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The Practical Guide for Researchers has been prepared to help researchers from all over the world who plan to come to work or study in Estonia. The aim of this guide is to provide researchers with the necessary information when they move to Estonia and also after arrival. The guide has been compiled and published by the Archimedes Foundation and is co-financed by the European Commission.

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. The Practical Guide for Researchers will lead you to various sources on the Internet, where you can check for the most up-to-date information.

The Estonian Researcher's Mobility Portal www.smartEstonia.ee provides updated information on all of the topics covered in this guide.



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The European Network of Mobility Centres (ERA-MORE) is designed to assist researchers to take up training and working positions abroad. In spring 2005, the Estonian Network of Mobility Centres consists of 2 bridgehead organisations and 3 local mobility centres in the three largest universities.



BRIDGEHEAD ORGANISATIONS:

Archimedes Foundation

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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 the Estonian Research and Development Strategy 2002–2006, *Knowledge-based Estonia*, which was approved by the Estonian parliament in December 2001. The strategy formulates the aspiration of Estonia to become a knowledge-based society where research and development are valued highly as one of the preconditions for the functioning and development of the entire society. The strategic objectives of Estonian R&D are the improvement of the knowledge pool (with emphasis on the quality of scientific research) and the increased competitiveness of local enterprises (with the focus on improving co-operation between science and industry). In order to concentrate national efforts, the strategy defines three key areas:

- User-friendly information technologies and the development of the information society;
- Biomedicine;
- Materials technologies.



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In parallel to the development of key areas, research for national identity (language, culture and history, nature, etc) should be fostered. To achieve the objectives, the strategy establishes the target of raising the total amount of R&D investment to 1.5% of GDP by 2006, in line with the objectives of the Lisbon strategy.

A strategy for the years 2006–2010 is currently in preparation.

Based on Knowledge-based Estonia. Estonian Research and Development Strategy 2002–2006



For more information see the Research section of the website of the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research at <http://www.hm.ee/>



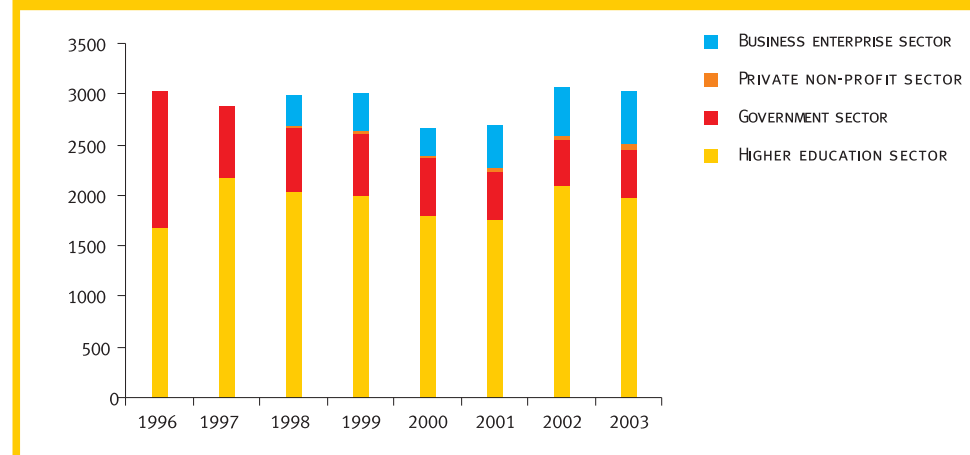
1.2 Estonian R&D statistics

In 2004, government spending on research and development represented 0.83% of Estonia's GDP. The number of researchers (full-time equivalent) has remained roughly the same in recent years, and in 2003 was about 3000. The number of doctoral graduates has increased considerably, growing from 106 in 1998 to 209 in 2004.

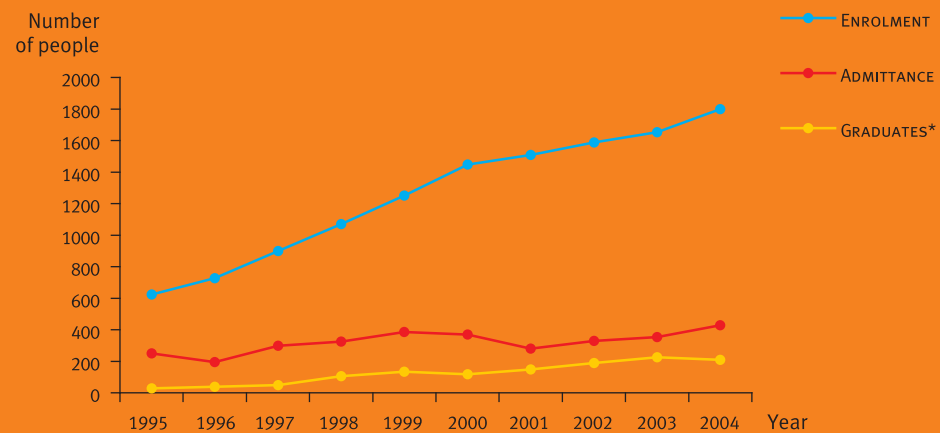
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURES AND THEIR FINANCING FROM STATE AND LOCAL BUDGETS

	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	0.58	284	0.95
1999	572.8	0.7	370.9	1.12
2000	579.4	0.62	342.8	1.01
2001	763.5	0.73	397.3	1.09
2002	871.5	0.75	469.6	1.13
2003	1046.2	0.83	508.4	1.12

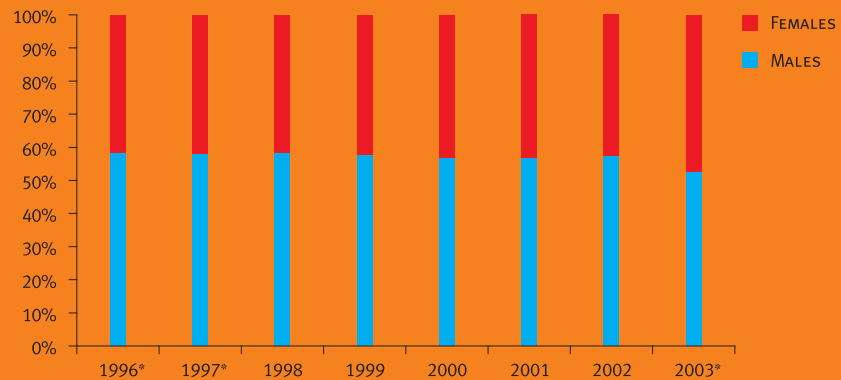
RESEARCHERS IN FULL-TIME EQUIVALENTS



ENROLMENT, ADMITTANCE AND GRADUATES FOR DOCTORAL STUDIES



RESEARCHERS BY SEX



Source: Statistical Office of Estonia <http://www.stat.ee/>



1.3 R&D Funding

Instruments of the Estonian R&D funding system are:

- Targeted financing;
- 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 by recommendation of the Science Competence Council. Both basic and applied research is funded. Evaluated and registered research institutions may apply. The Science Competence Council organises the peer-reviewing of submitted applications and advises the Minister on opening funding for new research themes and continuation of funding for previously-approved ones. 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. 31 new research topics with a total budget of 32.5 million kroons were approved for targeted financing in 2005. The targeted financing of 238 research topics is continued with 294.1 million kroons.

The Estonian Science Foundation (EstSF) awards **research grants** to individuals and research teams on a competitive basis. Project applications are evaluated by expert commissions and approved by the EstSF Council. In the year 2004 EstSF financed 740 research projects.



Data on targeted financing and EstSF grants is available at the Estonian Research Information System, ERIS: <http://www.eris.ee/>

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National **research and development programmes** are launched and funds allocated by the ministry responsible for the implementation of the programme. As of spring 2005, Estonia has three national R&D programmes:

- “The Estonian Language and National Memory”;
- “Collections of Humanities and Natural Sciences”;
- “Collection and Conservation of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture for the Years 2002–2006”.

Through Enterprise Estonia and its sub-units, the Ministry of Economic Affairs finances R&D programmes that involve product development, co-operation with enterprises and entrepreneurs, and technology programmes for priority areas. Enterprise Estonia provides support for new companies as well as supporting the research and development activities of already active companies, NGOs and R&D institutions.

Estonia participates actively in European Union Framework Programmes. By the end of 2004, Estonian organisations had participated in the submission of 711 project applications; 140 of these projects were successful.



Information on national R&D programmes can be found at the web page of the State Chancellery of the Republic of Estonia, in the chapter on Research policy in the R&D section.

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

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

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

Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications

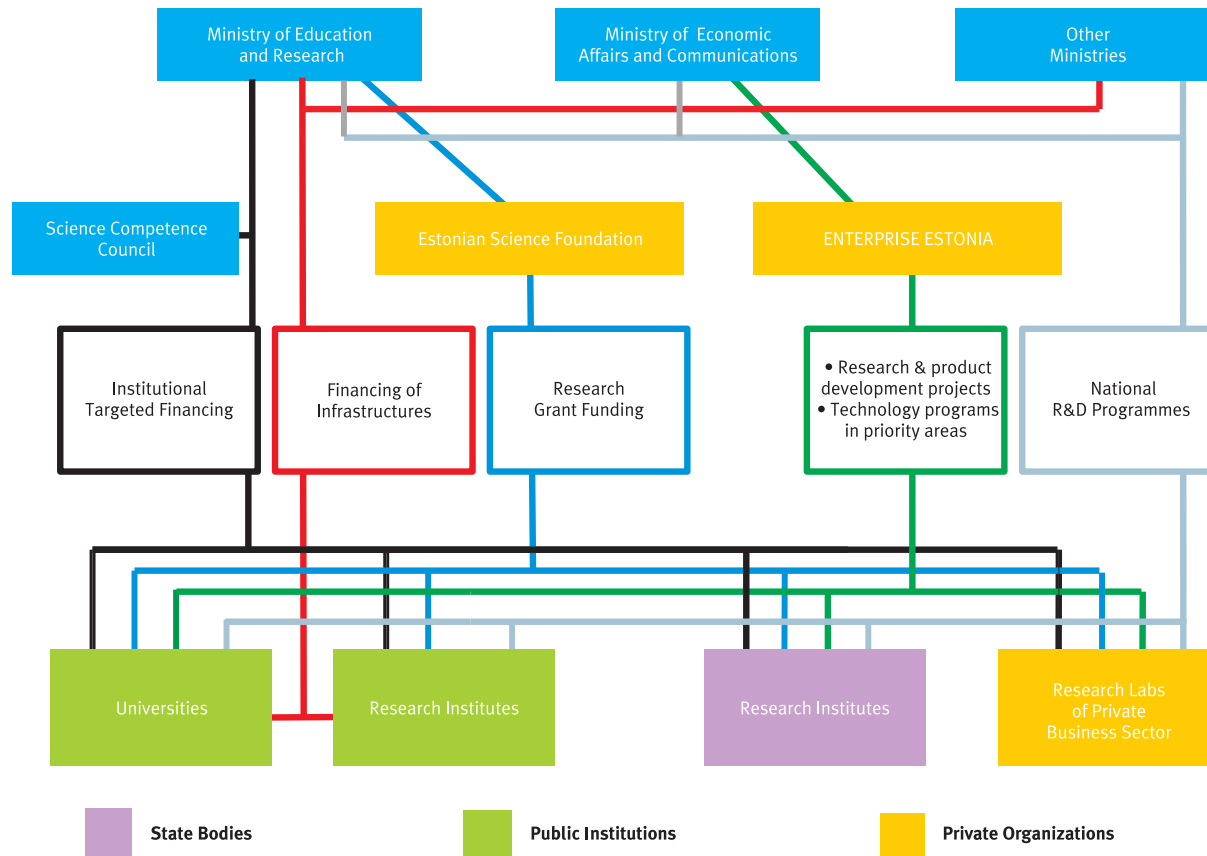
<http://www.mkm.ee/eng/>

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

Estonian Research Information System – ERIS <http://www.eris.ee/>



R&D funding system in Estonia



1

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**, Tallinn University and the **Estonian Agricultural 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/>

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

Estonian Agricultural University <http://www.eau.ee/>

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 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** is responsible for the planning, coordination, execution and surveillance of research and education policy.

The **Scientific Competence Council (SCC)** is an advisory body to the Minister of Education and Research. Its responsibilities are:

- To assess the applications for targeted financing and the effectiveness of previously granted funding;
- To make recommendations on the funding of research (long-term projects, infrastructure expenditures of R&D institutions, PhD and postdoctoral study programmes); etc.

Members of the SCC are nominated by the Government by recommendation of the Ministry, and supported by expert groups composed of internationally recognised Estonian scientists.



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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 Communication is advised by the Innovation Policy Council and assisted by Enterprise Estonia.

The **Estonian Academy of Sciences (EAS)** unites 60 top-level Estonian scientists and scholars (as of spring 2005) and acts as an umbrella organisation for a number of associated learned 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/>





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 2006.

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/>

R&D SUPPORT SYSTEM

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.

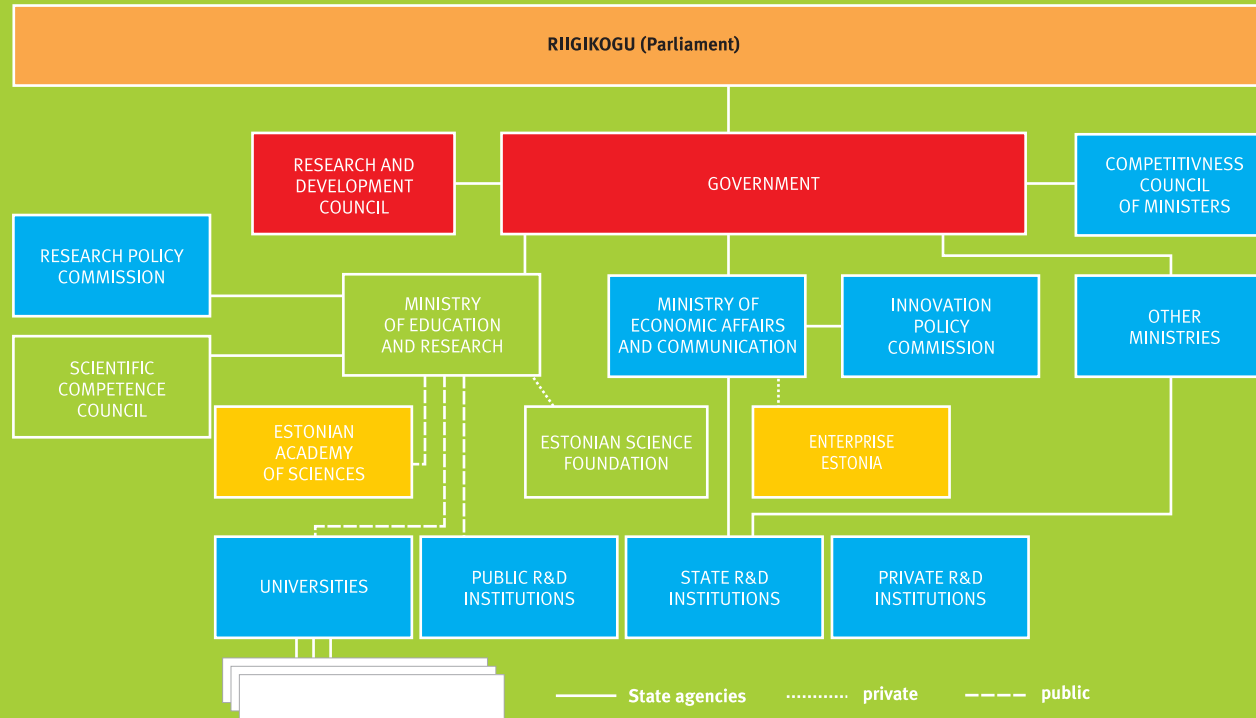
The Archimedes Foundation is an independent organisation founded by the Ministry of Education and Research that co-ordinates and implements programmes and projects for education and research. Enterprise Estonia provides both financing and counselling for technological development and innovation. Enterprise Estonia is also one of the institutions responsible for the utilisation of EU structural funds. The National Contact Points for the EU Framework Programmes work at these two R&D support agencies.



Archimedes Foundation <http://www.archimedes.ee/>
Enterprise Estonia <http://www.eas.ee/>



R&D structure



2

2.1 Estonia in brief

Estonia is situated in North-Eastern Europe, being the northernmost of the three Baltic States. It is bounded on the West and North by the Baltic Sea and on the East by Lake Peipsi and the Narva River. It is bordered on the East and South-East by Russia and on the South by Latvia. Tallinn, Estonia's capital city, 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 is often referred to as a very small country. With an area of 45,000 square kilometres, Estonia is in fact bigger than Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark or Switzerland, but still five times smaller than Great Britain. 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.



2

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. Arnold Rüütel, the current President of Estonia, was elected on 21 September 2001 and inaugurated on 8 October 2001.

The **Government** carries out the country's domestic and foreign policy, which is shaped by the Riigikogu; it directs and co-ordinates the work of government institutions and bears full responsibility for everything occurring within the authority of executive power. 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 in the current European Commission, Siim Kallas, is the Vice President for Administrative Affairs, Audit and Anti-Fraud.

Estonia's population ranks among the smallest in the world. According to the last official census taken in 2000, there are only 1.37 million people living in Estonia. Despite its small population, about one hundred different nationalities and ethnic groups are represented in Estonia. The largest of these are Estonians (67.9 per cent), Russians (25.6 per cent), Ukrainians (2.1 per cent), Belorussians (1.3 per cent), Finns (0.9 per cent), Tatars (0.2 per cent) and Latvians (0.2 per cent).

One positive aspect of being relatively small in number is that there is plenty of space, since Estonia's population density is only 32 people per square kilometre.



2

The **national currency** of Estonia is called the kroon (abbreviation EEK), and 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 the prognosis of the Bank of Estonia, Estonia will join the Euro zone in the second half of 2006 or in the beginning of 2007.

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.



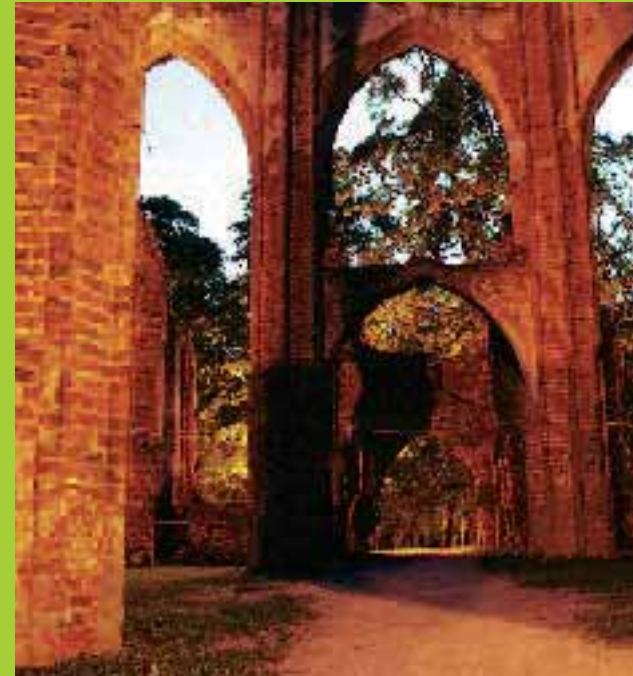
For more information on Estonia, see the web page of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <http://www.vm.ee/estonia/>



2

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.



2

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
10 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/>

2

2.3 Nature and climate

The Estonian natural environment is influenced by the small average population per square kilometre, 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://www.ilm.ee/>

2

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

2.5 Customs and holidays

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.



2

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.

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 of 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

2.7 Media

The Estonian media system involves both private and public media channels.

Estonian Television (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.



The website of ETV is
<http://www.etv.ee/>

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.



More information can be found at
<http://www.er.ee/>

The Association of Estonian Broadcasters (AEB) unites most Estonian private broadcasters and protects the interests of radio and television broadcasters. AEB has 19 members: 2 TV organisations (Kanal 2 and TV3), 15 radio organisations, and 2 video production companies.



See website <http://www.ringhliit.ee/>
for the contact information of the member organisations.



2

The Estonian print media is mostly owned by private companies. 6 daily nationwide newspapers are published in Estonia: Postimees, Eesti Päevaleht, Äripäev, SL Õhtuleht, Molodjož Estonii (in Russian) and Vesti Dnja (in Russian). The biggest weekly newspapers are Eesti Ekspress, Maaleht and Vesti Nedeli (in Russian). Several other weekly newspapers and 22 regional newspapers are published.



More information on Estonian newspapers can be found at the website of the Estonian Newspaper Association <http://www.eall.ee/>

Magazines are published for very different target groups. There are several crossword magazines, many magazines for women, magazines about houses and gardens, magazines about sports, and many others.

Estonian and international newspapers and magazines are sold in bigger shopping centres and R-kiosks.



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



2

2.8 Economy

The Estonian economy is considered to be liberal and innovative. IT is one of the most popular areas of business and also “the thing” to study. 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 2003 was 5.1%. Estonia’s main business partners are Finland, Sweden and Germany.

The current unemployment rate is about 10%. Unemployment is greatest in the North-Eastern part of Estonia. The percentage is higher among young people, but recently slight improvements have occurred in their employment figures.

Industrial production constitutes about 18% of Estonia’s GDP. 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 is growing constantly, exceeding 1.1 million in the year 2003.

Agriculture does not involve very many people in Estonia, giving employment to about 5% of the workforce. 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 Estonica: <http://www.estonica.org/>
Ministry of Agriculture: <http://www.agri.ee/eng/index.html>
Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications: <http://www.mkm.ee/>

3

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 apply for a residence permit.

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 here without work permits. The same applies to the nationals of Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland. The only requirement is that if an EU citizen stays in Estonia for longer than 3 months, a residence permit should be applied for. It is advisable, however, to apply for a residence permit at the start of an extended stay in Estonia.

You can submit an application for a residence permit at a diplomatic representation of the Republic of Estonia in your home country or at a service bureau of the Citizenship and Migration Board (CMB) when already in Estonia. The residence permit is valid for up to 5 years.

The family members of an EU citizen can apply for a residence permit for the same period of time as the EU citizen.



3

Together with the residence permit you will receive an ID number and an Estonian ID card. 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 carries the residence 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/EUtrp/>

Within a month after the residence permit is issued, 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.

Registering one's place of residence has several benefits; for example, EU citizens will acquire the right to vote in local government elections.



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/districts/>



3

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.

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/>



3

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

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

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.

The family members of the citizen of a third country must apply for a residence permit. Citizens of third countries can 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 a minor settling with a parent.

The process of obtaining a residence permit or a residence permit for employment may take up to 3 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 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 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/>

3

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.

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/districts/>

4

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

4.3 General working conditions and regulations

General working time in Estonia is 8 hours a day, 5 days per week. According to the Working and Rest Time Act, the duration of the lunch break should be between 30 minutes and an hour. A person raising a child under 1.5 years of age shall be granted additional breaks in addition to the general breaks for rest and meals.

11 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 at least 70 days before the estimated birth of the child. 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.

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.



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/indexen.htm>

4

4.4 Employment regulations at universities

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.

Vacations for academic staff are generally longer than the 28 days required in the Holidays Act; their length starts from 35 days and depends on the academic position.

4.5 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 National Library. Public Internet points can be found in most libraries. It is possible to access electronic journals through university servers.



Estonian Libraries' Catalogue. Tallinn <http://ester.nlib.ee/screens/opacmenu.html>

Estonian Libraries' Catalogue. Tartu <http://ester.utlib.ee/screens/opacmenu.html>

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

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

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



4

4.6 Intellectual property rights (IPR) in Estonia

The most important document for IPR in Estonia is the Copyright Act. All universities have their own detailed IPR principles.

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 the public service in the execution of his or her direct duties has moral rights in the work. The economic rights of the author are transferred to the employer unless otherwise prescribed by the contract.

A work published lawfully 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.

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



The Copyright Act can be found at <http://www.legaltext.ee/>

5

5.1 Direct Taxes

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. The income tax of 24%, and the **unemployment insurance** of 1%, are withheld monthly from your salary by the employer. A **funded pension payment** is withheld from your salary at a rate of 2%, if you have joined the optional funded pension system. At present, 1700 kroons of the monthly salary is free of income tax.

Income tax is not charged on compensation for official travel, accommodation and other expenses and daily allowances, if they are within the limits established by the Government of Estonia.

Social tax is paid by employers at a rate of 33% on all payments made to employees for salaried work performed as well as unemployment insurance at a rate of 0.5%. The social tax is not part of the salary number; 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.



Estonia has signed 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

5.2 Income tax return

Income tax returns must be presented by Estonian residents. An **Estonian resident** is someone whose permanent residence is in Estonia or who stayed in Estonia for 183 days or more during one year.

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.

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.

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 from educational costs, paid housing loans, donations and gifts, and optional funded pension payments. Additional refunds are paid to families with three 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, the most convenient and widespread is electronic submission through the E-Tax Board, where pre-filled forms 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.

5

5.3 Taxation of non-residents

A non-resident is someone whose place of residence is not Estonia and who stays in Estonia for less than 183 days in a period of 12 months. The residency is decided, taking into account all of the days that were physically spent in Estonia.

Non-residents have a limited tax liability in Estonia, and only the Estonian-source income is taxed in Estonia. Non-residents cannot claim deductions and allowances available to residents.

If the international agreement 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 international treaty 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.

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.

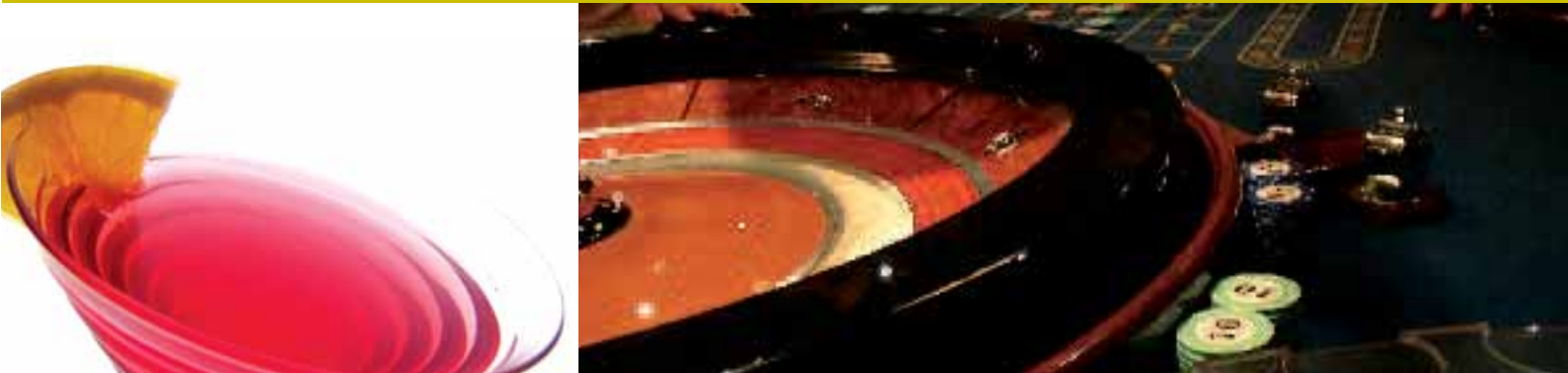
There are generally no differences for the taxation of residents and non-residents in the case of social tax.



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5.4 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.



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

6

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 people: 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.



6

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. Your employer will forward the information concerning your employment to the EHIF.

Some people have the same rights as taxpayers, for example children.

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.

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. If you are not insured in your home country and you are staying in Estonia for a short time without a residence permit, you should obtain private health insurance in your home country for the duration of your stay in Estonia.

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 paying their taxes here possess health insurance in Estonia.

**Estonian Health Insurance Fund**

Lembitu 10, Tallinn 10114

Phone: (+372) 620 8430

Fax: (+372) 620 8449

E-mail: info@haigekassa.ee<http://www.haigekassa.ee/eng/>

6

HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

The first contact with medicine is the general practitioner – **family physician**; if necessary, they refer the patient to a specialist. 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. Family physicians write prescriptions for prescription medicines. Visits to a family physician are free of charge if you have valid Estonian health insurance or a European Health Insurance Card. You must pay 50 kroons for a 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 of up to 50 kroons is charged. No referral is needed to visit a psychiatrist, gynaecologist, dermatovenerologist, ophthalmologist, dentist, pulmonologist (for tuberculosis treatment), infectious diseases specialist (for HIV/AIDS treatment), surgeon or orthopaedist (for traumatology).

If the situation is truly serious, an ambulance should be called.

Dental care is free for residents under the age of 19. All other insured individuals can ask for a refund of 150 kroons per year from the Estonian Health Insurance Board. 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.



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



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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 medicines is compensated to people who have 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

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 EHIF with your passport and a doctor's note certifying pregnancy.

The *parental benefit* is paid during the first year a the child's life to the parent that stays at home with the child. The amount of the benefit depends on the parent's previous income.

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* 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* 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.



Social Insurance Board. Pensions and benefits <http://www.ensib.ee/>
Estonian Health Insurance Board. Benefits <http://www.haigekassa.ee/eng/health/benefits/>

6

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).

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% her/himself for the funded pension (deductible 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 the supplementary funded pension from another country. And it is possible to continue in Estonia to make payments to supplementary pension funds that you have established elsewhere.

The retirement age in Estonia is currently 63 years for men and 59 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

6.4 Other benefits

Several benefits exist to help people in various life situations. The state pays disabled persons pensions for incapacity to work. Additional benefits are paid to compensate the need for personal assistance.

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

6.5 Unemployment insurance

Unemployment insurance is a compulsory insurance that is collected to pay benefits to employees in the event of unemployment. All employees pay 1% of their earnings and employers pay 0.5% 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 unemployment

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 himself 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/>

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 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

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

Tallinn University of Technology

<http://www.ttu.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 <http://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 <http://www.city24.ee/>



7.1 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 www.legaltext.ee. Paragraphs 271-338 deal with lease contracts.

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.

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8.1 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 (1.3 million), 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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8.2 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 and elementary 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, 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 to the age of 17 or until the acquisition of basic education. 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 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.



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Parents may freely choose a school for a child if there are vacant places in the selected school. A school is required to ensure a study opportunity for each child who resides in the school's catchment area.

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 (*gymnasium*) 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.

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.



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The academic year usually lasts from 1 September until June of the following year. It consists of a study period, examination period, 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 for citizens of Tartu <http://www.tartu.ee/>

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

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

8.3 Finding a job for the spouse

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/eng/>

or to the Estonian EURES website

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

Useful job search portals on the Internet that are available in English are:

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

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

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

EURES – The European Job Mobility Portal

<http://europa.eu.int/eures/>

To apply for a job you generally have to present your CV and an application. In many cases you have to go through additional rounds, which may include writing an essay, taking a language test or a job-suitability test. Finally – if you are successful –you can expect an invitation to an interview.



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8.4 Pets

If you wish to bring a pet with you to Estonia, 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 this is not obligatory. Dogs must be vaccinated before they are registered.



Dogs and cats are registered in Tartu at the following address:

Mõisavahe 21 (A wing),

Phone: (+372) 748 9002 or (+372) 527 7511.

Working hours: Monday 15–18, Tuesday to Friday 8–10.

Information on registering dogs in Tallinn can be found at

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

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Autre pays, autre mœurs, 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) and mosquito-repellents (in summer) would certainly come in handy.



BATHROOM SIGNS:

△ or N = Ladies

▽ or M = Gentlemen

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9.1 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/>
Union of Estonian Medical Emergency <http://www.kiirabi.ee/>



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9.2 Banking

Banking in Estonia is well developed, and financial matters are quite simple and convenient. 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 EUR = 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. Internet banking is also very common. Cheques are seldom used in Estonia. 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.



Bank of Estonia (exchange rates, banknotes and coins, and more)
<http://www.eestipank.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/>

9.3 Arrival in Estonia

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

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/>



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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. The taxi fare from the airport to the centre is quite affordable, costing (in spring 2005) under 90 EEK.

Arrival in Estonia by **helicopter** can be quite an exciting opportunity. Copterline operates between Tallinn and Helsinki city centres, and the flight takes about 20 minutes. The prices are, of course, higher than for plane tickets or ferry fares.



For more information, see
<http://www.copterline.com/>

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 on the Gulf of Finland 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/>



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International **bus lines** connect Estonia to Central and Western Europe and also to our 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 only between Tallinn and Moscow. Thus in case you are fond of travelling by train, but are not starting from Moscow, you must combine trains with other methods of transportation to get to Estonia.

Travellers from non-EU countries should submit a written *traveller's declaration* if they have with them goods with a customs value exceeding the tax-free limit of 175 EUR.

You should submit a written *customs declaration* if you have with you goods that have been purchased outside the EU that are worth more than 1000 EUR or that are heavier than 1000 kg. You also have to submit a written customs declaration in case you have with you goods that are meant for sale and that are worth more than 22 EUR. You must declare verbally the goods that you have for commercial purposes and that are worth less than 22 EUR.



For more details about customs procedures see the ETCB web site <http://www.emta.ee/>



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9.4 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; only the inhabitants of the capital city encounter rush-hour traffic congestion and a shortage of parking places.

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 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, like in Soviet times. The rail network has repeatedly been re-constructed and thus enables anyone to have a nice bicycle trip along the embankment, which dates from the early and mid-20th century – the old railway stations offer surprising sights. Remote rural areas around the old railway stations suffer isolation: cutting back the train service has hit them hard, and buses are insufficient.

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 bus 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.

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. One exception is the electric train system near Tallinn, in Harju County, which is used as everyday transport by many people. The long-distance 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/>

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

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

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Travelling with one's own **car** or a rental car is very convenient; all of the main roads are in good condition and are also improved each year. Renting a car is quite expensive (and one generally needs to use a credit card), so for a longer stay other options, for example leasing, are more advisable.

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 it 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.



Further information is available on the website of the Estonian Motor Vehicle Registration Centre <http://www.ark.ee/atp/eng/>

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Lights must be turned on while driving in Estonia, and safety belts fastened. 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 a sticker from your mobile phone operator is needed, and they will also provide you with specific instructions.

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.



Information on parking can be found at Tallinn's Tourism web page
<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.

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.



The website of Tallinn <http://www.tallinn.ee/eng/> provides instructions for taxi passengers, and maps of cycling roads.



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9.5 Phones

Mobile phones have become just as important 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 needed – 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 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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9.6 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 in several pubs, hotels 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.



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/>

9.7 Postal services

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



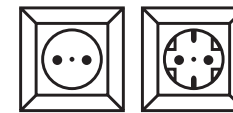
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9.8 Electrical appliances

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 126 sents/kWh. It is also possible to select alternative electricity packages, for example if you have a meter that measures electricity used during the daytime 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/en/first/>



9.9 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.



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SOME AVERAGE PRICES IN SPRING 2005 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)	3000 – 5000 EEK
Monthly rent for a 2-room flat in Tartu	2000 – 4500 EEK
Bread	7 – 14 EEK
1 kg of apples	6 – 15 EEK
1 kg of pork	60 – 95 EEK
Dinner at a restaurant	150 – 400 EEK
Cinema ticket	80 – 115 EEK
1 litre of fuel	11 – 12 EEK
Bus ticket from Tallinn to Tartu	85 – 100 EEK

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.

9.10 Language courses

Studying Estonian is no easy task. The Estonian language has 14 cases, but the use of prepositions is relatively simple. 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. Larger language learning centres offer several courses per year.



Centre for Baltic Studies <http://www.baltic.ut.ee/BSP/Courses/>
 International Language Services <http://www.ils.ee/eng/>
 University of Tartu. Intensive Estonian language courses
<http://www.ut.ee/english/studying/intensivcourse/>

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9.11 Useful phrases

tere!	hello!	palk	wage, salary
nägemist!	good bye!	raha	money
aitäh!/ tänan!	thank you!	hind	price
palun	please	kool	school
jah	yes	lasteaed	day-care centre, nursery school
ei	no	õpetaja	teacher
tasuta	free of charge	teadus	science
buss	bus	teadlane	researcher/scientist
bussipeatus	bus stop	õppemaks	tuition fee
rong	train	üliõpilane	student
kuukaart	a month's pass (for public transport)	lektor	lecturer
juhiluba	driving licence	professor	professor
naine	woman	üliõpilaspilet	student card
mees	man	sihtasutus	foundation
postkontor	post office	lugejapilet	library card
ümbrik	envelope	pass	passport
mark	stamp	id- kaart	ID card
arst	doctor	isikut tõendav	personal identification
hambaarst	dentist	dokument	document
kiirabi	ambulance	Kus on raamatukogu?	Where is the library?
pood	shop	Kuidas minna ülikooli?	Which way is the university?
restoran	restaurant	Minge vasakule	Go left
kohvik	café	Minge paremale	Go right
baar	bar	Minge otse	Go straight ahead
arve	bill	Palun sõitke aadressil...	Please drive to this address
juuksur	hairstylist	Mis kell on?	What time is it?
valuutavahetus	currency exchange	Kui palju see maksab?	How much does this cost?
vahetuskurss	exchange rate		

9

9.12 Disabled access

Conditions for disabled people in Estonia are not very good. Recently constructed public buildings provide disabled access, but older buildings have many shortcomings. The same problem is present in university buildings. Universities have made efforts to provide ramps and to make access for disabled people easier. Nevertheless, some older buildings lack ramps. 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 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.

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.



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



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10.1 Spare time

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.



10.2 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.



Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church
<http://www.eelk.ee/english.php>

Orthodox Church of Estonia
<http://www.orthodoxa.org/>

Estonian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate
<http://www.orthodox.ee/indexeng.php>

Catholic Church in Estonia. (in Estonian, kogudused =congregations)
<http://www.katoliku.ee/>

The United Methodist Church in Estonia
<http://www.bmk.ee/umc/>

Union of Free Evangelical and Baptist Churches of Estonia
<http://www.ekklesia.ee/index.php?a=35>

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



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10.3 Events

There are several databases on upcoming concerts, theatre and exhibitions. Tickets to concerts and cultural events are often cheaper if you buy them beforehand than right before the concert or event.



Kultuuriinfo. Events in Estonia <http://kultuuriinfo.ee/>

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

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

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

Tartu (culture and free time; main events) <http://www.tartu.ee/>

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

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

10.4 Hobbies

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



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

Tartu Tourist Information. Active leisure <http://turism.tartumaa.ee/>

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



10.5 Outdoors

Spending time outdoors is a pleasure in Estonia. The 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 an enjoyable time outdoors.

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



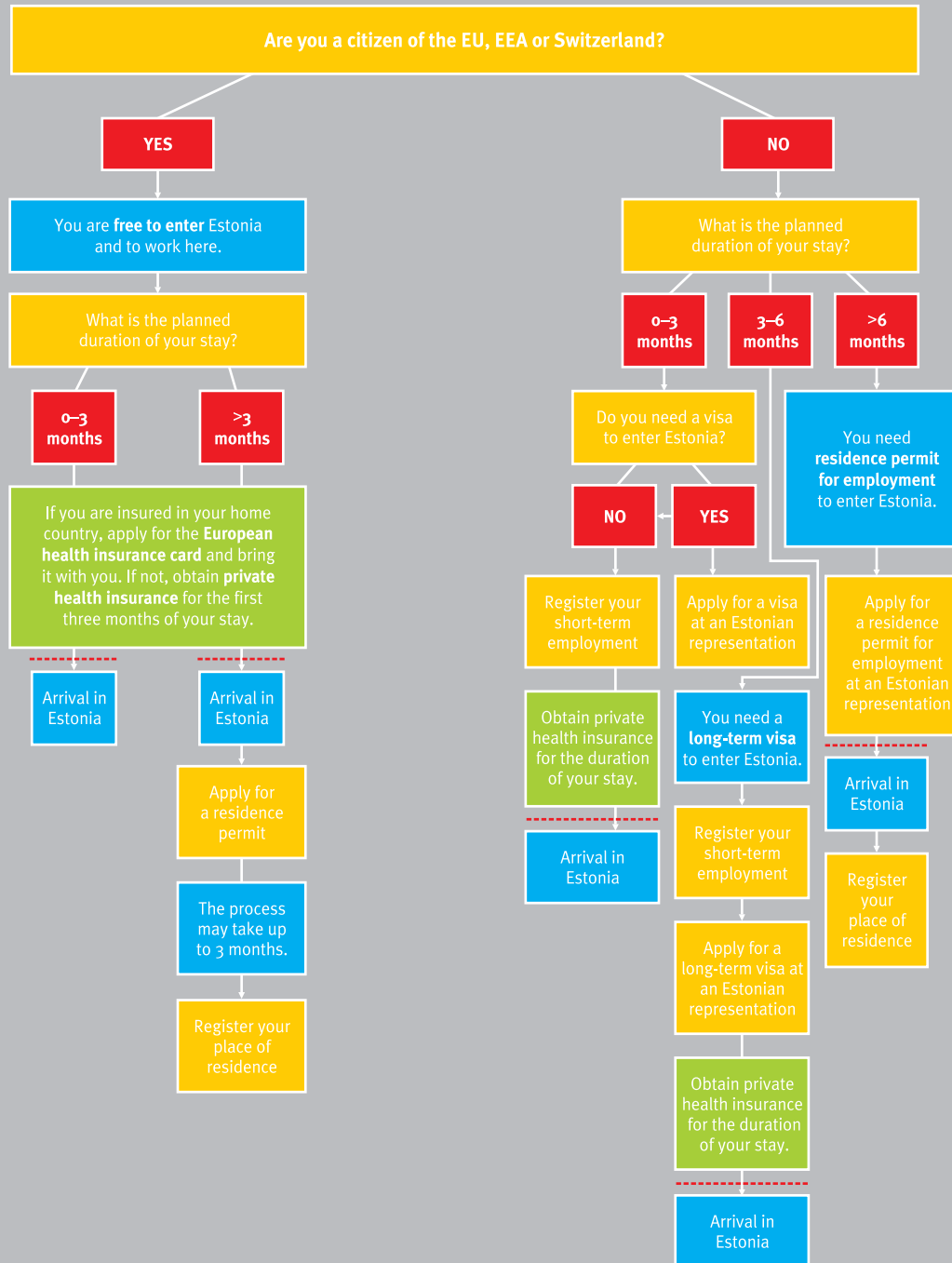
RMK. State Forests <http://www.rmkk.ee/>

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

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



Road-map for coming to Estonia











smartEstonia.ee

Research and study opportunities in Estonia