORK

If your period of work in Estonia is shorter than 6 months, you do not need a work permit if you register your **short term employment** at the Citizenship and Migration Board (CMB). Short term employment must be registered before applying for a long-term visa, and the document confirming registration must be appended to the long term visa application.

The registration process at the CMB takes up to 10 days. The best way is to register short-term employment by mail before arriving in Estonia.



Further information on registering short-term employment can be found at the web page of the CMB
<http://www.mig.ee/eng/work/shortterm/>

3.3 Citizens of third countries. Long-term residence (more than 6 months)

ENTRY

Citizens of third countries who stay in Estonia for work lasting longer than 6 months must apply for a **residence permit for employment**. You should submit an application to a diplomatic representation of the Republic of Estonia before coming to Estonia. A residence permit for employment is issued for the period for which you have guaranteed employment in Estonia. The residence permit for employment is valid for up to two years, and can be extended for up to five years at a time.

You should apply for a **residence permit for study**, if you wish to study at a university in Estonia (incl. doctoral studies). A residence permit for study is issued for a period of up to one year but no longer than the estimated duration of the studies. The permit may be extended by one year at a time but not for longer than six years altogether. In the event that you have been issued a residence permit for study, you are exempt from the immigration quota. You may take employment in Estonia without a work permit in order to participate in practical training pursuant to the curriculum, but for work not directly related to your studies, you need to apply for a separate work permit. For the period of study you need to obtain a private health insurance contract.

The family members of the citizen of a third country must apply for a residence permit. Citizens of third countries may apply for a temporary **residence permit for settling with their spouse** to whom a residence permit for employment has been granted. For your children, you should apply for a **residence permit for settling with a close relative**. The applications for residence permits for family members can be submitted at the same time as the researcher's application. The decision whether or not the family members will be granted a residence permit will be made after the decision concerning the researcher has been made.



ENTRY, RESIDENCE AND WORK PERMITS

The process of obtaining a residence permit or a residence permit for employment may take up to 3 months. In the event the immigration quota applies to you, the whole process of obtaining a residence permit may take up to 6 months.

Together with the residence permit for employment or the residence permit, you will receive an Estonian ID number and an Estonian ID card. The ID number enables you employer to forward all the necessary information to the EHIF, the Tax and Customs Board and the Social Insurance Board so that you will have health insurance and other benefits resulting from paid taxes. The ID card can be used as identification and for giving digital signatures, and it carries the residence permit and work permit data. ID cards can be used for a wide range of electronic services.



Further information and the necessary forms are available at the CMB web page

<http://www.mig.ee/eng/residence/employment/>

<http://www.mig.ee/eng/residence/study/>

If only a residence permit has been applied for at first, as might be the case with the spouse of a researcher, it is possible to apply for a separate work permit at a later date. The work permit will not be issued for a longer period than the residence permit.



Further information and the necessary forms are available at the CMB web page

http://www.mig.ee/eng/work/work_permit/

Within a month after coming to Estonia, you must register your place of residence at a local government registers office. The place of residence can also be registered by mail. Family members can present a joint notice of place of residence.



The town government registers service **in Tartu** is situated at KÜÜNI 5, Tartu 51004, tel. (+372) 736 1143; (+372) 736 1141.

In Tallinn, there are registers services in all districts. Further information can be found at Tallinn's official web page <http://www.tallinn.ee/eng/g3231>

Future developments concerning third country researchers

Estonia is in the process of implementing EU's Directive 2005/71/EC of 12 October 2005 on a specific procedure for admitting third-country nationals for the purposes of scientific research. This Directive lays down the conditions for the admission of third-country researchers to the Member States for more than three months for the purposes of carrying out a research project under hosting agreements with research organisations. The Directive is expected to be implemented by amending the Aliens Act of Estonia by the end of 2007. Entering into force, these amendments will change the current procedures described above. Therefore be sure to consult the web page of the CMB for most up-to-date information!

WORK

In Estonia, universities are the main employers of researchers. As a result, research work in Estonia also has a good academic background. Rules vary between universities in matters such as work contracts or salary conditions.

4.1 Work habits

Like every country in the world, Estonia also has numerous rules regulating work, and naturally many go to work to earn money, with only a few managing to unite money and vocation. In research, however, working hours are often dictated by the pace of an experiment. Rooms at universities are often also filled with people in the evening. As real peace and quiet at universities and labs only tends to arrive in the evening, scholars put in long hours. They feel that research is fun!

Estonians are fond of talking about their Lutheran work ethics. No wonder then that business is done on Saturdays as well. In Estonia, shops stay open long hours on the weekends. Weekends are generally for the family, but this is often enough the time when a long overdue job finally gets done, either in the household or in your everyday job.

4.2 Greetings

The first thing you inevitably have to do upon entering an office is to greet people and introduce yourself. Do not be amazed if you do not see any friendly hands being extended to you: Estonians don't like to shake hands, and it is normally done only on an official occasion: birthdays, award presentations, etc. So, when people stare at you in quiet expectation and simply say hello or utter their name during the greeting ceremony, nothing is actually amiss. You have been welcomed amiably. A quiet, slightly embarrassed welcome is no indication of how you will be treated later and what your relations with your colleagues will be.



4.3 General working conditions and regulations

General working time in Estonia is 8 hours a day, 5 days per week. 12 public holidays and one national holiday, i.e. the Anniversary of the Republic of Estonia on the 24th of February, are days off.

The duration of the annual vacation is 28 days, and an extended vacation is granted in the case of some professions, such as state officials and local government officials, teachers, academic staff and other pedagogical and scientific staff, and others. National holidays and public holidays are not included in the calculations of the duration of the vacation. Employees who have worked at least six months during their first working year have the right to be granted a vacation in proportion to the number of months worked.

A woman is granted 140 days pregnancy and maternity leave, which may be commenced 70 days before the estimated birth of the child. The pregnancy and maternity leave should be commenced at least 30 days before the estimated birth of the child, or else deductions will be made to the maternity benefit. A mother or father shall be granted parental leave at her or his request for raising a child of up to 3 years of age. For more details about maternity and child-care benefits, see chapter 6.2 Family benefits.

Employment contracts may have a specified or an unspecified term. In the event that the term is fixed, the contract is made for no longer than 5 years. With the agreement of both employer and employee, an employment contract can be terminated at any time. It can be terminated on the initiative of the employee by giving at least one month notice in advance if the employment agreement has an unspecified term. In the case of an employment contract with a fixed term, it is necessary to give 2 weeks advance notice, if the term of the contract exceeds one year, and 5 days in the event of a shorter contract.

Employment contracts may only be terminated on the initiative of the employer for serious reasons and with at least two weeks advance notice (in the case of long-term incapacity for work), although in most cases notice must be given at least 1 month in advance.

It is generally prohibited to terminate an employment contract with a pregnant woman or a person raising a child under three years of age. An employment contract with a pregnant woman or the parent of a child under three years of age can be terminated only with the consent of the labour inspector.

WORK

Employers are required to pay compensation to employees upon termination of their employment contracts due to the closing down the organisation, the laying-off of employees or old age. The amount of compensation that must be paid depends on the length of time that the employee has been continuously employed by the employer. In the event that the reason for the termination of the employment contract is employee unsuitability, the employer must pay compensation in the amount of one month's salary. In the event of the termination of employment contracts due to a declaration of bankruptcy, the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund shall pay compensation to the employees.



The most important legal acts that regulate employment and working conditions in Estonia are the Republic of Estonia Employment Contracts Act, the Holidays Act and the Working and Rest Time Act. All these can be found in English at the electronic database <http://www.legaltext.ee/>

4.4 Employment regulations at universities

Estonian universities are autonomous and thus are entitled to regulate their internal work procedures, employment conditions and other issues based on the decisions of their councils. Each university has its own regulations concerning employment conditions for researchers and academic staff. The salary level and other conditions of employment are established in an employment contract, based on the rules of the university and on the Employment Contracts Act.

The salary rules vary for professors, docents (assistant professors), specialists and other academic positions, and the rules are reviewed on a regular basis. The rules can be found on the web pages of the universities.



University of Tartu. Personnel regulations and documents
<http://www.ut.ee/personnel/employment/documents/>

Tallinn University of Technology Employment
<http://www.ttu.ee/employment/>

Estonian University of Life Sciences. Vacancies
<http://www.emu.ee/116389>



4.5 Intellectual property rights (IPR) in Estonia

The authorship in Estonia is protected by the Copyright Act. The legal protection to the objects of industrial property is regulated by Patents Act, Utility Models Act, Trademark Act, Industrial Design Protection Act and international treaties. All universities have their own detailed IPR principles following the international and state legislation.

The author has copyright in the work as of the creation of the work. An author also has copyright in the results of the intermediate stages of creating a work (drafts, sketches, plans, figures, chapters, preparatory design material, etc.). The original title of a work is subject to protection on an equal basis with the work itself.

Copyright is constituted by moral rights and economic rights. The moral rights of an author are inseparable from the author's person and are non-transferable. The economic rights of an author are transferable as single rights or a set of rights for a charge, or free of charge.

The author of a work created under an employment contract or in public service in the execution of his or her direct duties has moral rights to the work created. The economic rights of the author remain or are transferred to the employer depending on the contract and institutional principles. This applies to textbooks, lecturing material, handbooks etc.

Work published by another person may be

reproduced for private use without the authorisation of its author and without payment of remuneration.

The public performance of works in the direct teaching process without the authorisation of the author and without payment of remuneration is permitted if the name of the author of the work is duly referred to.

Inventions are legally protected by patents or as utility models. An invention is patentable if it is new, involves an inventive step and is susceptible to industrial application. A utility model, like an invention protected by a patent, must be new; but, compared to the latter, it has lower inventive step requirements. The author of the invention is entitled to apply for a patent or a utility model.

In Estonian universities there is a general principle that the economic rights to industrial inventions created in the execution of duties are transferred to the employer. In the case of inventions and utility models, the economic rights are transferred to the employer on the basis of a contract. Such an agreement may be included in the employment contract or concluded with a separate contract.

Applications for Estonian patents and utility models should be submitted to the Estonian Patent Office.

The IPR regulations of universities are available on their web pages.



The IPR related acts can be found at <http://www.legaltext.ee/>

The Estonian Patent Office <http://www.epa.ee/>

TAXATION

Estonians love paying taxes or at least they love submitting their income tax returns. In 2007, about 20% of the expected income tax returns were submitted already within the first two days of submitting the income tax returns. The Tax and Customs Board returned in 2007 600 million kroons already within two weeks, by the end of February. The easiness of submitting the e-returns and the Tax and Customs Board's quickness in processing them has made the income tax return a hit, which demands the maximum from the web servers. After all, why should not it be so, when it is possible to get refunds already within a week with minimal personal effort?

5.1 Determination of the country of residence

A key element for all your taxation issues is to work out whether you are an Estonian resident or non-resident for tax purposes. Residency rules can be quite complicated so please read with care. Before coming to Estonia, we advise to ask from your local tax authority **a certiciate proving your previous status as tax payer**. This comes handy especially in case your home country has a bilateral tax treaty with Estonia and you are subject to certain benefits.

It is important to remember that your **status of residence must be certified by the Estonian Tax and Customs Board**. The decision will be made upon your application that you should file after arriving Estonia.

Determining the place of residence is based on a number of conditions.

Firstly, it is of importance, whether your home country has an **effective bilateral tax treaty** with Estonia. If yes, then it is considered whether:

- 1) You stay in Estonia less than 183 days within 12 month period; and
- 2) You receive income from sources outside of Estonia; and
- 3) Your employer does not have a permanent establishment here to conduct business in Estonia

If the answer to these questions is yes, then you will probably be considered resident of the other contracting country, your income will be taxable only in you home country and you do not have to pay taxes in Estonia. Treaties may also prescribe other conditions for the



determination of residency. To prove that prior to arriving in Estonia you have been a tax resident of the other contracting country, **you need a certificate issued by your local tax authority.**

Even if one condition is not fulfilled – for example, if you are employed by an Estonian organisation Estonia **has the right** to tax your income. Usually the employer withholds income tax according to Estonian legislation already while making payments. In case the employer does not withhold income tax, it is your obligation to declare your income.

In the event that your home country **does not have an effective bilateral tax treaty** with Estonia, the decision concerning your residency is based upon the number of days spent (or planned to be spent) in Estonia.

If you stay in Estonia less than 183 days within 12-month period and the income is paid by Estonian state, local government, resident, non-resident employer in Estonia or permanent establishment of non-resident legal person registered in Estonia, you are considered a non-resident of Estonia and Estonia has the right to tax your income arising from Estonia.

If you stay in Estonia for more than 183 days within 12-month period you will become an Estonian resident and you are obliged to declare your worldwide income (wherever arising). Estonia has the right to tax all your income wherever arising and you will be treated as Estonian resident for tax purposes.



Estonia has signed bilateral tax conventions with several countries for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income and capital. The texts of these conventions can be found at the website of the Estonian Tax and Customs Board (ETCB), at <http://www.emta.ee/?id=1830>

5.2 Taxation of residents

The Estonian tax system is considered to be simple and liberal. One big difference compared to most European countries is that **income tax** has only one overall flat rate.

Direct taxes are income tax, unemployment insurance and the funded pension payment. As of January 2007, income tax is 22%, and there is a monthly **unemployment insurance tax** of 0.6%, which is deducted from your salary by your employer. According to current legislation, the income tax rate is set to decrease by one percent per year until it reaches 20% in 2009.

A **funded pension payment** is withheld from your salary at a rate of 2%, if you have joined the optional funded pension system.

2000 kroons of the monthly salary is income tax free. You must apply to your employer for the income tax free sum to be taken into account monthly for salary payments. Income tax is not charged on compensation for official travel, accommodation and daily allowances if these are within the limits established by the law.

Social tax is paid by employers at a rate of 33% on all payments made to employees for salaried work performed, as well as 0.3% unemployment insurance. The social tax is not part of the salary figure; it is calculated on the basis of the agreed salary. 13% of the social tax goes to the Health Insurance Fund and 20% goes to the State Pension Insurance Fund.



TAXATION

For example, if your salary number is stated as 20 000 EEK in your employment contract, then:

- Firstly, 0.6%, i.e. 120 EEK, would be withheld from your salary unless you have reached retirement age.
- Secondly, if you have joined the optional funded pension system, then 2%, i.e. 400 EEK, would be withheld for that purpose.
- Thirdly, of the remaining 19480 kroons, 2000 EEK is income tax free, and 22% income tax (3845.60 EEK) would be withheld from the rest.
- Thus, your net salary would be 15 634.40 kroons.
- Your employer would pay an additional 6 600 EEK social tax and 60 EEK unemployment insurance.

Your salary:					Paid by your employer:	
Income tax free amount (2000.- as of Jan. 2006)	Taxable income	Income tax free amount 2000.-	Funded pension payment 2% (optional)	Unemployment insurance 0.6%	Social Tax (33%)	Unemployment insurance 0.3%

TAXATION

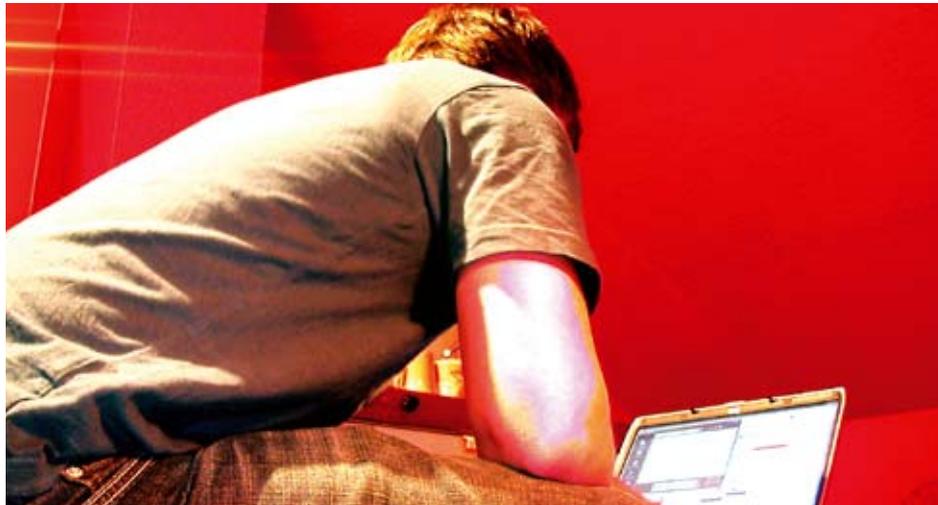
5.3 Income tax return

Income tax returns must be presented by Estonian residents. A non-resident is obliged to submit a tax return if he/she has received income that is subject to taxation in Estonia, but on which no income tax has been withheld upon payment.

Estonian residents must also declare the income that they have received abroad.

If an Estonian resident stayed abroad for work more than 183 days in 12 consecutive months and taxes were paid from the income abroad, no additional income tax has to be paid in Estonia, and the income must be declared as tax free income from abroad.

If an Estonian resident stayed abroad for work less than 183 days, income tax has to be paid on the salary received abroad as well. Taxes paid abroad are taken into account, so no double taxation occurs. If the income tax in the other country is smaller than in Estonia, the difference in the income taxes must be paid in Estonia. If the income tax in the other country is higher than in Estonia, no refunds are paid for the difference in the taxation rates.



TAXATION

In Estonia income tax returns must be presented by 31 March. If you have only received income from employment in one organisation and no other income, you do not have to present an income tax return, but you can still do so, as you may get some refunds.

Refunds are paid in the extent of the income tax on educational costs; paid housing loans; donations and gifts to non-profit research, cultural, educational, sports or social welfare organisations, religious organisations, public universities or political parties; and optional funded pension payments. Additional refunds are paid to families with two or more children.

Married couples can present a joint income tax return, which is useful if one of the two does not have a permanent income or the income received is below the income tax free limit. While income tax returns can be filed on paper in the regional offices of the Estonian Tax and Customs Board (ETCB), the most convenient and widespread method is electronic submission through the e-Tax Board, where pre-completed forms containing the information the Estonian Tax and Customs Board possesses about your tax payments and refundable expenditures, are available.

The e-Tax Board can be entered from the Estonian Tax and Customs Board's homepage with your ID card, or through an Internet bank. The e-Tax Board and the income tax return forms are currently not available in English. Contact an Estonian mobility centre for assistance with the income tax return forms.



ERA-MORE, Estonian Network of Mobility Centres

<http://www.smartestonia.ee/eramore/>

Estonian Tax and Customs Board

<http://www.emta.ee/>

The Income Tax Act can be found at

<http://www.legaltext.ee/indexen.htm>

5.4 Taxation of non-residents



A non-resident is someone whose permanent place of residence is not Estonia and who stays in Estonia for less than 183 days over a period of 12 months. Residency is decided on the basis of all of the days that were physically spent in Estonia.

Non-residents have limited tax liability in Estonia, and only the Estonian-source income is taxed in Estonia. Non-residents can claim deductions and allowances available to residents if they are residents of another EU country and have obtained at least 75% of their income from Estonia. Otherwise they are not eligible to claim deductions from their paid income tax.

If the bilateral convention for the avoidance of double taxation prescribes more favourable conditions for the taxation of the income of non-residents than those provided by law, the provisions of the convention apply. You can apply for the tax incentives or exemptions arising from these tax treaties if you have certified your residence status to the tax authority, which can be done using Form TM3 (available on the website of the ETCB). It is not necessary to submit the document if data on you and your residency have been entered in the register of taxable persons. In the event that your income tax has been withheld at a higher rate than prescribed in the tax treaty, you may apply to the Estonian tax authority within three years from the deadline for the payment of the tax for a refund of the overpaid tax amount.

TAXATION

A non-resident is obliged to submit a tax return if he/she has received taxable income that is subject to taxation in Estonia, but on which no income tax has been withheld upon payment.

There are generally no differences for the taxation of residents and non-residents in the case of social tax.



Guide on Taxation of Income of Non-residents

http://www.emta.ee/public/Nonresidents_2007.pdf

For further information on taxation issues and in the event of difficulties determining your country of residency, see the website of the Estonian Tax and Customs Board

<http://www.emta.ee/> Taxes section, chapter Income tax, or contact the ETCB directly.

Estonian Tax and Customs Board

Narva mnt 9j, 15176 Tallinn

Phone: (+372) 683 5700

Fax: (+372) 683 5709

E-mail: emta@emta.ee

5.5 Indirect taxes



The most important of the indirect taxes is the value-added tax (VAT), which is 18% for most goods. The VAT for some goods, for example books, medicines, etc., is 5%. There are also additional indirect taxes for gambling, tobacco products and alcohol.

SOCIAL SECURITY

6.1 Health

The Estonian population is ageing fast, and population growth has been negative for the last fifteen years. Healthcare problems therefore continue to be essential. These problems are usually revealed only when a person's health begins to deteriorate.

It is worthwhile to take care of your health in advance, all the time, and Estonians seem to do this with pleasure. Despite their relatively high prices, gyms and pools are full of people.

Spas are also popular among young and old alike: the mud baths in Haapsalu and Pärnu have been famous for centuries. Take advantage of the serene Estonian environment. Unlike really big cities, in Estonia it is possible to get to the nearest forest in a relatively short time. There are marked paths for walkers in every corner of the country, and the hours spent on a path in a marsh or by seaside invigorate both your body and your soul.

HEALTH INSURANCE

The Estonian health insurance system is based on solidarity – all insured people have the same rights. To receive health insurance from the Estonian Health Insurance Fund (EHIF), taxes must be paid in Estonia, and an Estonian ID number is needed. You get an ID number together with a temporary residence permit or residence permit for employment.

If you are working in Estonia for a short period and do not possess a residence permit, you can receive an ID number by contacting the county government and filling in an application form.



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You will then receive a document with your ID number which you will have to present to your employer. Your employer will then forward all the necessary information to the EHIF, the Tax and Customs Board and the Social Insurance Board, so that you will have health insurance and other rights resulting from paid taxes.

When visiting a doctor you only need to take an identification document with you and the clinic will be able to find out all of the necessary information using your identification number.

Some people, for example children and pregnant women from the 12th week of pregnancy, have the same rights as taxpayers.

The EHIF pays for visits to doctors and hospital treatment, and covers part of the cost of some medicines. The EHIF covers the costs of medical treatment, apart from the fee for visiting medical specialists (50 kroons) and the hospital in-patient fee (25 kroons per day). First aid in the event of emergencies is free of charge for everybody.

The EHIF pays **sickness benefits** on the basis of a certificate of incapacity for work, which you receive from your doctor and must then present to your employer. The sickness benefit is 80% of the average income per calendar day and is paid from the second day of sickness. The sickness benefits are calcu-

lated on the basis of social tax paid by you in the previous calendar year in Estonia.

If the family members of an EU citizen remain in their home country, their health insurance can be covered by the EHIF after the E109 form has been issued by the EHIF and registered in the country of residence of the family members.

EU citizens are also insured as long as their **European health insurance card** is valid on the basis of previous work or other insurance conditions in their home country. In the event of short-term work, you should check the term of validity of your health insurance and your European health insurance card. If your European health insurance card is valid, you will be granted necessary health care while staying in Estonia.

An employee who is **posted** for a short term from another EU member state to Estonia can receive necessary health care by presenting his/her European health insurance card.

In case you are posted to Estonia from another EU member country for a longer-term assignment (more than 1 year), you are entitled to obtain health care in Estonia on the same terms as local insured persons. You should receive from your employer Form E106, which you should bring with you to Estonia. Go to the Estonian Health Insurance Fund with 2 copies of Form E106 and your

SOCIAL SECURITY



residence permit or Estonian ID card and fill in an application to be registered in Estonia as a posted worker.

Citizens of third countries coming to Estonia for a short period of time should obtain private health insurance in their home country or in Estonia. Having valid health insurance is one of the visa requirements. Citizens of third countries staying here on the basis of a residence permit or a residence permit for employment and employed here are insured by the EHIF.



Estonian Health Insurance Fund (EHIF)

Lembitu 10, Tallinn 10114

Phone: (+372) 620 8430

Fax: (+372) 620 8449

E-mail: info@haigekassa.ee

<http://www.haigekassa.ee/eng/>



HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

The first person to consult in the case of illness is the general practitioner – **family physician**; if necessary, they refer the patient to a specialist. Family physician gives advice concerning the prevention of diseases, takes preventive measures and issues health certificates, certificates of incapacity for work and prescriptions. Everyone has the right to choose their own family physician. You can register yourself as a patient right in the office of a family physician. Visits to family physicians are free of charge if you have valid Estonian health insurance or a European Health Insurance Card. Currently, a fee of 50 kroons is to be paid for a family physicians home visit.

In order to see a **medical specialist** you need a letter from your family physician and some patience – the queues can be long. For visits to **medical specialists**, a visit fee (at present 50 kroons in state clinics, and different rates in private clinics) is charged. No referral letter is needed to visit a psychiatrist, gynaecologist, dermatovenerologist, ophthalmologist, dentist, pulmonologist (for tuberculosis treatment), surgeon or orthopaedist (for traumatology) or infectious diseases specialist (for AIDS/HIV treatment).

If the situation is truly serious, an ambulance should be called by dialling **112**.

Dental care is free for residents under the age of 19. All other insured individuals can ask for a refund (at present 150 kroons per year) from the Estonian Health Insurance Fund. Higher rates of compensation are established for pregnant women (450 kroons per year), mothers of children up to 1 year old and those in greater need of dental treatment because of sickness (both 300 kroons per year). There is also additional compensation for dentures. There are some public dentistry clinics and a large number of private dental clinics. Dental care in Estonia is relatively cheap compared to average European prices.

In case you need help finding a family physician, gynaecologist or dentist, you can contact your nearest mobility centre for assistance.

The EHIF has established a **health advice hotline** that operates 24 hours a day; the service is free of charge and you can use it by dialling **1220**.



For more information about the Estonian health care system, see the EHIF web page <http://www.haigekassa.ee/eng/health/outline/>

SOCIAL SECURITY

Medicines are divided into prescription and non-prescription medicines. Both can be bought in any pharmacy. The Estonian State Agency of Medicines holds registers of medicines and pharmacies. There are many pharmacies in Estonia, some of which are open 24 hours a day. You can find a pharmacy in most big shopping centres, but also at the town hall squares in Tallinn and Tartu. A portion of the price of prescription medicines is compensated to people who have valid Estonian health insurance. The compensation rate depends on the diagnosis.



State Agency of Medicines <http://www.sam.ee/>

For more information on compensation for medicinal products see EHIF web page <http://www.haigekassa.ee/eng/health/medicinal/>

6.2 Family benefits

State family benefits are paid to permanent inhabitants of Estonia and aliens living in Estonia on the basis of a temporary residence permit. Citizens of the EU who work in Estonia can also apply for family benefits for children who are not living in Estonia. You should submit an application for an allowance to the Social Insurance Board's local pension office within six months after starting work in Estonia, and also present your ID card with the residence permit and the child's birth certificate.

If you are a resident of Estonia and your child is born in Estonia, you are entitled to a state *childbirth allowance*. In order to receive additional childbirth benefits from a local government, you should be registered as a resident at the local government registers' office for at least 6 months before the birth of the child.

It is possible to take a pregnancy vacation starting 70 days before the expected birth of a child. People who are employed receive a *maternity benefit*. Your gynaecologist will give you a document



certifying the expected birth of a child, which you must present to your employer. A father has a right to be granted 14 days additional childcare leave during the pregnancy leave of the mother or within two months after the birth of the child.

Pregnant women receive health insurance from the 12th week of pregnancy. If you are not insured before pregnancy, you should go to the local department of the EHF with your passport and a doctor's note certifying pregnancy.

The *parental benefit* is paid to the parent that stays at home with the child. The parental benefit is paid after the end of the maternity benefit. Together the maternity benefit and the parental benefit are paid as of January 2006 for a period of 455 days. Non-working parents receive the parental benefit for 14 months from childbirth. Fathers have a right to parental benefits starting from 6 months after the birth of the child. The amount of the benefit depends on the parent's income in the previous calendar year that is calculated on the basis of the social taxes paid in Estonia. Those, who did not receive any taxable income in Estonia in the previous

calendar year, receive the parental benefit according to the monthly rate of the benefit. In the year 2007 the monthly rate for parental benefit is 2690 EEK. The maximum amount of parental benefit that is paid in one month is 21 624 EEK in 2007.

A parent who takes a child care vacation and is raising children under the age of 3 receives a *child-care allowance*.

A monthly *child allowance* of 300 EEK is paid to one of the parents of a child under the age of 16, and in case the child continues his/her studies, the child allowance is paid until the child's 19th birthday.

At the beginning of each school year, *school support* in the amount of 450 EEK is paid for children who attend school. Additional allowances are paid to families with three or more children.

Apart from the maternity benefit, these benefits are paid by the Social Insurance Board. Most of these benefits are available to you even if your children live in a different EU country.



Social Insurance Board. Pensions and benefits

<http://www.ensib.ee/>

Estonian Health Insurance Board. Benefits

<http://www.haigekassa.ee/eng/health/benefits/>

6.3 Pensions

Each EU country contributes to a person's pension according to the amount of time they have worked in that country. Work in Estonia is added to the pensionable service from other countries if a person has worked in Estonia for at least one year. Estonia contributes to pensions for the time worked in Estonia.

Permanent residents of Estonia and persons living in Estonia under a temporary residence permit are entitled to receive a **state old-age pension** in Estonia if they have pensionable service in Estonia or in another EU member country for at least 15 years. Work in another EU member country or in Norway, Liechtenstein, Iceland or Switzerland is taken into account if the person has worked in one of those countries for at least one year and has the necessary documents to prove it (i.e. employment contract, etc.).

In addition to the state pension, the Estonian pension scheme also includes a funded pension scheme and a voluntary supplementary pension scheme.

Joining the **funded pension** scheme is optional for persons born before 1983 and obligatory for persons born later than 1983. A person pays 2% for the funded pension (deducted from the salary by the employer), and the state adds 4% from the social tax paid by the person.

Joining the **supplementary funded pension** scheme is voluntary. The amount of the contribution can be determined individually, as well as the period of receiving payments from the supplementary funded pension. Income tax from payments for the supplementary funded pension is refunded (see the chapter on taxation). It is also possible to continue payments to a pension fund in another country.



The retirement age in Estonia is currently 63 years for men and 59.5 years for women. The retirement age for women is gradually rising, and women born in 1953 or later will have the right to receive an old-age pension when they reach the age of 63.



More information on pensions can be found at <http://www.pensionikeskus.ee/>

6.4 Other benefits

The state pays disabled persons pensions for incapacity to work. Additional benefits are paid to compensate the need for personal assistance. Parent of a disabled child receives a benefit to compensate the additional expenses; the amount of the benefit depends on the child's level of disability.

Funeral benefits are paid to help to cover the expenses of a funeral.

Survivor's pensions are paid upon the death of the provider of the family to the family members who were under his/her maintenance.

State compensations are paid to crime victims to compensate loss due to incapability to work, victim's medical treatment costs or other relevant and important costs related to the crime.



The Social Insurance Board regulates the payment of these benefits. To apply for a pension or a benefit, one should contact the local Pension Office. Additional information on pensions and benefits can be found at the web site of the Social Insurance Board, <http://www.ensib.ee/>



6.5 Unemployment insurance

Unemployment insurance is a compulsory insurance that is collected to pay benefits to employees in the event of unemployment. As of 1 January 2006 all employees pay 0.6% of their earnings and employers pay 0.3% of the payroll for unemployment insurance. Unemployment insurance is withheld from the employees' salary automatically. Persons who are old enough to receive an old age pension do not have to pay unemployment insurance.

Unemployment insurance benefits are paid to legal residents of the EU. To receive an unemployment insurance benefit, unemployment insurance contributions must have been paid for at least 12 months during the two previous years.

A legal resident of the EU has the right to apply for an unemployment insurance benefit from the country where he or she last worked and paid taxes. The period of time that a person has worked and paid unem-

ployment insurance contributions in other EU countries is considered when deciding whether and how long a person is entitled to receive the unemployment insurance benefit. The sum of the benefit paid by Estonia is calculated on the basis of the wages earned in Estonia.

An unemployed person should register him/herself at an employment office in order to receive the unemployment benefit. Unemployment insurance benefits are paid by the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund.

Those who are not entitled to receive unemployment insurance benefits, or who have received unemployment benefits for the maximum period but have not found a job during that time, are entitled to receive the **state unemployment benefit**. In the latter case the benefits are paid for up to 270 days.

State unemployment benefits are paid by the Estonian Labour Market Board's employment offices.



Further information on unemployment insurance is available on the web site of the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund
<http://www.tootukassa.ee/>

Information on the Estonian Labour Market Board and its services is available at
<http://www.tta.ee/>



7.1 Estonian families

Fortunately, the re-establishment of independence in 1991 did not demand a single victim in Estonia, but it did not come easy. The new way of life required getting used to, and young people put off starting a family.

Now, 15 years later, the number of births is increasing again. Many young people prefer cohabitation to marriage and are in no hurry to tie the knot even when they have children. An average Estonian family has 1–3 children, and grandparents live separately. Families come together at Christmas and birthday parties.

The extended family meets at important jubilee celebrations, but extended family reunions are also popular. The genealogy of Estonian families mostly reaches back to the 18th century, and earlier information is vague or was destroyed in the Great Northern War (which took place from 1700–1710 on Estonian territory). Considering Estonia's modest population, it is not rare to find a distant relative in the course of a casual conversation.

Estonian family life is more or less closed to strangers. However, when a colleague invites you home, you should seize the opportunity. Forming close friendships takes time, but once you are accepted, you will find sincere and faithful friends.

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When visiting the homes of your Estonian friends or colleagues, you should know that it is customary to take your shoes off at the door unless you are told otherwise. From autumn to spring this also has a very practical justification – to avoid carrying mud into the rooms. Bringing a small present is perceived as good manners, but what exactly to bring depends on the occasion and your choice, and almost anything from sweets to flowers is suitable.

7.2 Day care and schooling



Estonia's well-developed **day care system** provides opportunities for families in which both spouses work. There are day care facilities for children under the age of 3, called crèches. Between the ages of 3 and 7 children can attend nursery school, where they already learn some social skills and have lessons like music or drawing. Although most children go to municipal day care centres, privately-owned day care centres exist as well. In municipal day care centres the parents pay for the cost of meals and a small tuition fee, but the rest is covered by the local government.

Additionally, babysitters can be found with the help of friends or through newspaper advertisements.

School is obligatory from the age of 7 until acquiring basic education or attaining 17 years of age. Municipal schools are prevalent; some schools belong to the state and a few are privately-owned. At municipal and state owned schools there is no tuition fee, and parents must only buy school supplies.

Possibilities for education in English can be found in the two biggest cities – Tallinn and Tartu, where the International School of Estonia, Tallinn International Kindergarten and Tartu International School operate. The International School of Estonia accepts students up to grade 12 (17–18 years of age). Tartu International School educates students from age 6 to 14. As all

FAMILY

these three are private institutions, a tuition fee must be paid for the studies.

Parents may freely choose a school for a child if there are vacant places in the selected school.

A school is required to ensure educational opportunities for each child who resides in the school's catchment area. Some schools do not have a catchment area and may accept pupils on the basis of admission tests or other requirements. A child should be registered at a school by the 1st of June, for schools with admission tests earlier, and for that parents should submit to the school an application for admission together with a copy of the child's personal identification document or birth certificate. In the event that your child has already attended school, documents certifying education obtained abroad or in another school in Estonia must also be presented.

After satisfactory completion of basic education, pupils obtain the Basic School Certificate at the end of grade 9, and are entitled to continue their education at upper secondary schools or vocational education institutions.

An upper secondary school (*gümnaasium*) is a school that provides opportunities to acquire general secondary education. An upper secondary school covers grades 10–12. Most schools offer all levels of general education:

elementary, basic and secondary level, i.e. grades 1–12.

Admission to upper secondary school takes place on the basis of admission tests and results from basic school. In most schools, admission tests to upper secondary level take place in March or April; the local education board can give you the exact dates.



FAMILY

For some professions, vocational schools offer curricula that can be attended after graduation from basic school, and in many cases secondary education can also be obtained while acquiring vocational training. Several professions can be studied at a vocational school after obtaining secondary education. Some vocational schools offer professional higher education.

The national curriculum establishes compulsory subjects and the minimal scope of their treatment (compulsory courses and compulsory topics). Schools establish their own study branches through the choice of optional subjects and courses and/or by intensified study in some compulsory subjects. The number of optional subjects and courses is determined by the national curriculum, but the school, taking into consideration students' wishes and opportunities, determines their content. A school may have more than one branch of study.

The academic year usually lasts from 1 September until June of the following year. It consists of a study periods, examination periods, and holidays, which include one week in the autumn, two weeks at Christmas and one week in the spring. The maximum number of lessons per week varies from 20 lessons (grade 1) to 34 lessons (grade 9). At upper secondary school the number of lessons may be 35 or even more.



Estonian Ministry of Education and Research <http://www.hm.ee/>

Tallinn Board of Education <http://www.haridus.ee/en/>

Survival Guide 2006 for citizens of Tartu <http://www.tartu.ee/data/guide2006.pdf>

The International School of Estonia in Tallinn <http://www.ise.edu.ee/>

Tallinn International Kindergarten in Tallinn <http://www.kindergarten.tln.edu.ee/ing.htm>

Tartu International School <http://www.istartu.edu.ee/>



7.3 Finding a job for the partner

The most common ways for finding a job in Estonia are with the help of friends, through newspaper advertisements, personnel search companies, Internet portals and with the help of the Estonian Labour Market Board and its labour offices. Job offers and useful information on employment and living conditions in Estonia can also be found at EURES – The European Job Mobility Portal. The EURES (European Employment Services) consultants in Estonia work at the labour market offices.



For further information, you can refer to the Estonian Labour Market website <http://www.tta.ee/> or to the Estonian EURES website <http://www.eures.ee/>

Useful job search portals on the Internet that are available in English are:
EURES – The European Job Mobility Portal <http://europa.eu.int/eures/>

Research related jobs in Estonia <http://www.smartEstonia.ee/>

CV-Online <http://www.cv.ee/>

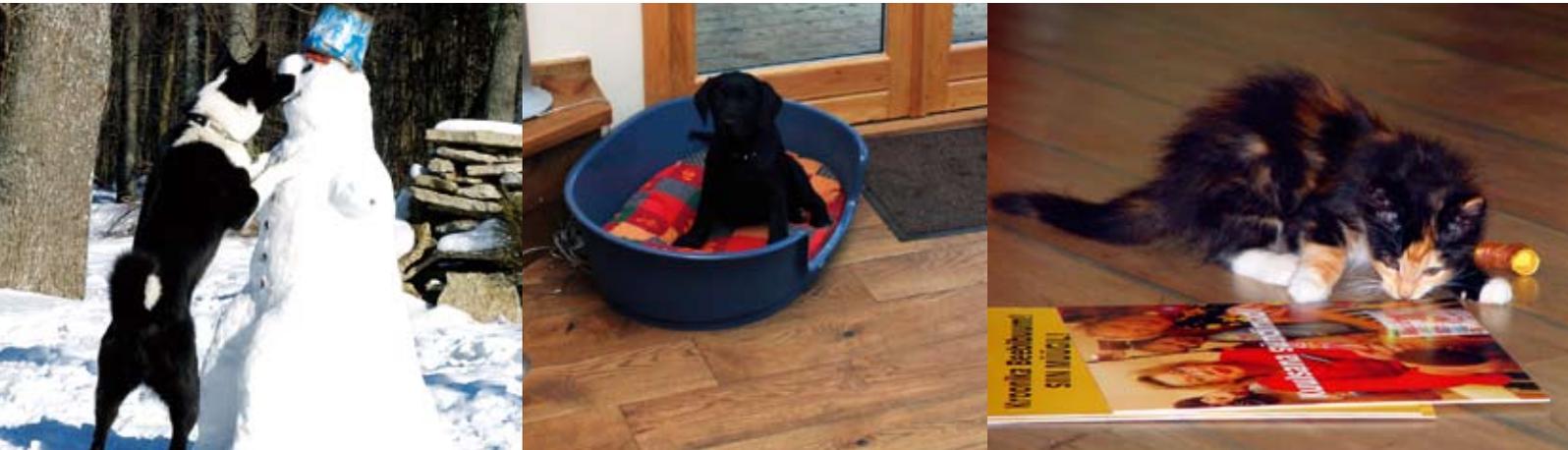
CV Market <http://www.cvkeskus.ee/>

CV Inter <http://www.cvinter.ee/>



Applying for a job generally requires presenting one's CV and an application. In many cases one must also undergo additional rounds, which may include writing an essay or taking a language test or job-suitability test. Finally – if you are successful – you can expect an invitation to an interview. Please note that if you are a third country national staying in Estonia on the basis of a residence permit for a spouse, you will need to apply for a separate work permit.

FAMILY



7.4 Pets

If you wish to bring a pet to Estonia with you, you will need to have an international veterinary certificate or an animal passport issued in your home country before travelling to Estonia.

Local governments have made certain regulations about the keeping of pets. In both Tallinn and Tartu, dogs must be registered. In Tartu cats may be registered, but it is not obligatory. Dogs must be vaccinated before they are registered. Cats must also be vaccinated.



Dogs are registered in Tartu at the following address:

5 K  uni St., Tel. : 736 1142 or 736 1139.

Hours of operation: Monday 9–12 and 15–18, Tuesday 8–12 and 14–16, Wednesday and Thursday 9–12 and 14–16, Friday 9–12.

Pets in Tallinn can be registered in several veterinary clinics. To obtain the contact information of clinics nearest to your location please contact Tallinn city government’s environmental department: Tel.: 640 4572, E-mail: keskkonnaamet@tallinnlv.ee

Autre pays, autre moeurs, says the French proverb. What should you know to make it easier to get used to life in Estonia? On the whole, people stare at other people with undisguised interest, and thus you should not feel offended if your turban, sari or a darker complexion attract keen scrutiny: the curiosity is not malevolent. No need to fear the language barrier: knowing foreign languages is the rule amongst Estonians, not an exception, and besides English, other languages can be suggested for communication, and you may be pleasantly surprised.

A busy Estonian in a social environment is mostly serious and reserved: smiles seem to be strictly limited and not easily wasted. Do not despair, however, but keep in mind that the seemingly reticent Estonians offer specific help and advice much more amiably and willingly than you might expect from their sour expressions. This is valid also in the service sector and offices, unless, of course, you chance upon an employee with an exaggerated self-esteem. Visiting bureaucratic institutions, you should be prepared for vastly different attitudes – from cordial helpfulness to dumb arrogance. Cool politeness is most probable.

Getting information is not a problem in Estonia; the main thing is to have an Internet connection, as most of what you need to find out is available there, often in English as well.

And should you wonder at home what to bring to Estonia, a pair of rubber boots (in autumn), a warm sweater (in winter) and mosquito-repellents (in summer) would certainly come in handy.



BATHROOM SIGNS:

▲ or N = LADIES

▼ or M = GENTLEMEN

8.1 Emergencies

IN AN EMERGENCY SITUATION, CALL:

- 110 Police**
- 112 Emergency calls, Ambulance**

Calls to emergency numbers are free of charge and can be made from any phone, including pay-phones and the mobile phones of any service provider (incl. foreign).

You should report the following when making an emergency call:

- What happened?
- Where did it happen?
- Who is calling?
- Is somebody injured? What is their condition?
- Can somebody give first aid?

In case you are contacting the police, you should describe as precisely as possible the people and/or vehicles involved.

Remain calm and answer any additional questions you might be asked. Do not end the phone call before you have been told you may do so.



Estonian Police <http://www.pol.ee/>

Estonian Rescue Board <http://www.rescue.ee/>



8.2 Housing

Before you decide to rent a flat you should know that prices in the capital city are at the Scandinavian level: in the city centre, a modest domicile could cost a packet. Your colleagues will treat you to a brief overview of the benefits and drawbacks of various districts in the city.

The absolute ideal of Estonians themselves is a single-family house in the countryside near the city. Estonians are not afraid of the time-consuming journey home, as long as they have their own house and sauna, because they want to live in the city as if they were in the country.

In Soviet times, regions of high-rise houses were built around city centres. In that rather desolate environment, however, you can find properly renovated flats for rent at a decent price.

In Estonia usually you don't have to sign contracts for water or electricity consumption yourself, but you have to bear in mind that the rental price does not include these expenditures. In case you are looking for something exotic and historical, find a flat without central heating and heat your own stove. In winter the exotic side might become a bit too much, but if you stay here for more than 6 months, the sense of history emanating from the flames in your stove is well worth the effort.



Several Estonian universities offer possibilities for accommodation at student dormitories. Their advantage is cheapness and generally also closeness to the university buildings. Most of the student dormitories have been recently renovated.

University of Tartu. Student housing <http://www.ut.ee/13479>

Tallinn University of Technology <http://www.ttu.ee/>

Estonian University of Life Sciences. Practical Information <http://www.emu.ee/4894>

Tallinn University <http://www.tlu.ee/>

Hotels and hostels in Tallinn and Tartu are available in a wide price range. Hotels in all regions of Estonia can be found at the **www.visitestonia.com** accommodation section. It is advisable to make a reservation before arrival. The Estonian real estate market offers many possibilities for rent as well as for purchase.

Real estate prices are climbing constantly, but the price range is quite broad. The first thing you should do is to identify your needs and possibilities. There are a great number of real estate agencies to turn to – agencies usually charge a fee in the amount of one month's rent. You can also explore newspaper advertisements. If you rent a house or flat, the costs for water, electricity etc. are usually not included in the stated price.



Real Estate Web <http://www.kv.ee/>

City24 Real Estate Portal <http://www.city24.ee/>

8.3 Renting a house or a flat

Before deciding on a suitable property, find out:

- Is the apartment association active?
- Who are the neighbours?
- What is the condition of the roof and the technical systems?
- How high are the heating costs?

The first rule about any contracts is, of course, to know what you are signing. In case of renting, it is advisable to compare the prices for this type of dwelling before signing the lease contract.



In Estonia, a lease contract should be prepared in accordance with the Law of Obligations Act, which has also been translated into English and can be found at <http://www.legaltext.ee/> Paragraphs 271-338 deal with lease contracts.

EVERYDAY NECESSITIES

Lease contracts can have a specified or an unspecified term. You should return the leased property together with any further belongings to the owner at the time agreed. The owner should make repairs to the property in case of defects that have not been caused by the renter. The renter should remove minor defects that can be removed by light cleaning or maintenance which are in any case necessary for the ordinary usage and preservation of the rented property.

Before making any improvements or alterations to the property, the owner's written consent is required. If the value of the property increases because of the alterations, the renter can ask for compensation. It would be advisable to agree on the amount of compensation for alterations or improvements in advance.

In case you have a lease contract with an unspecified term and the owner wishes to raise the rent, he must inform you 30 days beforehand in writing. The owner can ask for a deposit in the amount of up to 3 months rent. The renter can demand repayment of the deposit in case the owner has not informed the renter of any claims against him within two months after the expiry of the lease contract.

Lease contracts with an unspecified term may be cancelled by giving at least three months' notice. Upon lease of furnished rooms, a lease contract may be cancelled by giving at least one month's notice. The owner can cancel the lease contract if the renter has not paid the rent for three or more months.



8.4 Banking

Banking in Estonia is well developed, and financial matters are quite straightforward and convenient. Opening a bank account is very simple – you can do so at the nearest bank office; all you need for this is an ID card or passport.

The Estonian currency is the Estonian kroon (EEK), 1 kroon = 100 sents. The Estonian kroon has a fixed rate to the Euro, i.e. 1 € = 15.6466 EEK. The exchange rate for other currencies is calculated daily on the basis of the exchange rates set by the Bank of Estonia.

In addition to cash, debit and credit cards are also accepted in most shops, restaurants and companies. Salary payments are usually made to a person's bank account. The ATMs of the larger banks can be found in branch offices, petrol stations, larger supermarkets and other frequently visited places. VISA and MasterCard are widely accepted. Internet banking is very common, while cheques are seldom used in Estonia.



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Bank of Estonia (exchange rates, banknotes and coins, and more)

<http://www.bankofestonia.info/>

Hansabank <http://www.hansa.ee/eng/>

SEB Eesti Ühispank <http://www.seb.ee/eng/>

Sampo Bank <http://www.sampo.ee/eng/>

Nordea Bank <http://www.nordea.ee/>

8.5 Arrival in Estonia

You can come to Estonia by plane, bus, train, ferry, car, and from Finland even by helicopter.

There are direct **flights** between many European cities and Tallinn Airport. The best plane connections are with Helsinki, Copenhagen and Stockholm, with several flights going every day. Estonia's national carrier, Estonian Air, is affiliated to SAS. Many other airlines also operate in Tallinn.



Tallinn Airport (timetables, airlines, passenger info)

<http://www.tallinn-airport.ee/>

Tallinn Airport is located 4 kilometres from the centre of Tallinn. You can get to the centre by taxi or also using public bus transport. The bus stop is right in front of the airport, at the exit door of the arrivals area. Normal bus fare in Tallinn costs 15 EEK if you buy it from the bus driver and 10 EEK if you buy it from a kiosk. The taxi fare from the airport to the centre is quite affordable, costing (in spring 2007) under 110 EEK. In order to avoid misunderstanding, clarify the approximate taxi fare to the destination in advance and ask for receipt.

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EVERYDAY NECESSITIES

Arrival in Estonia **by sea** is possible from Helsinki and Stockholm. In summer ships also go to Rostock and St. Petersburg. The ship traffic between Tallinn and Helsinki is frequent and fast.

Smaller boats take an hour and a half for the trip from Helsinki to Tallinn, but they are dependent on the ice conditions and do not travel in winter. Large ferries travel all year round and need a bit more than 3 hours for the trip. The port of Tallinn is near the city centre, so the centre can also be reached on foot.



For passenger ship schedules, see
<http://www.ts.ee/>

International **bus lines** connect Estonia to Central and Western Europe and also to its eastern neighbours. International bus lines go to Tallinn, Tartu and Pärnu, and buses coming from Russia go through Narva. Bus connections within the Baltic countries are quite frequent, so it is possible to arrive in Estonia via Riga, the capital of Latvia.



Eurolines <http://www.eurolines.ee/>
Ecolines <http://www.ecolines.ee/>

An international **train connection** exists between Tallinn and Moscow and St. Petersburg. Thus in case you are fond of travelling by train, but are not starting from Russia, you must combine trains with other methods of transportation to get to Estonia.



GoRail <http://www.gorail.ee/>

For information regarding customs regulations
and procedures see the ETCB web site
<http://www.emta.ee/>

8.6 Transportation in Estonia

The Estonian traffic situation is not quite as intense as in the Mediterranean countries. It is true that the local roads, which are often narrow and rough, do not encourage speeding, which young hot-blooded drivers nevertheless engage in. Large and small Estonian towns alike are generally characterised by a calm progression of vehicles and a plenitude of pedestrians. The inhabitants of the capital city encounter rush-hour traffic congestion and a shortage of parking spaces; in other towns the rush-hour is not as extensive.

In case you do not have any business to conduct in different ends of Tallinn, you don't need a car: the heart of the city is perfectly walkable. Trams, trolleys, buses and electric trains take you to the furthest corners of the city, although in the morning and evening the first three may force you into too close contact with your fellow passengers. In towns people use buses and minicabs which stick to their timetable quite closely. Buying a single ticket will not ruin anyone's budget, but frequent travellers

are advised to get a monthly public transport pass. The weak point in Estonian urban public transport is the lack of night service, but this is compensated by reasonably priced taxis.

On the whole, Estonians prefer to take the bus from one town to another: train connections are sparse, and some trains are uncomfortable, as in Soviet times. The rail network has repeatedly been re-constructed and thus enables anyone to have a pleasant bicycle trip along the railway beds, which date from the early and mid-20th century. The old railway stations offer surprising sights. Remote rural areas around the old railway stations suffer from isolation: the reduction of train service has hit them hard.

As a pedestrian you should know that in autumn and in winter you must wear a reflex reflector, which makes it possible for drivers to see you in the dark from a longer distance.



EVERYDAY NECESSITIES

Public **bus transport** is well organised and offers good possibilities for transport within cities as well as over longer distances. Public transport in cities mostly offers the possibility of using 10-, 30- and 90-day public transport cards as well as single-fare tickets. If you have an ID card, you can also buy tickets using a mobile phone, Internet banking or a fixed-line phone in Tallinn and Tartu. Beside buses you can use trams and trolleybuses in Tallinn for local transport.



Tallinn. Public transport <http://www.tallinn.ee/eng/>

Public transport in Tartu <http://buss.tartu.ee/>

The **long-distance bus** bus schedules between cities are very good, and bus transport is quite affordable. There are, for example, more than 60 buses from Tallinn to Tartu every day.



Long-distance buses <http://www.bussireisid.ee/>

Travelling long distances **by train** is cheaper, but as the rail system still needs a lot of investment; buses are generally quicker, and are used more often. Long-distance lines are usually managed by the company Edelaraudtee. In case of Edelaraudtee you can buy tickets online and you have free internet access in first class cars of Tallinn-Tartu line. The vibrant electric train system near Tallinn, in Harju County, has frequent departures and is used as everyday transport by thousands.



Long-distance passenger trains, Edelaraudtee <http://www.edel.ee/>

Information (in Estonian) about Harju County electric train system <http://www.elektriraudtee.ee/>

Renting a **car** is quite expensive (and one generally needs to use a credit card), so for a longer stay alternative options, like leasing or bringing your own car, are more convenient.

In Estonia you can drive a vehicle registered abroad for 12 months without registering it here. In the event of a longer stay, the vehicle should be registered at the Estonian Motor Vehicle Registration Centre. All vehicles must be insured. Driving licences of the European Union are valid in Estonia and you do not need to exchange them for an Estonian licence. Foreign driving licences that have been issued in accordance with the Vienna Convention are valid in Estonia for one year, and you should exchange your driving license for an Estonian license within 12 months after coming to Estonia. Otherwise you must pass a theoretical and practical driving exam to exchange your driving licence for an Estonian one.

Lights must be turned on and safety belts fastened when driving in Estonia. A parking fee is usually required in city centres. Signs indicate the prices for different parking zones. Blue lines on a parking space also indicate that it is in a paid parking area. Parking tickets can be purchased from street-side machines. It is also possible to pay for parking using a mobile phone, for which detailed instructions are provided by your mobile phone operator. Usually the first 15 minutes of parking are free of charge (depending of local government policy) if you indicate the starting time. A parking fee must be paid in Tartu from 8.00–18.00 from Monday to Friday. In Tallinn, a parking fee must be paid in the city centre, the Old Town and the Pirita area. The times for paid parking differ in Tallinn by city districts. Both Tallinn and Tartu have different parking rates for different city districts.

The Automobile Club of Estonia helps its members and others in case of unexpected car problems, such as flat tyres, and provides other services.



The Automobile Club's help number is **1888**.

The Estonian Motor Vehicle Registration Centre <http://www.ark.ee/>

Tallinn Tourism web page. Transportation. Plan your visit. Parking <http://www.tourism.tallinn.ee/>

There are many **taxi** companies in the bigger towns. Taxi prices are quite affordable, and it is possible to get a receipt from the driver. Fare prices can be checked from the taxi window before getting in; all the prices are given in Estonian kroons. While taxis can be found in stops in the cities, ordering a taxi by phone is more convenient as well as more efficient.



Tartu. Info: Transportation. Taxi information <http://www.tartu.ee/>

Tallinn. For Residents. Transport. Instructions for taxi passengers <http://www.tallinn.ee/eng/>

The possibilities for using a **bike** as a means of transportation are constantly being improved. The local governments in both Tallinn and Tartu are developing cycling paths, and non-profit organisations are doing a lot of work to make cycling more popular.



Tallinn. For Residents. Map of Tallinn (map of cycling roads)

<http://www.tallinn.ee/eng/>

8.7 Phones

Mobile phones have become just as important as, or even more important than fixed-line telephones. Estonia has one of the highest numbers of mobile phones per capita in the world. A customer can choose between a contract with a mobile phone service provider, and a calling card. Calling cards have no monthly payments, but slightly higher per minute rates, and can easily be bought from all petrol stations and news stands (no ID is needed).

Estonia is in the forefront in the use of innovative mobile technologies. Mobile phones



can be used for parking, making payments in some shops and restaurants, and for buying public transport tickets in Tallinn and Tartu. In order to make payments with your mobile phone, you need to conclude a mobile payment agreement with your bank.

For parking by mobile phone, a parking sticker is encouraged to be used – this will be given to you by your mobile phone operator.

The three largest mobile phone service providers in Estonia are EMT, Tele2 and Elisa.

There are also many service providers for fixed phones. Several service providers offer various options for Internet access.

You can use public phones with a calling card, which you can buy from a post-office or news stand. You can also call collect – to do that, dial 16116 on a public phone. Calls to emergency numbers are also free of charge from public phones.

You must dial **00** and then the country code to make international phone calls from Estonia. Estonia's country code is **372**. To call the Estonian mobility centre at the Archimedes Foundation from abroad, for example, you should dial **+372 730 0337**. To call the mobility centre when you are already in Estonia, dial **730 0337**. And to call the Finnish mobility centre from Estonia dial **00 358 977 4881**.



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8.8 Computers and Internet facilities

There are plenty of possibilities to access the Internet in Estonia. The number of wifi (*wireless Internet*) areas is growing constantly, and wifi can be accessed for free in several pubs, hotels, petrol stations and public buildings. Several Internet cafés operate in bigger cities.

Public Internet points can be found in most libraries. The terms of use may vary from place to place – using a computer is generally free of charge, but a fee may be requested for booking in advance. Sometimes the usage terms limit the amount of time that a computer may be used per day or week by one person.



WIFI.ee <http://www.wifi.ee/>

Tartu. Info. Internet points <http://www.tartu.ee/>

In Your Pocket. Tallinn city guide. Keep in touch
<http://www.inyourpocket.com/estonia/tallinn/en/>

8.9 Postal services

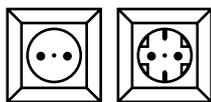
Estonian Post has many offices across Estonia. Sending a regular letter within Estonia (up to 20 g) costs 4.40 kroons (0.28 €). Air mail to the Baltic States and Scandinavian countries costs 6.00 kroons (0.38 €), to the rest of Europe and several countries in Central Asia, is 6.50 (0.41 €), and to other countries the price is 8.00 kroons (0.51 €). If your letter weighs more than 20 grams, the price is higher.



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8.10 Electrical appliances

Electricity in Estonia is produced and distributed by the national energy company Eesti Energia and its power plants. Outlets operate at 220 V/ 50 Hz. You must sign a contract with Eesti Energia if you buy a house or a flat; you can do this at a customer service office of Eesti Energia. If you rent a house or flat, the owner probably already has an energy purchase agreement, and you will just have to make an agreement with the owner about electricity payments. Currently the price for electricity (in the simplest and most widespread package) is 127 sents/kWh. It is also possible to select alternative electricity packages, for example if you have a meter that measures electricity used during the day-time and at night separately, in which case the rates differ.



Further information on Eesti Energia and the contact information of the customer service offices can be found at <http://www.energia.ee/>



8.11 Shopping and cost of living

Shopping in Estonia is quite comfortable and easy. All of the bigger supermarkets are open from 10–21 or even 9–23. Opening hours for other shops, such as those selling jewellery or sportswear, are 10–18 or 10–19, but in bigger shopping centres these may also be open longer. Smaller shops close earlier on the weekends, but most supermarkets keep the same opening hours as on the weekdays.

The most popular places for everyday shopping are the supermarket chains Konsum, Prisma, Rimi, Selver, and Säästumarket. Many people also like to do some of their weekly purchases at markets, which usually close earlier.

EVERYDAY NECESSITIES

SOME AVERAGE PRICES IN SPRING 2007 MIGHT GIVE YOU AN IDEA OF THE POTENTIAL COST OF LIVING:

Monthly rent for a 2-room flat in Tallinn (not in the Old Town)	4500–10 000 EEK	287–639 €
Monthly rent for a 2-room flat in Tartu	3500–8000 EEK	223–511 €
Bread (1 loaf)	7– 14 EEK	0.45–0.89 €
Apples (1 kg)	13-25 EEK	0.83–1.59 €
Chicken breast (1 kg)	70–95 EEK	4.47–6.07 €
Dinner at a restaurant	150–400 EEK	9.6–26 €
Cinema ticket	80–115 EEK	5.11–7.35 €
Fuel (1 l)	14–16 EEK	0.90–1.02 €
Bus ticket from Tallinn to Tartu	100–125 EEK	6.39–7.99 €

Your rights as a consumer are protected by the Consumer Protection Act and, if necessary, the Estonian Consumer Protection Board will give you information and assistance to help you protect your rights.



You can contact the Consumer Protection Board by e-mail at info@consumer.ee or call (+372) 620 1700

European Consumer Centre of Estonia <http://www.consumer.ee/>

Estonian Consumer Protection Board <http://www.tka.riik.ee/>



8.12 Garbage management

Environment friendly behaviour should be everybody's responsibility and waste management is definitely a part of that. If you are living in a flat in an apartment building, the apartment association will have a waste collection contract for the whole building.

Paper and metal, as well as plastic and glass bottles can be recycled. Paper and mixed beverage containers are located in several places in towns.

Most of beverage bottles, plastic, metal as well as glass, can be returned for a return fee. The amount of the return is also depicted on the bottles. Shops should be able to provide information about the nearest collection point.

Containers for old batteries can be found supermarkets and photo and electronics shops. Oil, oil filters and car batteries can be returned to containers in petrol stations.

Recycling Centres in Tallinn and Tartu accept old furniture and other items that are no longer needed in your household but could be used by someone else. The recycling centre can provide transportation for larger items.



Tallinn. Resident. Map of Tallinn (select Environment for the map of recycled garbage disposal places)
<http://www.tallinn.ee/eng/>

Tartu Environmental Education Centre. Environmental info. Materials. How to separate garbage
<http://www.teec.ee/>

Tartu. Info. Survival Guide
<http://www.tartu.ee/>



8.13 Libraries

Estonian libraries have merged their databases into a joint electronic catalogue. This electronic database provides information about collections at university libraries, the central libraries in Tallinn and Tartu as well as the National Library of Estonia, the library of the Literary Museum, the Medical Library of Estonia, and the Repository Library of Estonia.

A reader's card can be obtained directly in the library. An ID card or passport is required in order to obtain a reader's card. Having a reader's card enables you to borrow books from the

library and use other library services. Libraries also offer one-day visitor's cards, which enable you to use books in the library, but borrowing books or ordering them from collections is restricted. The National Library of Estonia does not lend books, but you can order a wide range of materials from their collections and use them in the library. Public Internet points can be found in most libraries. It is possible to access electronic journals and publications and databases through university servers.



Estonian Libraries' Catalogue. **Tallinn**
<http://ester.nlib.ee/search>

Estonian Libraries' Catalogue. **Tartu**
<http://ester.utlib.ee/search>

National Library of Estonia (Information on Estonian libraries on the Internet-librarianship)
<http://www.nlib.ee/>

University of Tartu Library <http://www.utlib.ee/en/>

Tallinn University of Technology Library
<http://www.lib.ttu.ee/eng/>



8.14 Studying Estonian Language

Studying Estonian is no easy task. Still, quite many foreigners have learned to speak Estonian fluently within a relatively short period of time. Estonians themselves appreciate it if you can use some simpler words or phrases. Estonian belongs to the Finno-Ugric family of languages and is therefore easier for Finns to learn than for others. Before starting your Estonian studies you should make sure that the teacher has the kind of teaching methods that you are able to follow. It would be advisable to attend a sample lesson.

EVERYDAY NECESSITIES

Useful phrases

tere	Hello!
nägemiseni	Good bye!
tšau (Ciao)	informal and a very common way between friends to say both Hi and Bye
aitäh!/ tänan!	thank you!
palun	please
jah	yes
ei	no

TRANSPORT

buss	bus
rong	train
pilet	ticket
takso	taxi
Palun sõitke sellel aadressil	Please drive to this address

DOCUMENTS

dokumendid	documents
pass	passport
id- kaart	ID card
isikut tõendav dokument	personal identification document
juhiluba	driving licence
lugejapilet	library card

SERVICES

postkontor	post office
ümbrik	envelope
mark	stamp
arst	doctor
hambaarst	dentist
kiirabi	ambulance
haigla	hospital
pood	shop
restoran	restaurant
kohvik	café
juuksur	hairdresser
ilusalong	beauty salon
ujula	swimming pool
spordiklubi	sports club

MONEY

pank	bank
raha	money
valuutavahetus	currency exchange
palk	wage, salary
hind	price
arve	bill
tasuta	free of charge

EVERYDAY NECESSITIES

FAMILY

Perekond	family
naine	woman, wife
mees	man, husband
laps	child
abikaasa	spouse
kool	school
lasteaed	day-care centre, nursery school
õpetaja	teacher

ACADEMIC GLOSSARY

teadus	science, research
teadlane	researcher/scientist
õppemaks	tuition fee
üliõpilane	student
lektor	lecturer
professor	professor

SOME PHRASES

Ilusat päeva!	Have a nice day!
Kuidas läheb?	How are you?
Tänan küsimast, väga hästi!	Very well, thank you!
Kui palju see maksab?	How much does it cost?
Mis kell on?	What time is it?
Kus on raamatukogu?	Where is the library?
Kuidas minna ülikooli?	Which way is the university?
vasakule	left
paremale	right
otse	straight
Ma armastan Sind	I love you

8.15 Disabled access

Conditions for disabled people in Estonia could be improved. Recently constructed public buildings provide disabled access, but in older buildings – including many university buildings – this can be a serious problem. Universities have made efforts to provide ramps and to make access for disabled people easier. Personal assistants can help to overcome these problems.

Difficulties may arise in some shopping centres, pubs and restaurants, and in some public transport vehicles. Access to public transport in Tallinn and Tartu is improving, as several

EVERYDAY NECESSITIES

new buses with low floors have been acquired. The timetables for buses indicate the times for buses with low floors; in Tartu they are marked with “a” and in Tallinn with a coloured background.

The public transportation between different cities is problematic, as possibilities for people in wheelchairs are very limited. However, personnel in bus stations will help if necessary.

It is possible to use a special taxi service for disabled people in both Tallinn and Tartu.



To use the taxi service you should contact the **Tallinn City Board of Disabled People**, phone number **(+372) 655 4160**, e-mail: **tiia@tallinnakoda.ee** in Tallinn, or the social welfare department in Tartu.



A lot remains to be done to enable disabled people to manage on their own. Disabled people can obtain support and additional information from their local government’s social welfare departments. Contact them also to obtain more information about getting help from a personal assistant.



Tallinn Social Welfare and Health Care Department

Address: Narva mnt. 11d, 10151, Tallinn

Phone: **(+372) 645 7440**

Fax: **(+372) 645 7444**

E-mail: sotsiaal@tallinnlv.ee

Tartu Department of Social Welfare

Address: Raekoja plats 3

Phone: **(+372) 736 1300**

Fax: **(+372) 736 1301**

E-mail: sao@raad.tartu.ee

LEISURE AND PLEASURE

It seems that the main leisure time activity in Estonia is sport. Those who never make it to the gym are excellent armchair sportsmen and enthusiastically follow their fellow countrymen's successes on the international arena. Possibilities for active recreation include bathing in the sea in summer, autumnal trips into the forest for mushrooms and wild berries, and odd jobs around the summer cottage. All of these activities offer lots of sporting excitement.

About 10 years ago, nobody appeared to have any spare time at all (the common purpose seemed to be to accumulate huge amounts of money, and fast), whereas now people have realised that money is not enough to sustain you. Hence one can now see young people on roller skates, bicycles or skateboards, cars loaded with skis, canoes or surf boards, but also party animals hurrying from one venue to the other in the darkness of the night. Estonians have learned how to relax.

When colleagues return from their holidays in autumn, the first topic of conversation is Midsummer Night's Eve, the smoke sauna and strawberries from their own garden: summer is the time when Estonians prefer to stay home.



LEISURE AND PLEASURE

9.1 Events

There are several databases about upcoming concerts, theatre performances and exhibitions. Concerts of the Estonian National Male Choir, Estonian National Symphony Orchestra or Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir are definitely worth watching out for. The most important organisation that organises classical music concerts is the State Concert Institute, Eesti Kontsert.

The variety of museums ranges from a mining museum, a glass museum and railway museums to the Estonian Flag Museum. The Estonian National Museum was founded in 1909 in Tartu. The permanent exhibition of the Estonian National Museum introduces the everyday life of Estonian peasants, Estonian holidays and changes in Estonian culture. The most recent addition to Estonian museums is KUMU Art Museum, which was opened in 2006.



Visitestonia.com <http://www.visitestonia.com/>

Tourist web portal of Tallinn <http://www.tourism.tallinn.ee/>

Culture and main events in Tartu <http://www.kultuuriaken.tartu.ee/>

Tourist Information Tartu and Tartu County <http://www.visittartu.com/>

Eesti Kontsert <http://www.concert.ee/>

Piletilevi. Tickets on the internet <http://www.piletilevi.ee/>

MEELIS LOKK



9.2 Outdoors

Spending time outdoors is a pleasure in Estonia. Estonian nature is picturesque and vibrant. Hiking trips and camping are very popular in summer, and skiing is enjoyed by many in winter.

The State Forests offer beautiful hiking trails and possibilities for accommodation. There are also many other places in Estonia where one can spend enjoyable time outdoors. Probably the best places for skiing are in southern Estonia, where there are also possibilities for mountain skiing, for example at Kuutse Hill (in Estonian *Kuutsemäe*), but don't expect the Alps! Beautiful cross-country skiing trails can be found in Otepää, Kääriku, Vooremäe, Haanja, Mõedaku or Kõrvemaa, but also within city limits – in Pirita in Tallinn and in Tähtvere park in Tartu.

Beautiful places worth visiting are Taevaskoja, Soomaa, Saaremaa, Hiiumaa, the North coast, Lahemaa, the Piusa caves, the Endla Nature Reserve and Suur Munamägi and many others.



RMK. State Forests <http://www.rmkk.ee/>

Estonian Rural Tourism Organisation <http://www.maaturism.ee/>

Visitestonia.com <http://www.visitestonia.com/>

9.3 Hobbies

Popular hobbies in Estonia include singing in choirs, dancing and sports. There are many sports clubs, swimming pools and exercise tracks.



Tallinn. Education. Hobby Education Schools <http://www.haridus.ee/en/huvialakoolid/>

Tallinn. City Administration: Sports and Youth Department. Possibilities of Sports <http://www.tallinn.ee/>

Tartu Tourist Information Centre. Sports <http://www.visittartu.com/>

Tartu. Education and Science. Hobby Schools <http://www.tartu.ee/>



9.4 Religion and churches

Estonians are fond of talking about their Lutheran work habits. This is largely the only religion-related topic that reaches your ear. In predominantly Protestant (since the early 16th century) Estonia, the church is separated from the state, and religious topics only emerge at Christmas and Easter. Confessional belonging is strictly everybody's own business. Representatives of the state, however, consider it necessary to appear in church from time to time, and the church diligently voices opinions on social matters. The most heated religious debates focus on whether or not religion should be a compulsory subject in the school curriculum.

The mass Christianisation of Estonians began in the 13th century, although the previous pagan beliefs persisted until the 17th century. Alongside Christian holidays there are also a number of "pagan" traditions alive today; such as bonfires in May and on Midsummer's Eve.

The majority of religiously active people belong to the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church or the Orthodox Church. The Orthodox Church in Estonia has two separate branches: the Russian-language church subordinated to Moscow and the Estonian-language church subordinated to Constantinople. Visitors to Tallinn will immediately notice the Orthodox presence here: the cathedral from the period of Russification (the end of the 19th century) dominates Toompea hill in the Old Town. By Lake Peipsi, the archaic community of Old Believers has sheltered since the Russian reformation.

The most common time for Sunday services is 10 o'clock, but in some congregations services begin at 11 or 12. You should contact a congregation directly if you wish to become a member.



Information on churches in Tallinn can be found at the Tourist web portal <http://www.tourism.tallinn.ee/>

Information on churches in Tartu can be found at the Tourist web portal <http://www.visittartu.com/1443/>

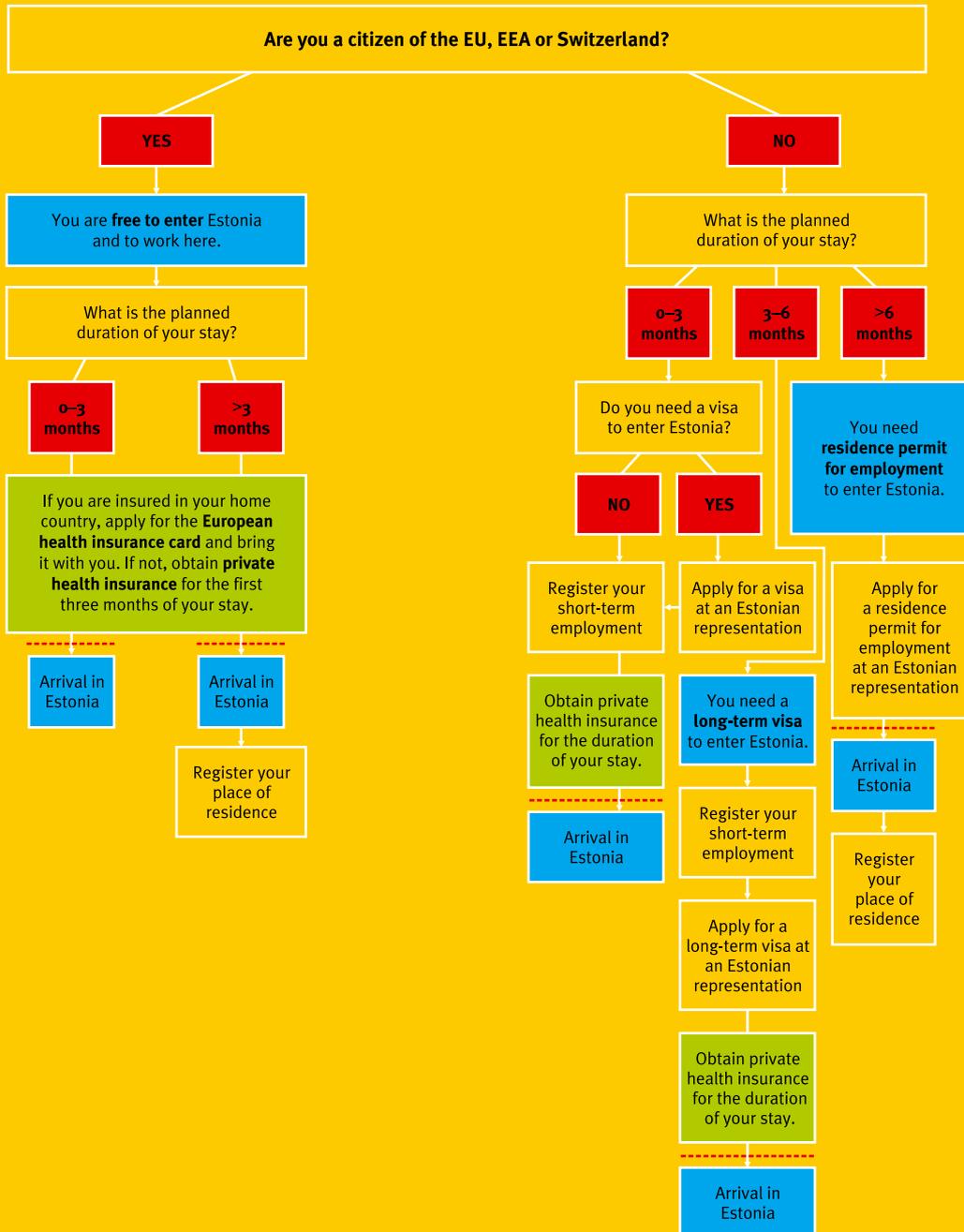


KERLY ILVES



TAAVI GREPP

Road-map for coming to Estonia



NOTES

A series of 20 horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

NOTES

A series of 20 horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.



www.smartEstonia.ee

Research and study opportunities in Estonia



TALLINN
TARTU

