

***ESTONIA'S FOURTH REPORT
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
COUNCIL OF EUROPE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION
FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES***

2014

Introduction

The Republic of Estonia signed the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (hereinafter the *Framework Convention*) on 2 February 1995 and it entered into force in respect of Estonia on 1 February 1998.

Estonia's third report was submitted on 4 April 2010 and recommendations arising from that report have been addressed in this present report. The Council of Europe Advisory Committee (hereinafter the *Advisory Committee*) delegation was on a visit to Estonia from 14 to 17 September 2010. The Committee met with the representatives of the Government and NGOs with the aim to obtain information about the implementation of the requirements of the Convention in Estonia. The opinion of the Advisory Committee in respect of Estonia was adopted on 1 April 2010. The Council of Europe Committee of Ministers (hereinafter the *Committee of Ministers*) passed the decision on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in Estonia on 13 June 2012.

Coordinating the implementation of basic principles of population policy, analysing the population data and commissioning demographic surveys lie within the administrative area of the Ministry of Social Affairs in Estonia. Integration policy related tasks, including creating conditions for the development of cultural life of national minorities and their integration into Estonian society, lie within the competence of the Ministry of Culture.

According to the declaration made at the time of ratifying the Framework Convention, Estonia only considers ethnic groups whose members are Estonian citizens to be national minorities within the meaning of the Convention. The declaration has been reflected in detail in the second report of Estonia, and the Republic of Estonia confirms that the wider definition still applies in practice and that the rights set out in the Convention are available for all national minorities residing in Estonia.

The report covers legislative, administrative and other measures taken to ensure the rights established under the Framework Convention.

Following ministries contributed to drawing up the report: the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Also the Chancellor of Justice of the Republic of Estonia and the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner delivered their opinions. In addition, all the umbrella organisations of national minorities and NGOs dealing with human rights were involved in drawing up the report. Feedback was provided by one of them—the Estonian Institute of Human Rights.

The report covers the period 2010–2013. Statistics are presented as at 2011, 2012 or 2013, depending on availability.

I Practical measures taken at the national level for introducing the third reporting cycle and the Framework Convention

The Estonian Government highly appreciates the dialogue with the Advisory Committee and continues to make efforts to inform the public about the rights and duties under the Convention. The Government believes that information can best be provided through specific activities. The state integration policy is enshrined in the Estonian Integration Plan for 2014–2020. The plan is very important for guaranteeing the rights under the Framework Convention through promoting common understanding and multiculturalism.

The decision of the Committee of Ministers, the Advisory Committee's opinion and the Government's comments are available on the homepage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in both Estonian and English. Following the example of other countries, the Government published the Advisory Committee's opinion with comments before the adoption of the relevant decision by the Committee of Ministers.

The Framework Convention has been published in both Estonian and English on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the State Gazette (*Riigi Teataja*).

II Implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee of Ministers in its decision: Implementation of the provisions of the Convention Article by Article

Article 2

The provisions of this framework Convention shall be applied in good faith, in a spirit of understanding and tolerance and in conformity with the principles of good neighbourliness, friendly relations and co-operation between States.

As an international legal act, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities is an inseparable part of the Estonian legal system pursuant to Section 3 of the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia.

There are several important international organisations in the world shaping and analysing, inter alia, issues pertaining to cultural policy (for example, UNESCO, the European Union, including the Agency for Fundamental Rights, the European Commission, and co-operation organisations of the Nordic and Baltic countries, etc.). Estonia contributes to the activities of these organisations on equal bases with other countries and continues to value principles that uphold equal treatment and culture irrespective of the size of its country of origin or other characteristics. It is important that cultural policy decisions of Estonia value obligations of international agreements and conformity with the European Union (EU) law and international conventions.

Protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities is part of the international protection of human rights, and as such, a priority of the Republic of Estonia. Protection of the rights of minorities is an endless process. The Republic of Estonia attaches importance to mutual good-neighbourly relations with ethnic motherlands, to co-operation within the EU, and to active participation in regional as well as international organisations.

In 2006 Estonia acceded the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Estonia makes voluntarily regular contributions to the international fund of the convention. Also a national commission for the implementation of the conventions has been established.

In 2003 Estonia acceded the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Estonia has been active in implementing the convention. In 2004-2008 Estonia was elected for the first time to the UNESCO structures as the member of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The implementation is coordinated by the Chamber of Intangible Heritage in the Estonian Folk Culture Development and Training Centre. In 2010 the Estonian Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage was established, managed by the Chamber. All communities, regardless of their size, location or ethnic origin, can present their living heritage in text, sound or images in the Inventory by an online-solution.

Estonia has entered into cultural co-operation agreements with over 40 countries around the world. Co-operation agreements and programmes allow developing and supporting bilateral co-operation with foreign countries and their cultural authorities. Often, co-operation is mediated by embassies with the active participation of the Ministries of Culture of the two countries. As a rule, said programmes also cover cultural co-operation with organisations of national minorities of Estonia and its contract partners. During the reporting period, the Republic of Estonia concluded or renewed its cultural co-operation programmes with Belgium (Flanders and Wallonia), Georgia, China, Israel, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Hungary and Russia.

Article 3

1. Every person belonging to a national minority shall have the right freely to choose to be treated or not to be treated as such and no disadvantage shall result from this choice or from the exercise of the rights which are connected to that choice.

2. Persons belonging to national minorities may exercise the rights and enjoy the freedoms flowing from the principles enshrined in the present framework Convention individually as well as in community with others.

Gathering of statistical data is the responsibility of Statistics Estonia. According to the census of population carried out in 2011, populations of foreign origin¹ form 22.6% of the Estonian population. Estonia is the country of residence for representatives of over 190 nationalities, which is approximately 31% of the entire population according to the census of 2011. Citizens of the Russian Federation make up the highest percentage of citizens of other countries—93,267 persons, followed by citizens of Ukraine—5,770 persons. As regards EU citizens, these are mostly citizens of Finland living in Estonia—5,721, followed by citizens of Latvia—3,294, of Germany—2,005, and of Lithuania—1,979.²

A question about national origin was included in the questionnaire of the 2011 census. The questionnaire together with explanations (also an electronic version was available) was in Estonian, English and Russian. Estonia respects the right of national minorities to self-determination. It is not required to answer the question about national origin. If basic information includes only one or two representatives of certain national origin, Statistics Estonia publishes this information under “other national origin” to avoid the possible identification of the persons.

Principles and requirements ensuing from the Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council extend to information concerning nationality. Although according to the Personal Data Protection Act data revealing ethnic or racial origin are deemed sensitive personal data, legal instruments do not preclude the gathering of such data in general. All surveys commissioned by the Government proceed from the requirement that personal data may only be processed in the course

¹ 15 to 74-year-old permanent Estonian residents of foreign origin whose both parents were born in a foreign country.

² According to data as of 01.03.2014.

of the performance of public duties in order to perform obligations prescribed by law, an international agreement or directly applicable legislation of the Council of the European Union or the European Commission, and processing thereof for other purposes is permitted only with the consent of the data subject.

Statistics Estonia and the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund gather statistical data which allow making more efficacious political decisions about measures intended for a specific target group. Moreover, governmental authorities have commissioned specific surveys in co-operation with national minority groups with the aim of having a constant adequate overview of their needs and requirements.

Article 4

1. The Parties undertake to guarantee to persons belonging to national minorities the right of equality before the law and of equal protection of the law. In this respect, any discrimination based on belonging to a national minority shall be prohibited.

2. The Parties undertake to adopt, where necessary, adequate measures in order to promote, in all areas of economic, social, political and cultural life, full and effective equality between persons belonging to a national minority and those belonging to the majority. In this respect, they shall take due account of the specific conditions of the persons belonging to national minorities.

3. The measures adopted in accordance with paragraph 2 shall not be considered to be an act of discrimination.

The Government is of the opinion that the right of national minorities to equality is guaranteed by applicable legislation. No significant changes have been made to the legislation within the reporting period.

According to subsection 9 (1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia, all persons staying in Estonia are equal before the law, and § 12 of the Constitution provides for prohibition on discrimination. With the Equal Treatment Act (2008) Estonia has transposed into national law EU Directives 2000/78/EC and 2000/43/EC establishing a general framework of equal treatment. The objective of the Act is to ensure the protection of persons against discrimination on grounds of nationality (ethnic origin), race, colour, religion or other beliefs, age, disability or sexual orientation. The Act does not concern racial discrimination, which lies within the scope of application of the Gender Equality Act. Prohibition on discrimination and duty to promote equal treatment are included in the Employment Contracts Act (§ 3) and in the Public Service Act (§ 13). Also the Penal Code enshrines provisions related to discrimination, setting out criminal liability for certain violations. The most important relevant provisions of the Code deal with the prohibition on incitement of hatred and on violation of equality.

At present, amendments to the Penal Code are being drafted. In respect of hate crimes the objective is to bring the Estonian penal law into conformity with the requirements of the EU Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia as regards incitement to hatred and considering hatred motivation as an aggravating circumstance for every criminal offence. Therefore, such an amendment of the Penal Code is definitely significant in increasing legal certainty.

In the case of a suspicion of discrimination it is possible to contact the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner for assistance and counselling. In practice, discrimination disputes are resolved by a court or a labour dispute committee. Discrimination disputes are resolved by the Chancellor of Justice by way of conciliation procedures.

There have not been many court cases or labour disputes in Estonia arising from racial or ethnic origin. Also the number of complaints filed with the Commissioner in connection with discrimination on the grounds of race, nationality or ethnic origin is relatively small. In 2010 two complaints were filed and the Commissioner conducted an investigation procedure for one of them, finding that the complainant had been discriminated against on the grounds of nationality. In 2011 six complaints were filed; two of them were investigated and on both occasions the Commissioner found that the complainant had been discriminated against on the grounds of nationality. In 2012 five complaints were filed; one of them was investigated but the Commissioner did not find that the complainant had been discriminated against on the grounds of nationality. One applicant was referred to a labour dispute committee, who failed to settle the matter of discrimination in its decision. In 2013 four complaints were filed, one of them was resolved by a finding of discrimination on the grounds of nationality.

Coordination of national activities relating to equal treatment and non-discrimination is the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs. The Gender Equality Department of the Ministry of Social Affairs also has the responsibility to shape the equal treatment policy. To ensure that legislation governing non-discrimination is better implemented, the department has focused on raising public awareness, above all, through a project “Diversity Enriches”³ carried out in the framework of the EU programme for Employment and Social Solidarity—PROGRESS. To utilise funds of the EU PROGRESS programme, the Gender Equality Department coordinates a non-discrimination working group, the input of whose members is taken into account in setting the national priorities for each year in the field of equal treatment.

The project “Diversity Enriches” has been carried out by the Tallinn Law School of the University of Technology as of 2010, co-financed and coordinated by the Ministry of Social Affairs. Through various activities the project aims to raise awareness of all characteristics of discrimination specified in the Equal Treatment Act, inter alia, discrimination on the grounds of nationality, race and ethnic origin.

The Committee of Ministers recommends providing adequate financial and human resources to the Office of the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner and ensuring that awareness of its responsibilities is raised among society at large and relevant public services throughout the country.

The Office of the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner is financed from the state budget and the allocations have been consistently increased through the years. In addition, on 30 October 2012 the Kingdom of Norway approved the funding from the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for an Estonian programme dealing with promotion of gender equality and balance between work and family life for 2009–2014. The Ministry of Social Affairs, the programme operator, set out in the application that as a pre-defined project (in the amount of 700,000 euros), the activity of the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner will also be funded from the programme. Estonia co-finances the project to the extent of 15% of the project budget. Although the planned activities within the project are mainly the promotion of gender equality and in-depth increase of gender equality, grounds for discrimination other than sex have also been addressed to a certain extent in the context of multiple discrimination. The Commissioner project lasts until the end of 2015. Within the framework of the project, the Office of the Commissioner organises legal counselling in counties throughout Estonia (one counselling in every county each year from 2013 to 2015) in the course of which legal advice is also provided to those who suspect that they have been

³ Website of the project: <http://erinevus-rikastab.ttu.ee/>

discriminated against on the grounds of their nationality. Advocates, employees of the Labour Inspectorate and labour dispute committees as well as employers will receive training on the requirements of the Gender Equality Act and Equal Treatment Act.

Various development plans in the field of integration, education, culture and social life along with set strategic objectives pay attention to supporting people with different language and cultural background in their participation in social life irrespective of their citizenship and ethnic origin. To an achieve active and efficient ability to cope in social life, long-term residents of foreign origin and new immigrants are supported in acquiring the official language, in adapting to society and in acquiring citizenship with the aim of decreasing differences in participation in the labour market and civil society, but also with the aim of promoting ties to other members of society and the state. Activities of various policy areas support the achievement of the objectives of the field of integration.

Two national programmes in the field of integration have been carried out in Estonia: “Integration in Estonian Society 2000–2007” and “Estonian Integration Plan for 2008–2013”. A new development plan of the area “Integrating Estonia 2020” is being prepared and it will be presented to the Government of the Republic for approval during 2014.

The priority of integration activities is to support the active participation of people with different language and cultural backgrounds in forming a socially coherent society, and the establishment of the common state identity of Estonia, which ensures peoples’ sense of connection with the state and other members of society, supports the economic growth potential and stability of the state. Estonia values multicultural society and appreciation thereof, and ensures everyone’s right to maintain their national identity and at the same time avoid national and cultural encapsulation caused by regional peculiarities or social exclusion in the case of the existing population as well as new immigrants. Special attention is paid to communication with the target groups and accounting for ethno-cultural peculiarities. Residents of Estonia are guaranteed possibilities to speak other languages, develop various national cultures, and assert themselves by participating in the economic, social, political and cultural life of society, and to support the belonging of every permanent resident to Estonian society through sharing common values and having command of the official language.

The development plan “Estonian Integration Plan for 2008–2013” was based on the principles enshrined in the Framework Convention, focusing on the individual rights of persons. The integration plan sets as an objective a target group-based approach and awareness of integration as a multilateral process.

The activities of the Integration Plan for 2008–2013 were divided as follows: educational and cultural integration; social and economic integration; legal and political integration; and management and monitoring activities of the development plan.

The general objective in the field of education and culture is to guarantee to all residents of Estonia equal opportunities in acquiring education within the integral education system and conditions for preserving their language and culture. Educational integration focuses on students by supporting the acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary to function in Estonian society, including learning the Estonian language and how to manage in a multicultural environment.

The objective of cultural integration is to support national minorities in acquiring and preserving their mother tongue and culture in Estonia, to favour civil activity and contacts between people of different citizenships and cultural backgrounds, and also to promote a common cultural and information space as well as to introduce the cultural diversity of Estonian residents to Estonians

and the Estonian culture to national minorities living in Estonia. The right of every person to their native language culture is acknowledged. In the field of culture, support is provided to activities that favour the work of cultural societies of national minorities, the involvement of representatives of different nationalities in Estonian cultural life, and the introduction of Estonian cultural space. In the field of culture, priority is given to tightening contacts between Estonians and other nationalities as well as to supporting joint activities.

Social and economic integration aims to ensure that all residents of Estonia have equal opportunities for economic self-assertion and social success irrespective of their nationality, native language and place of residence.

Legal and political integration measures guarantee to all Estonian residents on the basis of the law equal opportunities for self-assertion in social and political life irrespective of their nationality and native language. Efforts are made to increase mutual tolerance between ethnic and cultural groups, to form the common state identity of Estonia, and to promote the naturalisation process.

To implement the Integration Plan the Government of the Republic approved implementation plans for 2008–2010 and 2011–2013⁴. Volumes of implementation plans of the Estonian Integration Plan for 2008–2013 applicable during the reporting period by corresponding years:

| Year | Ministry of Culture / mln euros | Ministry of Education and Research / mln euros | Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund / mln euros | Total / mln euros |
|-------------------|--|---|---|--------------------------|
| 2010 | 2.91 | 4.13 | 0.42 | 7.46 |
| 2011 | 2.85 | 3.07 | 0.7 | 6.62 |
| 2012 | 3.07 | 2.76 | 1.92 | 7.75 |
| 2013 ⁵ | 3.56 | 2.39 | 1.08 | 7.03 |
| Total | 12.39 | 12.35 | 4.12 | 28.86 |

Volumes of implementation plans of the Estonian Integration Plan for 2008–2013 applicable during the reporting period by corresponding areas:

| Year | Educational and cultural | Social and economic | Legal and political | Management and monitoring of Integration Plan |
|-------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| 2010 | 53% | 21% | 10% | 16% |
| 2011 | 47% | 20% | 16% | 17% |
| 2012 | 32% | 36% | 15% | 17% |
| 2013 | 34% | 28% | 21% | 17% |

In 2010 the Institute of International and Social Studies of Tallinn University conducted a study “2010 Monitoring of the Achievement of the Objectives of the Estonian Integration Plan”, which gathered data on the outcome of the activities of the Integration Plan for 2008–2009. The survey revealed that contacts between persons of different nationality living in Estonia had become more frequent compared to 2008, persons whose mother tongue is other than Estonian had become more

⁴ http://www.kul.ee/webeditor/files/ELK_rakendusplaan_2011-13.pdf

⁵ Forecast on the basis of the 2013 Implementation Plan of the Estonian Integration Plan for 2008–2013.

proficient in the Estonian language, and national minorities did not deem closer communication with Estonians as a threat to their cultural peculiarity. Attitude toward contact with people of other nationalities is prevalingly positive or neutral among Estonians and the Russian-speaking population. The overwhelming majority of Russian-speaking residents (83%) and Estonians (72%) do not agree with the statement that close communication between people of different nationalities could lead to the disappearance of the cultural peculiarity of their nationality. The Estonian language proficiency of Russian-speaking people improved and Estonians started to value Russian language proficiency more than so far.

In March 2012 the findings of the 2011 Estonian Society Integration Monitoring (hereinafter the EIM) prepared by the Political Research Centre Praxis, TNS Emor and the researchers of the University of Tartu were published. The study included the areas of nationality relations and identity, labour market, education, values and political preferences, participation and media consumption, and also addressed problems of adaptation encountered by new immigrants. The study aimed to gather comparative data, monitor processes happening in society, and map the most important integration areas and target groups.

Residents of Estonia with undetermined citizenship have become increasingly interested in applying for Estonian citizenship. Estonians have started to regard the involvement of other nationalities more positively. 66% of Estonian-speaking respondents agreed with the statement that “awareness of the opinion of the Russian-speaking population should be greater and it should be taken into account more because they are part of Estonian society”.

One of the main conclusions drawn from the study was that people who have immigrated to Estonia at different times and their descendants cannot be deemed one single group for the purposes of the integration policy. The study pointed out several target groups and stakeholders whose peculiarity had not been considered enough in the current integration process. The findings of the study served as a basis for a proposal to prepare a new development plan.

In October 2012 the Government approved a proposal of the Minister of Culture to prepare for the period 2014–2020 a new integration development plan “Integrating Estonia 2020”. The new development plan “Integrating Estonia 2020” is based on the multicultural nature of Estonian society and long-term and new challenges related thereto, and on the need for a more flexible approach upon planning and carrying out activities. In addition to the institutional emphasis of integration—citizenship, official language, and an integral education system—the new development plan focuses more on the social measures of the integration process. EU membership, which encourages immigration and emigration, has indicated a need to pay even greater attention to new immigrants, their ability to adapt and integrate further. The new development plan supports three wider courses of action: 1) increasing the openness of the entire society and shaping pro-integration attitudes; 2) continued support to long-term residents of foreign origin who have made little progress in integrating; 3) contributing to new immigrants’ ability to adapt and integrate.

In Estonia everyone has the constitutional right to form societies, associations and clubs, protect their interests and express common beliefs. The applicable Non-profit Associations Act establishes rights and opportunities for cultural activities. The Non-profit Associations Act of the Republic of Estonia does not restrict the right to belong to directing bodies of associations based on citizenship or nationality. § 26 of the Non-profit Associations Act and § 17 of the Foundations Act provide that the residence of at least one-half of the members of the management board must be in Estonia or another Member State of the European Economic Area or in Switzerland.

Persons belonging to German, Russian, Swedish and Jewish national minorities, and persons of national minorities with a population of over 3000 may establish cultural autonomy bodies of national minorities. Activities described in the National Minorities Cultural Autonomy Act: organisation of studies in the mother tongue, establishment of cultural institutions of national minorities, organisation of cultural events, establishment of foundations and grant of stipends and awards for promoting the culture and education of national minorities, are equally available for those national minorities who have no cultural autonomy or to whom the Act does not apply. Cultural autonomy is an additional opportunity for cultural self-determination. In Estonia, the Finns and the Swedes have cultural autonomy and they have formed their own cultural autonomy body.

The Committee of Ministers recommends ensuring that more inter-cultural elements are introduced in the school curricula and expanding opportunities for bilingual education to increase opportunities for contacts between the ethnic Estonian and non-Estonian communities.

Estonia is one of the few EU member states whose education system includes publicly financed schools that provide an education in languages other than the official state language. Russian-language education is available in public and private schools at all levels—preschool, basic, and secondary—as well as in vocational schools and in some higher education institutions. A school will organise language and cultural teaching for students acquiring basic education whose native language is not the language of instruction, provided that no fewer than ten students with the same native language or with the same language of household communication request it (subsection 21 (5) of the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act). Organisation of language and cultural teaching is regulated by the Government of the Republic regulation No. 116 of 19.08.2010. The regulation also specifies a situation where fewer than ten applications are filed for the organisation of language and cultural teaching. In such a case the organisation of language and cultural teaching is decided by the school in cooperation with the rural municipality or city government (subsection 3 (2) of the regulation). Unfortunately, this opportunity is not widely taken advantage of. There are several reasons for it: representatives of national minorities are scattered around, children of members of cultural societies do not study in the same school and it is difficult to gather a requisite number of students in one specific region to create the possibilities for taking an elective subject, and also there are not enough national culture teachers who would meet the requirements for qualification. That is why people prefer to study their native language unofficially, in Sunday schools of national cultural societies.

The development and preservation of the language and culture of ethnic groups are looked out for in Estonia by relevant national culture societies and Sunday schools that have always been a means to support national culture and native language. For this reason the Ministry of Education and Research is constantly engaged in facilitating the work of Sunday schools. Compared to the previous reporting period, the number of Sunday schools of national cultural societies has doubled. In 2010 there were 18 Sunday schools, now there are nearly forty. The term Sunday school has not been defined in the Estonian legislation, but it has been mentioned in the Education Act as an institution offering additional education. Although sometimes the term Sunday school is thought to refer to a school within a church, the owner of a Sunday school is actually a national cultural society and the objectives of the school prescribed in its statutes are, above all, related to the teaching of native language and culture.

Sunday schools of national cultural societies are required to be registered and hold an education licence because this gives the Sunday school a chance to be part of the education system and it also supports the principle of equality. If a Sunday school wishes to participate in project competitions and apply for benefits on the same grounds as schools which hold an education licence, then it must be applied for on the same grounds. At the same time, the existence of an education licence

increases the opportunities of Sunday schools because a registered Sunday school can apply to the local government or the multicultural education unit of the Integration Foundation (formerly the Centre for Educational Programmes) for extra funds for developing its activities. A national cultural society which has founded a Sunday school and been issued an education licence becomes an equal partner to the state. With the increase in the number of Sunday schools the Integration Foundation deemed it necessary to conduct a study on the current situation of Sunday schools, which was completed in 2012. The study serves as an important basis for further activities which will make the national minorities' language and cultural teaching more efficient. All Sunday schools of national cultural societies which hold an education licence have had the opportunity to apply, within the framework of a project competition, for support for the in-service training of Sunday school teachers in their native country. Also the national minorities themselves have the possibility to organise language-related preparation of teachers under agreements entered into with their native countries.

Information concerning national schools can be found at <http://www.rahvuskool.ee/>, where information concerning Sunday schools is presented in Estonian, English and Russian. Also the NGO, Association of Teachers of Sunday Schools of National Minorities has been founded, and its objective is to found Sunday schools and organise training courses for Sunday school teachers.

The Advisory Committee still holds that the non-availability of free Estonian language classes to prepare for the citizenship examination is an important reason for the decrease in naturalisations of adults, particularly the elderly.

As of this year it is also possible to take the citizenship examination (examination on the knowledge of the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia and the Citizenship Act) through electronic means. The electronic examination takes up less time in administration and waiting. And the applicants are informed of their result immediately.

The Foundation Innove (previously the National Examination and Qualification Centre) has also voluntarily assumed the obligation to organise the citizenship examination twice a year in Valga, Rakvere and Pärnu beside the regular cities (Tallinn, Narva, Jõhvi, and Tartu).

The Integration and Migration Foundation Our People coordinates the organisation of free preparation courses for the citizenship examination as well as free language courses. As of 2006 when the courses were first taught, nearly 7,000 people have attended the preparation courses for the examination on the knowledge of the Constitution and the Citizenship Act and over 2,000 people have attended the free Estonian language courses. The free Estonian language courses allow students to reach the language level B1, which is a prerequisite for applying for citizenship, but also Estonian language communication courses that develop active language proficiency are offered. In 2012 and 2013 the courses were aimed at unemployed persons and persons with undetermined citizenship with lesser means and citizens of third countries, since in many cases they are running short of their own funds to attend the courses.

From 2011 to 2013 the Foundation Our People compensated for language learning expenses to those who passed the Estonian language examination. Language learning expenses were compensated for within the framework of action "Compensation for Language Learning Expenses" of the "Language Learning Development Programme 2011–2013" funded from the European Social Fund. In 2013, after passing the Estonian language proficiency examination adults received a single compensation for language learning expenses in the amount of up to 320 euros for each proficiency examination passed. The level of proficiency acquired had to be higher than the lowest level. From January to September 2013 compensation was paid on 638 occasions at a total amount of nearly

178,000 euros.

Article 5

1. The Parties undertake to promote the conditions necessary for persons belonging to national minorities to maintain and develop their culture, and to preserve the essential elements of their identity, namely their religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage.

2. Without prejudice to measures taken in pursuance of their general integration policy, the Parties shall refrain from policies or practices aimed at assimilation of persons belonging to national minorities against their will and shall protect these persons from any action aimed at such assimilation.

Estonia has not set any restrictions based on nationality, race or other characteristics on participation in cultural life or in creating culture. All associations and collective bodies of national minorities may apply for subsidies on grounds equal to those of Estonian cultural associations. The state provides, through various programmes, additional funding to the activities of cultural associations of national minorities to help them preserve their language, traditions and cultural heritage. The cultural activities of national minorities continue to be supported by the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education and Research, the Foundation Our People, the Folk Culture Centre, the Cultural Endowment of Estonia, the Council of Gambling Tax, the National Foundation of Civil Society, and local governments. Subsidies for the cultural activities of national minorities also come from EU Structural Funds.

Since the year 1991 the preservation of the cultural peculiarities and languages of national minorities living in Estonia has been one of the foundations of the policy aimed at national minorities living in Estonia.

The state values the preservation of the authentic cultural traditions of national minorities through various regional cultural programmes. The preservation of national cultures is contributed to by county structures in the form of folk festivals, cultural organisations and the network of folk curators. This ensures a direct contact and co-operation with those who carry on traditions as well as with ethnic groups and individuals.

In 2014 there are 300 cultural societies of national minorities and 19 umbrella organisations in Estonia, and two national minorities have cultural autonomy. The umbrella organisations of national minorities are divided into mono-ethnic organisations (for example, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Russian, Finnish, Swedish, etc.) and multicultural organisations which include representatives of different nationalities.

The cultural societies of national minorities are granted both operating and project subsidies for achieving their objectives, for preserving and introducing their ethnic culture, and for organising song and dance festivals, other festivals, Sunday schools and study camps. An Internet portal www.etnoweb.ee was created in 2010 for providing information on the activities of cultural societies of national minorities. Several traditional cultural festivals of national minorities have become part of the Estonian cultural landscape over the years. Such as the Russian Old Believers' cultural festival *Peipus*, the Russian cultural festival *Slavic Wreath*, the international Orthodoxy religious music festival *Credo*, the theatre festival *Golden Mask*, the Jewish cultural festival *Ariel*, and the Ukrainian cultural festival *Baltic Trembita* which unites Ukrainians living in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, to name a few.

Integration programmes support the involvement of representatives of different nationalities in Estonian cultural life, the expansion of the common information space of the Estonian-speaking and

Russian-speaking population, and the establishment of contacts between Estonians and other nationalities and their joint activities.

The Ministry of Culture is carrying out a programme relating to cultural associations of national minorities, whereby it supports various projects of cultural societies of national minorities in preserving and introducing their ethnic culture, and organising song and dance festivals, other festivals, study camps, etc.

The operating subsidies programme (basic funding) aimed at umbrella organisations of cultural societies of national minorities is coordinated by the Foundation Our People. The programme grants subsidies to umbrella organisations of national minorities which have proven their actual activity and administrative capability beforehand.

The purpose of the basic funding is to support the everyday activities of societies and associations engaged in preserving and developing the national culture of national minorities, to preserve and introduce the cultural heritage of national minorities, and to raise awareness of a multicultural Estonia. The criteria for the basic funding of cultural societies of national minorities are established and developed in consultation with the target group, and development activities and trainings are also offered.

Operating subsidies from the state budget have constantly increased: 159,770 euros in 2003, 204,517 euros in 2006, 314,102 euros in 2010, and 333,346 euros in 2013.

Through regional cultural programmes Estonia supports the preservation of the culture of historic national minorities. To support and introduce the historic Russian culture a Peipsiveere cultural programme 2009–2012 and 2013–2016 has been initiated, and it aims to ensure the survival of the coastal villages alongside Lake Peipus, above all, of the cultural space of the Russian Old Believers. A virtual database⁶ has been created for the said purpose. The programme enables the organisation of festivals, trainings which introduce traditions, cultural summer camps for children, and a special programme introducing the local cultural heritage within the school curriculum. Subsidies granted to the Russian cultural societies of the region amount to 86% of the programme on average.

The Ministry of Culture supports on a regular basis the national minorities' professional and hobby theatres, concert organisations and agencies, museums, publishing houses, literary events, and festivals. The State Russian Drama Theatre of Estonia located in Tallinn continues to receive allocations from the state budget. There is the Youth Studio of the Russian Drama Theatre, the Russian Theatre School, and the Russian Youth Theatre operating in Tallinn, and the Tallinn Russian Cultural Centre houses the Russian Amateur Theatre Association in Estonia. Operating subsidies from the Ministry of Culture are received by the Russian-language studio theatre Ilmarine in Narva and the theatre Melnitsa (Windmill) operating in Jõhvi, Ida-Viru County. The largest theatre festival held in Russian in Estonia is the *Golden Mask*, which took place for the ninth time in 2013.

Estonian-Russian artists associations are active in Tallinn and in Ida-Viru County. Municipal music and art schools offer pupils music and art lessons in Russian.

The programme “Preservation and Development of Churches” for 2003–2013 and 2014–2018, coordinated by the National Heritage Board, supports the restoration of churches of all

⁶ www.starover.eu

denominations. The objective of the programme is to offer state support for the preservation of church buildings and items of cultural value therein, and to ensure the sustainable use and openness of buildings of cultural value. The programme supports the renovation of churches of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church, the Estonian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate, and the Old Believers. The amount of subsidies allocated to the last three confessions was 39.4% of the entire programme budget in 2011, 38.9% in 2012 and 42.1% in 2013.

The local government budget provides funds to the Russian Museum Foundation and the Russian Cultural Centre in Tallinn. From 2011 to 2012 the Council of Gambling Tax allocated funds to NGO Russian Museum for taking inventory of its art collection.

There are several museums and visiting centres located in local governments alongside Lake Peipus, which operate with the support of the local governments and which introduce the history and culture of the Old Believers: Kolkja Russian Old Believers Museum, Varnja Living History Museum, and Mustvee Old Believers Regional Studies Museum.

There is a Coastal Swedes Museum in Haapsalu, West Estonia, which is the traditional habitat of the Swedes. In Tallinn there is an Estonian Jewish Museum and a Ukrainian Cultural Centre. The preservation of the cultural heritage of Baltic German rural architecture is supported through the Manor Schools State Programme for 2001–2011 and 2012–2016. The Estonian National Museum located in Tartu acts as an ethnography museum and records the historic and cultural heritage of the national minorities living in Estonia.

Article 6

1. The Parties shall encourage a spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue and take effective measures to promote mutual respect and understanding and co-operation among all persons living on their territory, irrespective of those persons' ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, in particular in the fields of education, culture and the media.

2. The Parties undertake to take appropriate measures to protect persons who may be subject to threats or acts of discrimination, hostility or violence as a result of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity.

By ratifying the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities Estonia has assumed the responsibility “to encourage a spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue, and to promote mutual respect and understanding and co-operation among all persons living in the state, irrespective of those persons' ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, in particular in the fields of education, culture and the media”. These principles are also included in the national integration programmes which Estonia has been implementing as of the year 2000.

The integration programmes have proceeded from the presumption that integration into society is a two-way process based on democratic participation and proceeds, on one hand, from respect towards the language, cultural traditions and values of the native people by the national minorities and new settlers living here, and on the other hand, the native people's respect and tolerance towards the cultural peculiarities of the national minorities.

Estonia deems the integration of the population to be a matter of national importance. Integration is a long process the ultimate aim of which is a culturally diverse society with a permanent population that has a strong identity of the Republic of Estonia, shares common democratic values and uses the Estonian language as the language of communication in the public sphere, and where everyone can

realise their potential and feel safe, and participate in the economic, social, political and cultural life of the society.

As of June 2009 the body liable for the policy aimed at national minorities and matters of integration is the Ministry of Culture.⁷ The strategic management of the Integration Plan involves collegial bodies, the steering committee and steering group of the Integration Plan, comprising representatives of various ministries and departments.

The measures prioritised by the Government of the Republic from 2011 to 2013 within the framework of the Estonian Integration Plan for 2008–2013 were the following: making the learning of the Estonian language more efficient; advancing the mutual co-operation between young people who have different mother tongues, including supporting career counselling for young people; favouring civic associations to increase the involvement and activeness of people who have different mother tongues in Estonian society; and supporting the development of the common Estonian information environment. In preparing the implementation plan which describes the priorities, activities and financial resources, studies were conducted, experiences gained during previous periods were mapped, topical discussion seminars were held, and three regional round tables were organised.

The new development plan “Integrating Estonia 2020” supports as the priority course of action the increase of the openness of the entire society and the forming of pro-integration attitudes. Co-operation is carried out with advisory bodies of national minorities: the Council of National Minorities, the Round Table of National Minorities of the County Governor of the Ida-Viru County, and the Home Peace Forum in Tallinn.

Programmes which support co-operation between civic associations of different nations have been constantly carried out within the framework of integration programmes. Web portal www.etnoweb.ee introduces cultural events of national minorities in Estonia, and web portal <http://kultuur.info/> provides information concerning all cultural events in Estonia.

Greater attention during the reporting period was paid to the Roma and their history and culture. In the autumn of 2013 the state supported the setting up of a travelling exhibition about the Roma in Estonia, which is accompanied by an educational programme “By talking about differences in society we grow tolerance“. The exhibition introduces the history, everyday life and contemporary lifestyle of the Roma in Estonia. One of the goals of the exhibition is to break the stereotype image of the Roma and to grow tolerance.

Inter-cultural dialogue and establishment of contacts between persons of different ethnic groups is supported and favoured by a common language of communication. Research indicates that the Estonian language proficiency of the Russian-speaking population has continued to improve, whereas Estonians have become increasingly interested in learning Russian. The European Social Fund has helped to provide various flexible language learning opportunities to adults whose mother tongue is different from the official language, so that they could acquire the Estonian language at a level necessary for everyday communication and official business. Co-operation with local governments has allowed carrying out programmes for mediation of labour for officials of the Ida-Viru County whose Estonian language proficiency is lacking, and educational programmes in school curricula introducing cultural diversity, as well as collaboration projects and events for young people. An adaptation programme for new immigrants, the system of support persons, and

⁷ Government of the Republic order No. 236 of 11 June 2009.

preparation courses for the Estonian language and citizenship examinations were developed and are applied with the support of the European Programme for the Integration of Third-country Nationals.

Activities of priority in the field of culture are aimed at increasing contact between Estonians and other nationalities as well as their joint activities. Attention is paid to involving different nationalities in the Estonian cultural life, to introducing Estonian cultural environment, and to broadening the common information environment of the Estonians and national minorities.

The European Fund for the Integration of Third-country Nationals has allowed organising trainings and information events for journalists as well as information days for introducing the equality law. The target group for information events comprises members of professional associations and employers.

The support programmes of the Ministry of Culture and the Foundation Our People support the translation of websites and civic associations' newsletters into Russian and English, radio and television programmes, print media, and collaboration between and trainings for journalists of Estonian-language and Russian-language media channels.

Besides the Estonian Public Broadcasting (*Eesti Rahvusringhääling*, hereinafter the ERR) there are several Russian-language private television channels in Estonia, and some of the major networks broadcast Russian-language programmes in co-operation with local producers (for example, in Kohtla-Järve and Maardu). The level of information possessed by the Russian-speaking population, as assessed by them, concerning events in their home place, in Estonia and in the EU has risen. According to the 2011 Monitoring of Integration, 79% of people consider themselves well-informed of events in Estonia (the corresponding indicator in 2008 was 70%). 58% of people consider themselves well-informed of events in the EU, compared to 45% in 2008. The results of integration carried out in 2011 indicate that the media consumption of the Russian-speaking audience is changing by target groups. Although the Russian-speaking population as a whole constantly follows media channels broadcast in Russia (mostly the channel PBK), it does not mean that the information environment of the Russian-speaking population is only centred around Russia. Thanks to the increased use of the Estonian language upon following media and to opportunities to watch global television channels which have been adapted to Russians or which have Russian subtitles, the information environment of Estonia's Russian-speaking population is significantly more diversified than that of the Estonians.

In the field of audio-visual media, television programmes of the ERR, TV3+ and Kanal2 which introduce cultural diversity are worth pointing out, for example, the programme *Köögikodanikud* broadcast by the ERR from 2012 to 2013, which introduced the cuisine of national minorities living in Estonia. The regional Ida-Viru County news produced by AS TV3+ and supported by the Foundation Our People is also very popular.

The discussion groups of the development plan "Integrating Estonia 2020" held in March 2013 singled out the ERR as an important channel contributing to the establishment of a common media field. In recent years, people of non-Estonian origin have been used in commercials, television shows, the news, discussion programmes and entertainment shows significantly more, and more has also been written about their life in the Estonian-language press.

There is no law in Estonia which governs print media and publishing. Supervision over the media is exercised through media organisations. Assessments are made on the basis of the Code of Ethics for the Estonian Press. The Estonian Newspaper Association (EALL) aims at defending the common

interests and rights of newspapers, proceeding from internationally recognised principles of democratic journalism.

The Estonian Press Council established by the EALL in 2002 is a body of self-regulation which offers the opportunity to find extra-judicial solutions in cases of conflict with the media. In addition to representatives of the media the Press Council also includes persons from outside the media. The Press Council has a total of ten members.

The Press Council discusses complaints received from readers about materials published in the media. The Press Council may also be contacted by representatives of national minorities if they find that they have been portrayed in the media in a negative manner. Compared to the court, proceedings in the Press Council are speedy and free of charge. Newspapers are required to publish adverse decisions made by the Press Council. Decisions of the Press Council are to be published as they are, without any comments from the editor's office. The ERR is required to publish on air adverse decisions made by the Press Council. All decisions of the Press Council are also published on the Internet in the Press Council section of the website of the EALL.

A similar competence lies with the Council of Public Word set up in 1991, which is a labour body of the non-profit association Avalik Sõna (Public Word) according to its statute. The members of the non-profit association Avalik Sõna are the Estonian Newspaper Association, the Union of Media Educators, the Estonian Consumers' Union, the Estonian Council of Churches, the Estonian Lawyers' Association and an NGO, Media Watch, whose representatives belong to the Council of Public Word. During its existence the Council of Public Word has dealt with over 350 cases which have resulted in both adverse and supportive decisions in respect of journalists as well as publishers. Both the Press Council and the Council of Public Word proceed from the above-mentioned Code of Ethics for the Estonian Press.

Article 7

The Parties shall ensure respect for the right of every person belonging to a national minority to freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of association, freedom of expression, and freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Estonia's previous reports have given an overview of laws governing the field regulated by Article 7. In connection with amendments planned to be made to the Law Enforcement Act, there will also be changes in the legal framework of public meetings. Namely, the Public Meeting Act will be rescinded, and in the future public meetings will be governed by the Law Enforcement Act. The provisions of the Public Meeting Act referred to in Estonia's third report will remain essentially the same in the Law Enforcement Act.

The topic of freedom of religion is covered in more detail under Article 8.

Article 8

The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to manifest his or her religion or belief and to establish religious institutions, organisations and associations.

The principles of freedom of religion are guaranteed in Estonia by the Constitution, the Churches and Congregations Act and other legislation. Previous reports have provided an overview of the legislation to which no fundamental amendments have been made.

There are 10 churches, 10 associations of congregations, 75 individual congregations and 8 convents and monasteries operating in Estonia under the Churches and Congregations Act.

Religious associations are not required to report to the state the size of their membership or information concerning the nationality of their members. The figures set out in the tables hereunder concerning membership have been presented to the Religious Affairs Department of the Ministry of the Interior voluntarily following inquiry.

Table 1. Churches⁸

| Name | Members | Congregations |
|--|-----------------|----------------------|
| Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church* | approx. 25,000 | 61 |
| Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church* | approx. 180,000 | 166 |
| Estonian Christian Pentecostal Church* | approx. 4500 | 31 |
| Charismatic Episcopal Church of Estonia* | 300 | 3 |
| Estonian Charismatic Communion Church* | 503 | 3+3** |
| Estonian Methodist Church* | 1642 | 26 |
| Estonian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate* | approx. 170,000 | 35 |
| Roman Catholic Church* | approx. 6000 | 9 |
| New Apostolic Church in Estonia | 2500 | 3+15** |
| Anglo-Catholic Church in Estonia | | 3 |

Table 2. Associations of congregations

| Name | Members | Congregations |
|--|----------------|----------------------|
| Estonian Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Church* | 1589 | 20 |
| Union of Baha'i Congregations in Estonia | 150 | 5 |
| Union of Evangelical Christian and Baptist Churches of Estonia* | 6293 | 83 |
| Union of Evangelical Christian Pentecost Congregations of Estonia* | approx. 1000 | 3 |
| Union of Evangelical and Free Congregations in Estonia | approx. 1000 | 6 |
| Union of Congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses in Estonia | 4248 | 4+51** |
| Union of Estonian Christian Free Congregations | approx. 350 | 6 |
| Union of Old Believer Congregations of Estonia | approx. 15,000 | 10+1** |
| Estonian Association of Christian Congregations | | 3 |
| The House of Taara and Mother Earth People of Maavald | | 5 |

⁸ * Figures concerning the marked religious associations are presented as at 01.01.2013; figures concerning the rest as at 01.01.2012.

** On the case of the marked figures the first number indicates registered congregations holding the status of a legal person, and the other number indicates congregations not registered as wished by the religious association and not holding the status of a legal person.

Table 3. Individual congregations (not all registered congregations were asked for data)

| Name | Members | Congregations |
|--|--------------|---------------|
| Estonian St. Gregory Congregation of the Armenian Apostolic Church* | approx. 2000 | 1+3** |
| Estonian Buddhist Congregation Drikung Kagyu Ratna Shri Centre | 34 | 1 |
| Estonian Islamic Congregation | approx. 1400 | 1 |
| Jewish Religious Community of Estonia | approx. 2500 | 1 |
| Estonian Evangelical Brotherhood Congregation | 142 | 1 |
| Tallinn Congregation of “Evangelical Christians of the Apostles’ Creed” | 50 | 1 |
| Krishna Consciousness Tallinn Congregation | approx. 150 | 1 |
| Tibetan Buddhism Nyingma Estonian Congregation | less than 20 | 1 |
| Tallinn Congregation of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church | 318 | 1 |
| Estonian Congregation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints | 973 | 1+3 |

Monasteries and convents

Monastery of the Dominican Order in Tallinn
 Convent of the Order of Missionaries of Charity in Tallinn
 Convent of St. Felice da Cantalice Congregation in Ahtme
 Convent of St. Felice da Cantalice Congregation in Narva
 Convent of the Roman Catholic Church of Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Tartu
 Convent of the Bridgettine Order in Pirita
 Pühtitsa Dormition Stavropegic Convent in Kuremäe
 Holy Predecessor Skiita of Orthodox Church of Estonia in Saaremaa

The Estonian Council of Churches receives regular subsidies from the state budget. The Estonian Council of Churches uses the money received from the state budget to upkeep and maintain sacral buildings and assets of cultural value located therein, to develop the educational work done by churches, and also to introduce ecumenical morals, ethics, education and culture as well as to promote national and international cultural dialogue.

Table 4. Financing of the Estonian Council of Churches and churches and congregations from the state budget, 2010–2014.

| Year | Allocations to the Estonian Council of Churches | Allocations to other religious associations |
|------|---|---|
| 2010 | EEK 7,420,000 | EEK 3,080,000 |
| 2011 | EUR 571,684 | EUR 194,931 |
| 2012 | EUR 549,300 | EUR 146,072 |
| 2013 | EUR 549,300 | EUR 146,072 |
| 2014 | EUR 549,300 | EUR 147,000 |

As of 2014 there are 163 ministers of religion in Estonia who have been granted the right to marry people.

Article 9

1. The Parties undertake to recognise that the right to freedom of expression of every person belonging to a national minority includes freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas in the minority language, without interference by public authorities and regardless of frontiers. The Parties shall ensure, within the framework of their legal systems, that persons belonging to a national minority are not discriminated against in their access to the media.

2. Paragraph 1 shall not prevent Parties from requiring the licensing, without discrimination and based on objective criteria, of sound radio and television broadcasting, or cinema enterprises.

3. The Parties shall not hinder the creation and the use of printed media by persons belonging to national minorities. In the legal framework of sound radio and television broadcasting, they shall ensure, as far as possible, and taking into account the provisions of paragraph 1, that persons belonging to national minorities are granted the possibility of creating and using their own media.

4. In the framework of their legal systems, the Parties shall adopt adequate measures in order to facilitate access to the media for persons belonging to national minorities and in order to promote tolerance and permit cultural pluralism.

The systematic development of communication and the information environment for the share of the population whose mother tongue is other than Estonian was also a priority of the implementation plan of the Integration Plan for 2011–2013.

Compared to previous reports no significant changes concerning Article 9(1) and (2) have taken place in the Estonian legislation or in the implementation of the media policy. The report focuses on the actual developments in the Estonian media system, and more specifically on changes in the programme policy of the ERR. The freedom to receive and transmit television and radio services has been guaranteed by law. There are no restrictions on receiving or transmitting television or radio services provided by other countries.

The ratings of television channels in Estonia by different language groups show that Estonians watch mostly the channel ETV1 broadcast by the ERR and free distribution private channels Kanal 2 and TV3. The said three channels attracted 20.5%, 22% and 19.3%, respectively, of viewers among the Estonian-speaking population in December 2013. Non-Estonian viewers dedicated their time to watching Russian-language cable television channels PBK (21.9%), NTV Mir (14.0%) and RTR Planeta (13.3%), which mostly broadcast programmes produced in Russia. Practically everywhere in Estonia it is possible to subscribe to foreign channels via cable and digital television. It is hard to estimate the number of possible channels because it depends on the television package people choose and the technical means available. Estonia has not established any restrictions on transmitting foreign media channels.

According to the Estonian Public Broadcasting Act, the ERR shall transmit programmes which, within the limits of the possibilities of Public Broadcasting, meet the information needs of all sections of the population, including national minorities. The programme services and media services shall promote communication between the members of the society and social groups, the social cohesion of the society, and shall reflect different opinions and beliefs.

As we stated in the previous report, in August 2008 the ERR started the television channel ETV2. The objective of the new channel was, inter alia, to increase the proportions of programmes intended for Russian- and other language viewers and made with their participation. Special emphasis was given to programmes of information and publicity, and to representing the life of the national minorities in Estonia. Popular programmes of ETV2 are broadcast with Russian subtitles. Compared to 2009 the volume of Russian-language programmes in the television channels of the ERR, including programmes with subtitles, has increased by 30%, amounting to 520 hours a year. The main Russian-language programme produced by ETV2 itself is the news programme *Aktuaalne Kaamera* broadcast in prime time, which due to a transmission contract with a private channel 3+ has nearly 30,000 daily viewers.

The most important recent technological achievement is the transition to digital broadcasting in 2012. This has opened the way for the establishment of a lot of new channels and for the utilisation of opportunities provided by information technology, which add value to the usual programme: additional dynamic information within shows and TV guides, additional services (for example translations according to choice), and background products created upon processing materials, etc.

Producers face even bigger challenges presented by the Internet and knowing that the majority of young viewers prefer to get their information and entertainment on-line. 71% of Estonia's residents use the Internet and more than one-half (57%) of Internet users do so on a daily basis. 55% of Internet users follow the news through the Internet each day and 53% also watch videos uploaded with articles. The biggest advantage of the Internet and the mobile media based on it is the opportunity to consume media irrespective of time or place.⁹

The ERR has a webpage in Russian at <http://rus.err.ee/> and one in English at <http://news.err.ee/>, which include news stories as well as television and radio news produced by the ERR. It is also possible to watch television and radio channels live or afterwards, since all programmes which have aired are archived and available for viewing or listening through the web. All the web channels of the ERR were used by 170,000 residents of Estonia during the first week of 2014. 48,000 of Estonia's residents visited the ERR's news site in Estonian, 8,000 residents visited the site in Russian, and 2,000 residents in English. The largest Estonian media groups and institutions—the ERR, Ekspress Grupp and Eesti Meedia—offer Russian-speaking consumers extensive media services in their own language on the Internet.

As for radio, the most popular radio stations in the summer of 2013 were Estonian-language stations Vikerraadio (29.6%), Sky Plus (25.2%), Raadio Elmar (24.2%), and Star FM (20.9%). The 5th place and the 6th place were held by the most popular Russian-language channels Russkoye Radio (18%) and Raadio 4 (16.1%). Raadio 4 broadcasts diverse programmes which include verbal shows on a wide range of subjects as well as music. In addition to shows in Russian, Raadio 4 also broadcasts shows in Polish, Georgian, Ukrainian, Armenian, Belorussian, Azerbaijani, Chuvash, and Hebrew on a regular basis. Radio programmes are available through the websites of the ERR both in real time and later.

Estonian print media issues publications in different languages. During the reporting period from 2010 to 2013 several foreign-language newspapers, magazines and other periodicals were issued. The table below gives an overview of the periodicals issued during the reporting period.¹⁰

⁹ http://err.ee/files/ERRArengekava_2010-2013.pdf

¹⁰ Definitions: Newspaper—a periodical which is issued every day up to twice a month, is widely distributed, has an extensive circulation, can be pre-subscribed to, and is distributed throughout the country or in counties; magazine—a publication issued periodically at least twice a year; small paper—a publication of a low circulation aimed at a specific target group and distributed in

Table 5. Division by languages of periodicals issued in Estonia, 2010–2013.¹¹

| | | 2010 | | 2011 | | 2012 | | 2013 | |
|---------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Type | Items | Language | By languages | Items | By languages | Items | By languages | Items | By languages |
| Newspapers | 131 | | | 132 | | 130 | | 128 | |
| | | Estonian | 94 | | 97 | | 93 | | 88 |
| | | Russian | 32 | | 30 | | 31 | | 35 |
| | | English | 2 | | 2 | | 3 | | 2 |
| | | Finnish | 2 | | 2 | | 2 | | 2 |
| | | Swedish | 1 | | 1 | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | Latvian | 0 | | 0 | | 1 | | 1 |
| Small papers | 351 | | | 333 | | 342 | | | |
| | | Estonian | 333 | | 318 | | 324 | | 311 |
| | | Russian | 17 | | 13 | | 18 | | 16 |
| | | English | 0 | | 1 | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | Esperanto | 1 | | 1 | | 0 | | 0 |
| Magazines | 330 | | | 324 | | 327 | | 326 | |
| | | Estonian | 271 | | 272 | | 280 | | 280 |
| | | Russian | 20 | | 22 | | 20 | | 19 |
| | | English | 33 | | 27 | | 25 | | 23 |
| | | German | 1 | | 0 | | 1 | | 1 |
| | | Finnish | 2 | | 1 | | 1 | | 1 |
| | | Latvian | 2 | | 1 | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | Lithuanian | 0 | | 1 | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | Other languages | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | | 2 |
| Serial publications | 472 | | | 502 | | 480 | | 485 | |
| | | Estonian | 365 | | 374 | | 360 | | 366 |
| | | Russian | 19 | | 18 | | 17 | | 14 |
| | | English | 81 | | 100 | | 87 | | 95 |
| | | German | 5 | | 6 | | 4 | | 1 |
| | | French | 2 | | 2 | | 3 | | 2 |
| | | Latin | 0 | | 1 | | 1 | | 0 |
| | | Spanish | 0 | | 1 | | 1 | | 0 |
| | | Italian | 0 | | 0 | | 1 | | 0 |
| | | Latvian | 0 | | 0 | | 1 | | 0 |
| | | Swedish | 0 | | 0 | | 1 | | 0 |
| | | Finnish | 0 | | 0 | | 3 | | 1 |
| | | Danish | 0 | | 0 | | 1 | | 0 |
| | | Other languages | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | | 6 |
| Total | 1,284 | | | 1,291 | | 1,279 | | 1,268 | |

a specific region or within a specific group of stakeholders; serial publications—various scientific publications, collected works, yearbooks, series, and almanacs which are often issued on an irregular basis.

¹¹ Data here and in the next two tables: <http://www.nlib.ee/trukitoodangu-statistika/>

Table 6. Percentage of publications by language groups, 2010–2013.

| 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| In Estonian 83% | In Estonian 82.2% | In Estonian 82.6% | In Estonian 82.4% |
| In English 9% | In English 10% | In English 9% | In English 9.5% |
| In Russian 6.8% | In Russian 6.5% | In Russian 6.7% | In Russian 6.7% |
| In other languages 1.2% | In other languages 1.3% | In other languages 1.7% | In other languages 1.4% |

There are 4 nation-wide periodicals issued in Russian: newspaper *Postimees* (issued in Russian three times a week), weekly newspapers *Den za Dnjom*, *MK-Estonia* (*Moskovski Komsomolets - Estonia*) and *Delovye Vedomosti. Komsomolskaya Pravda v Baltii* is issued in Russian in Tallinn and distributed in Estonia, Latvia and Finland. The circulation of the papers remains between 5,000 and 12,000.

Russian-language regional journalism exists practically everywhere in Estonia where there are people whose mother tongue is Russian. The largest publications are *Narvskaya Gazeta*, *Narva, Gorod*, *Viru Prospekt*, *Severnoye Poberežje* and *Severnoye Poberežje Ekstra*, *Sillamyaeski Vestnik*, *Panorama*, *Infopress* in Ida-Viru County and *Tshudskoye Poberežje* in Jõgeva County. The most popular municipal newspaper is *Stolitsa* issued in the capital Tallinn. Local governments issue their gazettes in Russian in Ida-Viru County, Harju County and Tallinn. Furthermore, national cultural societies of national minorities issue newspapers and magazines in their own language, for example the Finnish *Inkeri* and the Swedish *Estlandssvensk*, and the Jewish community issues a Russian-language *Hashahar*.

Russian-language on-line journalism has actively developed. The most read websites are *Delfi*¹² (200,000 different visitors a week), *Postimees Online*¹³ (90,000 visitors a week), and *Delovye Vedomosti* portal¹⁴ (20,000 visitors a week). In 2007 a public-law news portal was launched¹⁵ (11,000–19,000 visitors a week). As of 2011 there is an independent portal *MK-Estonija*¹⁶, which has about 12,000 readers a week. The Russian Community Portal¹⁷ and the Russian Portal¹⁸ are also worth mentioning. There are tens of other Internet sites which, in one way or another, offer readers information in Russian concerning events in Estonia.

The creation of Russian and Estonian-Russian writers is mainly published by three Russian-language literature and cultural magazines: *Vyshgorod* and *Tallinn*, and a youth magazine *Plug*. Russian-language literature is published in Estonia by publishing houses KPD and Aleksandra, Antek and Avenarius, and also Varrak and Eesti Päevalehe Kirjastus. Publishing houses of institutions of higher education publish research in Russian and English. About 20 Russian-language commercial magazines are published in Estonia each year. Support for publishing cultural magazines in Russian and for translating Estonian children's and youth literature into Russian has been received from the support programmes of the Ministry of Culture, the Council of Gambling Tax, and the Cultural Endowment of Estonia.

In addition to printed work, e-books in foreign languages are also published in Estonia, but statistics

¹² <http://rus.delfi.ee/>

¹³ <http://rus.postimees.ee/>

¹⁴ <http://www.dv.ee>

¹⁵ <http://rus.err.ee/>

¹⁶ <http://www.mke.ee/>

¹⁷ www.baltija.eu

¹⁸ www.veneportaal.ee

in this regard are still to be gathered. In the book business, foreign-language printed work as well as e-books published in Estonia and elsewhere are distributed in Estonia. During the reporting period, original foreign-language books and translated books issued in Estonia involved 16 different languages.

Table 7. Books in Estonian and foreign languages published in Estonia, 2010–2012.¹⁹

| Language | 2010 | | 2011 | | 2012 | |
|----------------|------------------|------------|------------------|------------|------------------|------------|
| | Number of copies | Percentage | Number of copies | Percentage | Number of copies | Percentage |
| Dutch | 1 | 0.03% | 0 | 0.00% | 1 | 0.03% |
| English | 283 | 7.53% | 312 | 8.40% | 318 | 8.01% |
| Estonia | 2996 | 79.69% | 2892 | 77.83% | 3093 | 77.89% |
| Finnish | 3 | 0.08% | 17 | 0.46% | 14 | 0.35% |
| French | 5 | 0.13% | 5 | 0.13% | 3 | 0.08% |
| German | 4 | 0.11% | 12 | 0.32% | 7 | 0.18% |
| Italian | 1 | 0.03% | 1 | 0.03% | 2 | 0.05% |
| Latvian | 3 | 0.08% | 0 | 0.00% | 2 | 0.05% |
| Lithuanian | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 1 | 0.03% |
| Multi-language | 298 | 7.93% | 278 | 7.48% | 277 | 6.98% |
| Norwegian | 2 | 0.05% | 1 | 0.03% | 1 | 0.03% |
| Polish | 0 | 0.00% | 1 | 0.03% | 0 | 0.00% |
| Portuguese | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 2 | 0.05% |
| Russian | 160 | 4.26% | 192 | 5.17% | 239 | 6.02% |
| Spanish | 1 | 0.03% | 1 | 0.03% | 5 | 0.13% |
| Swedish | 2 | 0.05% | 4 | 0.11% | 6 | 0.15% |
| Ukrainian | 1 | 0.03% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% |
| Total | 3760 | 100.00% | 3716 | 100.00% | 3971 | 100.00% |

Article 10

1. The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to use freely and without interference his or her minority language, in private and in public, orally and in writing.

2. In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if those persons so request and where such a request corresponds to a real need, the Parties shall endeavour to ensure, as far as possible, the conditions which would make it possible to use the minority language in relations between those persons and the administrative authorities.

3. The Parties undertake to guarantee the right of every person belonging to a national minority to be informed promptly, in a language which he or she understands, of the reasons for his or her arrest, and of the nature and cause of any accusation against him or her, and to defend himself or herself in this language, if necessary with the free assistance of an interpreter.

The Committee of Ministers recommends to take a more balanced approach towards the legitimate aim of promoting the State language while ensuring the rights of persons belonging to national minorities to speak and use their languages in public, also in relations with local authorities;

¹⁹ Statistics concerning one year are made up of books issued to the National Library of Estonia as compulsory copies and described in the database of national bibliography in the respective year.

favour a policy of incentives over punitive methods with regards to the implementation of the Language Act as amended in February 2011.

The general principles of the regulatory framework of using the Estonian language and languages of national minorities have been covered in previous reports. A new Language Act entered into force on 1 July 2011. It is a new wording of the Act of 1995. In addition to arranging the structure, important amendments to the content have also been made.

The field of language of information has been changed the most (§ 16). Pursuant to subsection 16 (1), signs, signposts, business type names and outdoor advertisements, including outdoor advertising, installed to a public place with the purpose of political campaigning, and the notices of a legal person shall be in Estonian (meaning that notices of natural persons may be in a foreign language). The translation into a foreign language may be added to the text of information or advertisements in Estonian; thereby the text in Estonian shall be in the forefront and shall not be less observable than the text in a foreign language. If an enterprise has marked its place of business in a foreign language (for example with the following words in English: café, restaurant, shop, or lounge), translation into Estonian is required.

The Language Act includes an entirely new § 19. According to his section contracts may be concluded in any language if parties so agree.

The requirements for the command and use of the Estonian language have remained the same in essence. The requirements for proficiency in the Estonian language do not apply to persons who work in Estonia temporarily as foreign experts or foreign specialists; it has been added that foreign lecturers and researchers shall not be applied the requirements for proficiency in Estonian if they have worked in Estonia for less than five years (subsection 23 (5)).

Employees who have acquired a formal education in Estonian are not required to take the Estonian language proficiency examination; this has been specified by subsection 26 (4) which provides that education is deemed to have been acquired in Estonian if at least 60% of the studies were carried out in Estonian. Significant changes have also been made to subsection 26 (5), according to which persons who have passed the professional examination in Estonian and work in the speciality marked on the professional certificate need not pass the Estonian language proficiency examination.

Pursuant to the Language Act, in local governments where at least half of the permanent residents belong to a national minority, everyone has the right to approach state agencies operating in the territory of the corresponding local government and the corresponding local government authorities and receive from the agencies and the officials and employees thereof the responses in the language of the national minority beside responses in Estonian. Irrespective of the percentage of various nationality groups within a region, national minorities may, in oral communication with officials or employees of state agencies and local government authorities and with a notary, bailiff or sworn translator as well as in a foreign representation of Estonia, use their mother tongue as provided by subsection 12 (4) of the Language Act. On the basis of subsection 12 (3) of the Language Act, a state agency or local government authority may accept documents in a language of a national minority without requiring a translation. All ministries and state agencies have websites in Russian and English for providing necessary information. In use of language, local government authorities consider the needs of persons belonging to a national minority. Local governments in Tallinn, Harju County and Ida-Viru County issue newspapers in Estonian and Russian, and they also have websites in several languages where important local information can be found. Legal consultations, counselling and services of the employment office are offered in Russian in regions where the percentage of persons belonging to a national minority is high.

In addition to Estonian and Russian, public services are also offered in English everywhere in Estonia. In general, all authorities providing public services have a website in these three languages, displaying detailed information concerning all services. The Russian language is used in banking and business, in provision of medical aid and police services, and also in local governments and in the provision of municipal services where the percentage of the Russian-speaking population is high. Employers in authorities providing public services tend to prefer employees who can speak Russian besides Estonian and English.

Article 11

1. The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to use his or her surname (patronym) and first names in the minority language and the right to official recognition of them, according to modalities provided for in their legal system.

2. The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to display in his or her minority language signs, inscriptions and other information of a private nature visible to the public.

3. In areas traditionally inhabited by substantial numbers of persons belonging to a national minority, the Parties shall endeavour, in the framework of their legal system, including, where appropriate, agreements with other States, and taking into account their specific conditions, to display traditional local names, street names and other topographical indications intended for the public also in the minority language when there is a sufficient demand for such indications.

The Committee of Ministers recommends conducting a constructive dialogue with minority representatives on language-related developments, including with regards to the approach and functioning of the Language Inspectorate.

The interim report of the “Estonian Language Development Plan for 2011–2017”, which addressed developments in the field of language in 2011 and 2012, states that compared to previous years the number of cases of supervision exercised by the Language Inspectorate has somewhat decreased, and the percentage of identified violations and misdemeanour proceedings (meaning imposed fines) has also decreased.

Statistics concerning supervision reveal a significant decrease in the number of fines imposed during 2007–2012. 564 persons were fined in 2007, 331 persons in 2009, 208 persons in 2011 (at the same time 1961 violations of the Language Act were identified), and 176 persons in 2012 (2171 violations of the Language Act were identified). Upon imposing a fine the Inspectorate has always considered the amount of the fine very carefully, and the average amount of fine in 2012 was 14 times lower (56.7 euros) than allowed by the Language Act (800 euros). Therefore, fines imposed in the course of supervision are rather symbolic compared to many other fields (for example, traffic violations).

The principle of proportionality is especially considered in the Ida-Viru County. For example, four heads of school whose Estonian language proficiency did not meet the set requirements were identified from 1999 to 2004. The time given to them for language studies has constantly been extended. When in verifying the compliance with the last precept made in 2012 it was established that their language proficiency still does not comply with the set requirements, they were given until 10 June 2014 for acquiring the Estonian language proficiency necessary for work.

The duties of the Language Inspectorate according to its statute also include verification of compliance with the requirements set for the use of foreign languages, including minority

languages. Representatives of national minorities have phoned the Language Inspectorate to inquire about the right to use the Russian language in public information and in public events, and they have received thorough answers satisfactory to them as it is allowed to use minority languages in public information next to the Estonian language. The Language Inspectorate has not received any complaints about restrictions on the use of the Russian language or any other minority languages. The officials of local governments in Tallinn and Ida-Viru County always respond in Russian when being addressed in Russian. There is no information concerning any cases where persons belonging to a national minority were prevented from speaking in the minority language in public. This right has been guaranteed by legislation as well as in practice.

In December 2013 the Government of the Republic submitted to the Parliament (*Riigikogu*) a draft act on the amendment of the Penal Code and other Acts in connection therewith, which, inter alia, proposes to make the punishments imposed on the basis of the Language Act more lenient.

Currently, subsections 34 (3) and (4) of the Language Act enable imposing a punishment for non-compliance of the Estonian translation in content and form to the text in a foreign language upon making the audio visual work in a foreign language available to the public. It basically means that if a motion picture or a television programme in a foreign language is accompanied by a faulty translation, a fine of up to 100 fine units (i.e. up to 400 euros, considering that one fine unit equals to 4 euros) may be imposed on natural persons and a fine of up to 1300 euros on legal persons.

According to a proposal in the draft a punishment may be imposed for the lack of a translation, but spelling mistakes would no longer result in punishment. The Language Inspectorate has never imposed any fines on the basis of the applicable provision, but now even the theoretical chance that a fine may be imposed for spelling mistakes will cease to exist.

There is also a proposal to remove from the Language Act the possibility to impose a fine on an employee for not being proficient in the official language of Estonia. At present, § 37 of the Language Act provides for a possibility to impose a fine on an employer as well as an employee for failure to meet the requirements for language proficiency. According to the applicable Act, an employer may be fined for not establishing a language requirement for employees and an employee may be fined for not being proficient in the language.

Pursuant to the proposal of the Government of the Republic, only an employer may be fined for not establishing for employees a language requirement as required by law. And if an employee is not proficient in Estonian, the Inspectorate can no longer impose a punishment, that is a fine on him or her by way of misdemeanour proceedings. The Inspectorate may issue a precept to the employee and determine a deadline for acquiring the language at the required level.

The Committee of Ministers has recommended expanding opportunities to introduce minority language place names in compliance with the principles enshrined in Article 11 of the Framework Convention, and ensuring that relevant minority communities are aware of their rights in this respect.

No significant developments have taken place within the reporting period regarding this issue. Also, no legislative amendments have been made.

We emphasise that the Place Names Act of the Republic of Estonia takes fully into account international recommendations regarding the official use and protection of minority language place names. The protection of minority language place names covers, above all, Estonian-Swedish place

names on Vormsi and Ruhnu and in Noarootsi and coastal areas in northwest Estonia as well as place names in Russian in Petseri County and alongside Lake Peipus.

The Ministry of the Interior and the Place Names Board are prepared to support and guide in every way people who file a corresponding application concerning how to use place names in a foreign language pursuant to legislation, but as of today no local governments have filed any applications for using place names not in Estonian. In 2010 at a meeting with representatives of rural municipalities alongside Lake Peipus the Place Names Board introduced the possibilities for using Russian-language original place names. Trainings on the subject of place names have been organised during the reporting period.

As for displaying place names in a script other than Latin next to Estonian, it is possible to add to signposts names in the Cyrillic script, but only in those local governments the majority of residents of which were non-Estonian speakers as at 27 September 1939 and where the non-Estonian name may be established as the principal name pursuant to subsections 11 (3) and (4) of the Place Names Act. The said provision concerns Alajõe, Kasepää, Peipsiääre and Piirissaare Rural Municipalities, where all villages may, in theory, reclaim their old names in the Russian language and use them on signposts as the principal name. This was also recommended by the Place Names Board in 1998.

Local governments are competent to establish place names in their territory. The Committee of Ministers recommends to expand opportunities to introduce minority language place names. But using bilingual place names when the local government has no interest in doing so would make an impression of interference by the state and would undermine the principles of the institution of local government. Estonian laws allow using the Cyrillic script in areas outside official signs, signposts and other areas within the scope of the Place Names Act. The density of the population of non-Estonian origin is higher in the cities of north and northeast Estonia. But those cities, including Sillamäe, Kohtla-Järve and Narva have no historic Russian names of symbolic value, and the establishment and use thereof under regulatory acts would be misleading.

Article 12

- 1. The Parties shall, where appropriate, take measures in the fields of education and research to foster knowledge of the culture, history, language and religion of their national minorities and of the majority.**
- 2. In this context the Parties shall inter alia provide adequate opportunities for teacher training and access to textbooks, and facilitate contacts among students and teachers of different communities.**
- 3. The Parties undertake to promote equal opportunities for access to education at all levels for persons belonging to national minorities.**

According to the recommendation of the Committee of Ministers, Estonia shall ensure that more inter-cultural elements are introduced in the school curricula and expand opportunities for bilingual education to increase opportunities for contacts between the ethnic Estonian and non-Estonian communities.

Measures for introducing national minorities and their culture have been addressed under Article 5 above.

The following will provide an overview of the teaching of foreign languages at school by levels of education.

According to subsection 21 (2) of the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act, in a

municipal basic school (grades 1–9) the language of instruction may be any language on the basis of a decision of the council of the rural municipality or city government relying on a proposal of the board of trustees of the school and in a state basic school the language of instruction may be any language on the basis of a decision of the Minister of Education and Research. The said Act (subsection 21 (1)) defines the language of instruction to be the language in which more than 60% of studies are pursued. The owner of the school decides the language of instruction considering the needs of the region and available resources — available teachers, possibilities for acquiring means of instruction, etc. In basic schools it is possible to study in Estonian, Russian, English and Finnish. In 81% of general education schools the language of instruction is Estonian, in 14% it is Russian, 4% of schools have departments where the language of instruction is Estonian or Russian, and the language of instruction in the rest (1%) is English or Finnish. About 60% of pupils in Estonian-medium schools study Russian as a foreign language and about 20% study German. Swedish, Finnish and Hebrew are other languages of historic national minorities which are studied.

The cultural and language-based needs arising from the ethnic origin of the school’s student body can be regulated in the school curriculum on the basis of § 17 of the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act.

The Government has expressed its clear opinion that it considers supporting the studies of different languages, including the languages of the national minorities living in Estonia, a priority. On 13 March 2009 the Minister of Education and Research adopted a decree approving the Strategy for Foreign Languages in Estonia for 2009–2015. An objective of the strategy is to promote linguistic diversity in Estonia and thereby establish better possibilities for Estonian inhabitants to effectively participate in economic, social and political life both in Estonia and abroad.

Table 8. Number of pupils by languages of instruction, 2008–2013.

| Language of instruction | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
|--------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Estonian | 115221 | 110520 | 107288 | 105272 | 106139 | 107119 |
| Russian | 28146 | 27005 | 26596 | 25942 | 23532 | 22464 |
| Estonian (language immersion) | 4024 | 4143 | 4432 | 4647 | 4956 | 5358 |
| English | 117 | 91 | 99 | 189 | 277 | 390 |
| Finnish | 11 | 43 | 33 | 54 | 71 | 61 |
| Total | 147519 | 141802 | 138448 | 136104 | 134975 | 135392 |

Source: Estonian Education Information System (EHIS), 2014.

In co-operation with the state and with the local government, the school establishes for pupils acquiring basic education whose mother tongue is other than the school’s language of instruction possibilities for learning their mother tongue and national culture so as to preserve their national identity. The right to set up a language study group arises on the basis of a written application of parents of at least ten pupils of one and the same nationality. Each year the Ministry of Education and Research has asked schools to provide feedback on the progress made and problems encountered. This has served as the basis for initiating amendments to the relevant regulation, aiming to decrease the required number of pupils from ten to five and to give pupils the possibility to get support for studying their mother tongue within the framework of foreign language lessons and group work. As an alternative to language study groups, national minorities prefer to organise unofficial language and cultural studies by way of Sunday schools registered as hobby schools which receive systematic support from the Ministry of Education and Research.

Pupils who have stayed in Estonia for less than three years are deemed within the education system

to be new immigrant pupils. The number of new immigrant pupils has ranged from 120 to 190 over the last five years. In the academic year 2011/2012 there were approximately 135 new immigrant pupils in 22 general education schools in Estonia. 15 of them have the right to additional support in learning the Estonian language.

In co-operation with the North Estonian Roma Association, the Ministry of Education and Research has carried out various activities to improve the education possibilities of the Roma children. In 2010 the Ministry of Education and Research financed a study “The Roma Children in the Estonian Education System” carried out by the North Estonian Roma Association. The Estonian Education Information System includes the Roma as a separate nationality group, which facilitates the state-level organisation of the necessary educational support. As at the academic year 2013/2014, there are 30 full-time pupils and 2 part-time pupils of Roma origin.

In the spring of 2013 the Estonian National Museum opened in Valga an exhibition “We, the Gypsies” casting light on the culture and community life of the Roma. Through the scientific pre-exhibition work permanent contacts were made with the most influential representatives of the Roma community in Estonia and valuable information was gathered for planning future activities in solving the educational problems encountered by the Roma children.

The Committee of Ministers recommends ensuring that the ongoing transfer to Estonian as the main language of instruction in Russian-language upper secondary schools is implemented gradually and with due regard to the quality of education offered in Estonian as well as Russian language; expanding the availability of relevant teacher training courses including as regards bilingual and multicultural education.

Pursuant to the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act, in upper secondary schools (grades 10–12) the language of instruction is Estonian, but in municipal upper secondary schools or single classes thereof the language of instruction may be another language. The permission to pursue studies in another language is granted by the Government of the Republic on the basis of an application of a local government council. The board of trustees of the school makes such a proposal to the local government council on the basis of the development plan of the school. In private schools the language of instruction is decided by the owner of the school.

Information regarding the transition to Estonian-language instruction, which started in 2007, is provided under Article 14 below. The following only describes the possibilities for teacher in-service training.

Estonian literature, social education, history, music and geography teachers have completed relevant training, and additional teaching materials have also been prepared. Training courses continue for teachers of other subjects. Teachers continue to receive training regarding the methodology of teaching in another language. The main target group comprises physical education and art teachers (these are the subjects that most schools pick as subjects to be taught in Estonian). However, trainings are offered to other subject teachers as well. Seminars for heads of school are held with the participation of a representative of the Ministry of Education and Research. One of the objectives of the seminars is to provide partnership network-based counselling and share good practices; another objective is to prepare strategic action plans at school level and at state level.

The improvement of the Estonian language proficiency of teachers who teach in Estonian at Russian-medium schools is also deemed important. The state organises and finances the Estonian language training for teachers. The training is free of charge for teachers. A teacher who does not have an advanced proficiency on level C1 in Estonian cannot teach a subject in Estonian, but he or

she can teach subjects which are taught in Russian (or in another language) pursuant to the school curriculum. Teachers who teach subjects in a language other than Estonian must have attained intermediate level Estonian language proficiency (B2). In teacher training programmes language studies are integrated with the development of communicative skills to provide better support to the quality work of teachers in the classroom.

At the end of 2008 regional monitoring and counselling centres were opened in Russian-medium schools for subject teachers teaching in Estonian. At the centres teachers can familiarise themselves with the newest methodical literature and study materials, and the coordinators at the centres cooperate with regional counsellors to ensure the availability of counselling services for those who request them. The counsellors have completed relevant training. Such centres are located in Narva, Kohtla-Järve, Tallinn and Tartu.

Each year, a few external assessment visits are made to schools. The 2012/2013 results show that, at the schools included in the sample, studies in Estonian are guaranteed to the extent required in the national curricula. To support the teaching of subjects in Estonian schools organise joint events with Estonian-medium schools and participate in competitions in Estonian.

On the basis of § 77 of the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act, beginner's allowance is paid to a teacher who commences work in a school outside Tallinn or Tartu. This opportunity has been used a lot by beginner teachers who commence work in Estonian-medium as well as Russian-medium schools.

Vocational education

In the academic year 2012/2013 there were 40 vocational educational institutions in Estonia, 8 of which were private schools.²⁰ Pursuant to the Vocational Educational Institutions Act (§ 18), the language of instruction of vocational educational institutions is Estonian, but other languages of instruction are also allowed. The use of other languages is decided by the Minister of Education and Research. Currently, vocational education can be acquired in Estonian and Russian in Estonia. 26,172 people were acquiring vocational education in the academic year 2012/2013, and 23% of all students pursued their studies in Russian.

According to the Vocational Educational Institutions Act (§ 13), curricula of vocational educational institutions are prepared in compliance with the requirements of the Vocational Education Standard and the corresponding national curricula. Pursuant to the same Act (§ 22), in vocational educational institutions where the language of instruction is other than Estonian it is mandatory to teach Estonian at the level of secondary education: students acquiring a vocational secondary education are required to take the state examination of Estonian to graduate. The volume and organisation of studies are determined in the school curriculum.

The required volume of Estonian language studies in vocational educational institutions in groups using another language is four weeks of study. According to the Estonian Language Development Plan for 2011–2017, language studies in vocational educational institutions must result in the outcome corresponding to the curriculum to ensure that graduates speaking a language other than Estonian are able to compete on the labour market. To this end, students acquiring a vocational education must be offered lessons in professional Estonian as well as Estonian as a foreign language to the extent necessary for work, the situation of Estonian language studies in Russian-medium

²⁰ Data from the Estonian Education Information System here and under Article 13 is stated as at 31.01.2014.

groups must be analysed, the requirements for the proficiency in Estonian must be updated and integrated professional and language in-service training must be organised for heads and teachers of vocational educational institutions, preparation courses for vocational examinations organised in Estonian must be carried out for students studying in groups where the language of instruction is Russian as well as for adults employed in the corresponding specialities, students must be provided with support in practising in an Estonian-language working environment, and a language portfolio model must be developed for adult students.

Higher education

On the basis of the Universities Act (subsection 22 (8)) and the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act (§ 17), the language of instruction at the level of higher education is Estonian, and the use of other languages is decided by the council of the educational institution or by the minister who directs the ministry under whose area of government the particular institution of professional higher education belongs. Pursuant to the Standard of Higher Education (subsection 5 (5)), language of instruction is the language in which studies are conducted; the skill of using the language enables achieving learning outcomes determined in the curriculum (knowledge, skills, and attitudes). Every curriculum (except at the Doctoral level) may only have one language of instruction. Other languages which are necessary for achieving the learning outcomes may be used for carrying out studies. At present, it is possible to acquire a higher education in Estonian, Russian or English in Estonia. The language of instruction is mostly Estonian.

In the academic year 2013/2014 there are 26 educational institutions in Estonia where higher education is provided at different levels. 13 educational institutions used only Estonian as the language of instruction in the academic year 2013/2014, three educational institutions used Estonian and Russian, three used Estonian and English, six used Estonian, English and Russian, and one used only Russian.

| Number of students by language of instruction, 2010/2011–2013/2014 | | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 |
| Estonian and English (Doctoral study) | | | | 155 |
| Estonian and Russian (Doctoral study) | | | | 1 |
| Estonian | 62,358 | 61,496 | 58,716 | 54,962 |
| English | 1,279 | 1,642 | 2,219 | 2,968 |
| Russian | 5,476 | 4,469 | 3,871 | 1,912 |
| Total | 69,113 | 67,607 | 64,806 | 59,998 |

Source: Estonian Education Information System (EHIS), 2014.

On the basis of the Universities Act and the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act, those students whose Estonian-language proficiency is not sufficient for completing the curriculum in Estonian can study Estonian in depth. In such a case the standard period of study will be extended by up to one academic year.

Article 13

- 1. Within the framework of their education systems, the Parties shall recognise that persons belonging to a national minority have the right to set up and to manage their own private educational and training establishments.**
- 2. The exercise of this right shall not entail any financial obligation for the Parties.**

The Hobby Schools Act, which entered into force in September 2007, defines a hobby school as an educational establishment operating in the area of youth work which creates an opportunity for the acquisition of hobby education and for the diverse development of the personality, including cultivation of one's own language and culture, in different areas of hobby education (§ 3). Proceeding from the Hobby Schools Act, in the autumn of 2007 the Minister of Education and Research established by a decree the principles of basic financing of Sunday schools. 27 Sunday schools were financed in 2013, but there are around 35 registered hobby schools. The objective of the financing of Sunday schools is to enable ethnic minorities to study their mother tongue and culture. In the academic year 2012/2013, Russian, Ukrainian, Armenian, Korean, Uzbek, Turkish, Azerbaijani, Georgian, Tatar and other Sunday schools were financed. A total of 98,837 euros were allocated for the basic financing of Sunday schools in 2013.

Language study projects outside the scope of school continue to receive funds from the state budget. Those projects are intended for young people whose mother tongue is Estonian or another language. In general, children speaking both languages participate in the projects, which besides learning the language help to establish closer contacts between young people with different mother tongues.

The Private Schools Act also governs the covering of operating expenses by the state. Pursuant to the Private Schools Act, the salaries of teachers employed in a pre-school child care institution on the basis of the framework curriculum of basic education and the costs of acquiring teaching aids may be covered from the relevant rural municipality or city budget on the grounds provided for in the Pre-school Child Care Institutions Act.

Each year, state-budget subsidies for covering the costs of wages, social tax and in-service training of teachers and acquisition of textbooks are determined in compliance with the State Budget Act on the basis of the number of pupils.

Article 14

- 1. The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to learn his or her minority language.**
- 2. In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if there is sufficient demand, the Parties shall endeavour to ensure, as far as possible and within the framework of their education systems, that persons belonging to those minorities have adequate opportunities for being taught the minority language or for receiving instruction in this language.**
- 3. Paragraph 2 of this article shall be implemented without prejudice to the learning of the official language or the teaching in this language.**

The Committee of Ministers has found that the ongoing transfer to Estonian as the main language of instruction in Russian-language schools must be implemented gradually and with due regard to the quality of education offered in Estonian as well as Russian language.

According to the regulation of the Government of the Republic, as of the academic year 2011/2012 Estonian upper secondary schools are required to ensure pupils starting their tenth school year receive instruction in Estonian to the extent of at least 60% of the minimum mandatory curriculum.

The transition²¹ is flexible—five subjects to be taught in Estonian have been determined at the state level, the rest of the subjects are specified by the school. The main objective of the transition to instruction in Estonian is to increase the competitiveness of Russian-speaking young people. In basic schools it is not mandatory to teach subjects in Estonian. The national minorities will continue to study their culture and language in their mother tongue. The number of Russian language and literature lessons will not be decreased, and the number corresponds to the number of Estonian language and literature lessons in Estonian-medium schools. Schools may offer elective subjects to provide in-depth study of pupils' national language and culture.

The main objective of the transition to teaching subjects in Estonian is to increase the competitiveness of Russian-speaking young people. The aim of upper secondary school education is and can be nothing but quality education and knowledge corresponding to the national curriculum in all subjects. Learning subjects in Estonian also helps to improve the pupils' Estonian language proficiency which in turn will help them get into an institution of higher education and study there in Estonian, as well as obtain Estonian citizenship and find employment. This will give a certain advantage to young people whose language of communication at home is Russian as they can speak more languages.

It can be said that as at the beginning of 2014 the Russian-medium upper secondary schools have been successful in their transition to instruction in Estonian. All schools are able to ensure that all specified courses are taught in Estonian. About ten schools teach more subjects in Estonian than required by law. Still, the greatest challenge is to find teachers whose Estonian language proficiency meets the requirements, for which reason there are a few schools which have not been able to institute instruction in Estonian to the required extent.

The Ministry of Education and Research continues to organise seminars and trainings for teachers and heads of school for the purposes of mapping areas which need developing and raising the quality of education.

In connection with the transition to instruction in Estonian in upper secondary schools the need to improve the quality of teaching the Estonian language in lower school levels has also become an issue of importance. This has increased interest in the language immersion programme. In 2013 there were 45 kindergartens and 39 general education schools which had joined the language immersion programme. Since many basic schools have been interested in teaching subjects in Estonian, the Ministry of Education and Research launched a pilot project in 2013 for supporting Russian-medium basic schools in teaching subjects in Estonian. More than ten schools have joined the programme as of today. All schools have received support for the acquisition of Estonian-language learning materials as well as for carrying out needs-based support instruction (extracurricular activities, trainings, student exchange programmes, etc.).

Pupils may choose the language of their final examination. Questions in the final examination are prepared in both languages. The experience gained so far shows that most of the time the language in which studies were pursued is chosen as the language of the examination.

Under Article 14 the Advisory Committee has recommended determining impediments to studying the language and culture of national minorities as an elective subject. This issue has been

²¹ See also factsheet „Russian-language schools' transition to partial Estonian-language instruction – What is happening and why?“ available in English at <http://estonia.eu/about-estonia/society/russian-language-schools-transition-to-partial-estonian-language-instruction-what-is-happening-and-why.html>

addressed under Articles 5 and 12.

The Advisory Committee has deemed it important to monitor issues related to voluntary language immersion. Language immersion is a form of study which is implemented as a state programme in Estonia to contribute to better proficiency in Estonian as the second language. By now, one-third of schools where the language of instruction is not Estonian use the language immersion methodology, and almost 2000 children attend language immersion schools and kindergartens. The volume of instruction in Estonian is more than 50% of the total volume of instruction in language immersion classes and groups. Estonian is studied by actively using it, including by studying different subjects or participating in activities in the kindergarten. The objective of language immersion is to achieve equal proficiency in one's mother tongue as well as Estonian. Experts from the implementation unit of the Ministry of Education and Research carry out regular visits to educational institutions which apply the language immersion programme.

On the basis of the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act (subsection 21 (4)), in a school or class where the language of instruction is not Estonian, it is compulsory to teach Estonian as of the first grade. More than one-third of the Russian-medium schools apply language immersion programmes which cover a total of 10% of basic school pupils. Two types of language immersion exist: early and late immersion. Early language immersion programme (in 21 schools) means that in the first school year all teaching takes place in Estonian, the study of Russian begins in the second year, in the third year the first foreign language is added, and as of the fourth year some subjects are taught in Estonian and some in Russian. In the case of late language immersion (in 18 schools), which begins from the sixth school year, in addition to Estonian (as a subject) four more subjects are taught in Estonian in the sixth year, in the seventh and eighth year the teaching is conducted in Estonian while the study of Russian language and literature also continues, and in the ninth year the proportion of teaching in Estonian and Russian is more or less equal (50:50). The number of pupils participating in language immersion programmes has constantly increased. Although there has not been a significant increase in the number of schools applying language immersion, all the schools that have started the programme continue to implement it and therefore the number of participating pupils increases.

Article 15

The Parties shall create the conditions necessary for the effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in cultural, social and economic life and in public affairs, in particular those affecting them.

The Committee of Ministers has recommended taking appropriate measures to expand effective consultative mechanisms for persons belonging to national minorities beyond the cultural sphere; ensuring that minority representatives are involved in and have a substantial impact on all relevant processes of decision making affecting them; and ensuring that minority representatives are effectively consulted on the Estonian Integration Strategy, and that initiatives that create common social spaces and networking opportunities between ethnic Estonians and non-Estonians are enhanced, focussing in particular on promoting openness towards diversity among the majority population.

As an EU Member State, Estonia uses EU Structural Funds. The European Social Fund, the aim of which is to promote employment, raise people's qualification and competitiveness and increase the social coherence of society, has financed several programmes implemented in Estonia aimed at the protection of the interests and needs of inhabitants belonging to national minorities as well as at ensuring equal opportunities on the labour market. In addition to the European Social Fund the promotion of integration has been supported by the European Fund for the Integration of Third-

Country Nationals (EIF) established under the general programme “Solidarity and management of migration flows” for the period 2007–2013.

The strategic management of the Estonian Integration Plan for 2008–2013 has involved collegial bodies—the steering committee and steering group of the Integration Plan, comprising representatives of various ministries. The following advisory bodies of local governments are active in regions and in the capital: the Round Table of National Minorities with the County Governor of the Ida-Viru County as of 2001, the Home Peace Forum in Tallinn as of 2007, and the Council of National Minorities with the Ministry of Culture which joins 32 cultural societies.

The Round Table of Nationalities convened by the Estonian Cooperation Assembly was active from 2009 to 2011. Today, necessary consultative mechanisms are carried out through other foundations and local governments, and specifically through structures within the area of administration of the Ministry of Culture. Many of the members of the Round Table of Nationalities have been involved in the preparation process of the Integration Plan for 2014–2020 either as coordinators or experts. Information concerning the discussions, sessions and seminars of the Cultural Council of National Minorities and the Round Table of Nationalities is available on the websites of the Ministry of Culture and the Estonian Cooperation Assembly.

The cornerstone of the integration policy is the need to encourage national minorities to participate in social and political life more actively, and this is regarded as a two-way process. In 2011 the Government of the Republic approved the priorities for 2011 to 2013 of the new implementation plan of the Estonian Integration Plan. The priorities were the following: making the learning of the Estonian language more efficient; advancing mutual co-operation between young people who have different mother tongues, and supporting career counselling for young people; favouring civic associations to increase the involvement and activeness of people who have different mother tongues in Estonian society; and supporting the development of the common Estonian information environment. Preparing the implementation plan which describes the priorities, activities and financial resources took place through comprehensive involvement—studies were conducted, experiences gained during previous periods were mapped, several topical discussion seminars were held, and three regional round tables were organised.

In 2011 consultations were started with cultural societies of national minorities and co-operation partners for the purpose of developing new fundamental principles of Estonian cultural policy up to the year 2020. Six discussion seminars in Tallinn, Tartu and Ida-Viru County were held with representatives of national minorities. The proposals presented served as the basis for the development concept up to the year 2020 within the cultural diversity sphere. The document contains the principles for forming and carrying out the cultural policy as well as priorities in the following areas: architecture, design, performance art, cinematography, audio, literature and publishing, fine arts, cultural journalism and media, cultural diversity, protection of national heritage, museums, libraries, and folk culture. On 21 November 2013 the Government of the Republic approved the “Fundamentals of Cultural Policy up to 2020”. The new development trends of the cultural policy will need the final approval of the Parliament.

On 11 October 2012 the Government of the Republic approved the proposal for the preparation of a new development plan “Integrating Estonia 2020” and appointed the Ministry of Culture as the body in charge. An extensive consultation process took place before the preparation of the plan.

During the first half of 2013 discussions of various working groups were held. About 1300 persons were involved in the discussions of the development plan. One of the most important target groups discussed was the citizens of European third countries who amount to 15% of the Estonian

population. Discussions were held in different regions of Estonia: Tallinn, Tartu, Narva and Kohtla-Järve. The working language was either Russian or English depending on the target group. Results of the consultation process were discussed on a discussion day held at the conference centre of the National Library on 28 May 2013 with over 100 people in attendance.

A special website in Estonian, Russian and English, www.integratsioon.ee was created to gather materials covering the preparation of the development plan and to provide information to the public. The participants also created respective groups in the Facebook. Summaries of the discussions are available for stakeholders on the Internet at www.etnoweb.ee/arutelud and www.integratsioon.ee, including news, materials, findings of surveys, and interim reports on the preparation of the development plan. During the period of one year people have had the chance to submit their proposals electronically through the website as well. A consolidated report on the proposals is available on the website of the Political Research Centre Praxis.²²

The Foundation Our People aims to initiate and support projects directed at the integration of various nationality groups living in Estonia and to serve as the professional initiator of innovative initiatives in the integration field and the counsellor for the target group. The Foundation Our People carries out and finances integration projects which value the cultural diversity of society, offer support in social and economic integration and in legal and political integration, and also educational projects which support integration. The Foundation Our People supports the activities of the cultural societies of national minorities and Sunday schools, carries out in-service trainings for public sector employees who speak Estonian as a second language and mentoring programmes of language studies for employees within the education system. In 2012, the language club methodology was developed in language studies, and language lessons for employees of third sector organisations were commenced. The language studies were carried out with the participation of cultural societies' employees whose mother tongue is other than Estonian, including national cultural societies and their Sunday schools, sports associations and NGOs dealing with young people.

The Committee of Ministers recommends combating perceptions about ethnic Estonians being favoured in the labour market in order to ensure that persons belonging to national minorities feel motivated to enter and remain in the Estonian labour market; creating targeted development initiatives in the particularly disadvantaged region of Ida-Virumaa (Viru County).

The year 2010 was the year of the greatest unemployment and the lowest employment in Estonian history. As a result of the worldwide economic crisis the employment rate of persons 15 to 64 years of age dropped to 61.0% and the unemployment rate increased to 17.1%. 2011 on the other hand may be called the year of recovery from the crisis as the employment rate increased to 65.1% and the unemployment rate dropped to 12.6% due to a positive economic growth. Positive tendencies on the Estonian labour market continued in 2012 and 2013, but at a moderate rate. By 2013 the employment rate had already increased to 68.2% and the unemployment rate had dropped to 8.9%. Long-term unemployment and unemployment of young people has decreased fast. Unemployment has also decreased in Ida-Viru County where the population is mostly Russian-speaking. Compared to 2010, a year of economic crisis when the employment rate in Ida-Viru County was 25.6%, the unemployment rate in the said region dropped to 15.0% by 2013. According to forecasts, the employment rate should continue to increase at a moderate rate over the next few years and the unemployment rate should continue to drop.

²² www.praxis.ee

From 2010 to 2013 the unemployment rate of both Estonians and non-Estonians decreased by nearly two times: from 13.3% (2010) to 6.8% (2013) in the case of Estonians and from 23.4% (2010) to 12.4% (2013) in the case of non-Estonians. The unemployment rates of Estonians and non-Estonians differ almost two times, but the difference between employment rates is significantly smaller. During the same period of time, the employment rate of Estonians of 15 to 64 years of age increased from 62.2% to 69.3% and of non-Estonians from 58.4% to 65.7%. But when comparing the rate of participation in employment (in the case of Estonians 74.6% and in the case of non-Estonians 75.2% in 2013), we see that non-Estonians are more active on the labour market. Therefore, when non-Estonians become unemployed they seek employment more frequently than Estonians who remain inactive and thereby leave the labour market. At the same time as general unemployment, the registered unemployment has also decreased. 33,520 unemployed persons were registered with the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund as at 31.12.2013. Compared to the beginning of 2010, registered unemployment has decreased by 2.8 times. The registered unemployment rate has decreased from 14.1% (31.01.2010) to 5.1% (31.12.2013). The number and percentage of unemployed persons who cannot speak Estonian as a proportion of all unemployed persons has also decreased from 35.7% (31.03.2010) to 32.3% (31.12.2013). 10,842 persons who cannot speak Estonian were registered as unemployed persons by the end of 2013, which is three times less than at the time when registered unemployment was at its peak in the first quarter of 2010. Most of them live in Ida-Viru County where unemployment is the highest, but also in Harju County, including the capital Tallinn.

115 projects, the aims of which are to prevent unemployment and inactivity, introduce unemployed and inactive persons into employment, and make better use of the immigration and emigration potential of the workforce have been financed through application rounds opened from 2010 to 2013 on the basis of the measure “Increase of the offer of qualified workforce” of the priority course of action “Long and quality work life” of the implementation plan of the Human Resource Development of the European Social Fund. The total volume of the projects amounted to nearly 34.8 million euros. 21 projects were carried out in Ida-Viru County, and there were nationwide projects which included people from different regions. 27 projects were aimed at non-Estonians or immigrants, but the target groups of many other projects also included non-Estonians. Almost all possible services were provided to non-Estonians within different projects. Training, counselling, work practice, work exercises, support person services, child care services, start-up subsidies, wages subsidies, travel allowances and scholarships were offered, websites were prepared or improved, network co-operation was developed, information days and surveys were carried out, work clubs were organised, flexible forms of work were promoted, and workplaces were adapted within the framework of the projects in Ida-Viru County.

Article 17

1. The Parties undertake not to interfere with the right of persons belonging to national minorities to establish and maintain free and peaceful contacts across frontiers with persons lawfully staying in other States, in particular those with whom they share an ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, or a common cultural heritage.

2. The Parties undertake not to interfere with the right of persons belonging to national minorities to participate in the activities of non-governmental organisations, both at the national and international levels.

Cross-border contacts are supported by collaboration programmes for 2009–2011 and 2012–2014 of the Estonian Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, in the framework of which the parties undertake to promote international and cross-border cultural co-operation between regions of Estonia and Russia, favour direct contacts at the regional level, and carry out joint projects related to art, music, theatre and folk art.

The cross-border co-operation programme for 2014–2020 of Estonia and Russia continues the Estonian-Latvian-Russian cross-border co-operation programme carried out from 2007 to 2013. The co-operation between Estonia and Russia is part of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) which supports the achievement of the objectives of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) for the establishment of welfare and good-neighbourly relations between ENPI partner states and Russia. The ENI is a form of additional help which co-finances the activities of partner states on the basis of a partnership agreement with the European Commission. The partnership agreement is approved by the Government of the Republic. For the preparation of (the implementation plan of) the Estonian-Russian cross-border co-operation programme and relevant projects, topical seminars in four areas were held in the autumn of 2013 with the approval of the working group preparing the programme: economic development (including tourism), the environment, transport, and social development (including culture and sports). The programme also supports the development of cross-border co-operation projects of civic associations.