

YOUTH POLICY REVIEW SERIES

Simon Bart

Liisa Mürsepp

Ilona-Evelyn Rannala

Marti Taru

Maarja Toots

Youth and
Public Policy in

Estonia

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Research Team

Liisa Mürsepp

Ilona-Evelyn Rannala

Marti Taru

Local Coordinator

Maarja Toots

International Advisors

Simon Bart

Marius Ulozas

International Editorial Board

Yael Ohana

Project Coordination

Yael Ohana

Milosz Czerniejewski

Andreas Karsten

John Muir

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Youth Policy Press, Alt-Moabit 89, DG, D-10559 Berlin
Tel +49 30 394 052 555, Fax +49 30 394 052 505
hello@youthpolicypress.com

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List of Acronyms

ENL	Estonian National Youth Council
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
EUOMER	European Union Office of the MER
EYWC	Estonian Youth Work Center
KUTSE	National education program to support completing a vocational education
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender
MER	Ministry of Education and Research
MP	Member of Parliament
KIC	Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission
MP	Member of Parliament
OSF	Open Society Foundations
OSYI	Open Society Youth Initiative
STIs	Sexually transmitted infections
TULE	National education program to support completing a tertiary education
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
YU	Youth Unit (of the MER)

Executive Summary

After regaining independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Estonia went through a profound and countrywide transition process: once a minuscule part of the U.S.S.R., the world's largest country, with its totalitarian political system and centrally planned economy, Estonia has become a democratic nation with an exceptionally liberal economy and its own place within a united Europe. This process has not been painless, as aggressive reforms were found to be necessary and the subsequent swift changes had disparate effects on all members of Estonian society.

In 2011, young people between 7 and 26 years of age made up 22 percent of the total Estonian population. This percentage is going to drop considerably in the coming decades because of a consistently low birth rate and further losses through youth emigration. Estonia is thus an ageing society, which has, in addition to its eventful recent history and the presence of a significant Russian-speaking minority, made the country eligible for this youth policy review.

The legal basis for Estonian youth policy is provided by a number of legislative acts and government programs. As can be seen by the variety of age brackets and words referring to young people, policies pertaining to youth are not rigidly structured across different policy fields. The **National Youth Work Strategy 2006–2013** is the first and main official document; it attempts to coordinate and integrate activities in different spheres into a coherent youth policy based on several national and international documents referring to youth and youth work. The strategy is implemented by the Department of Youth Affairs of the Ministry of Education and Research, together with the Estonian Youth Work Center (a government agency also administered by the Ministry of Education and Research [MER]).

Apparently, consensus exists among all stakeholders that Estonian youth policy must be both horizontal (reflecting different aspects of young people's lives in connection with all relevant policy fields) and integrated (taking a young person's actual state, interests, and needs as starting point). Accordingly, Estonian youth is seen as a diverse and heterogeneous population, with different groups having dissimilar needs. In addition, youth participation is considered to be a priority.

However, a number of gaps in Estonia's youth policy realities have been identified by this study:

- » Cooperation between different ministries and their subordinate organizations for developing and implementing youth-related policies is predominantly issue- or theme-specific. Although the creation of one central unit (e.g., Ministry of Youth) has never been aspired to, institutionalized and permanent cooperative networks in the youth field (between ministries and other actors) are lacking;
- » Among the different groups within Estonian youth, members of the Russian-speaking minority, LGBT youth, and youth at risk appear to be particularly vulnerable or at least as most likely to be ignored by society and policymakers compared with their peers;
- » At least on the local level, the youth field is one of the most vulnerable areas in budget discussions, which indicates to us that the awareness of the need for youth-sensitive budgeting has yet to be developed among some stakeholders;
- » Young people's involvement in youth policy is still rather modest. On the one hand, youth are complaining about a lack of genuine openness among decision makers and the fragmented nature of the youth policy system—both can discourage young people from getting involved. On the other hand, policymakers question young people's ability and willingness to generalize their views to the relevant target groups and to seriously contribute to the decision-making process;
- » In general, Estonian youth policy is still in transition. Accordingly, some developments are not possible to predict.


Based on the abovementioned gaps, the present report offers eight concrete recommendations for policymakers and other actors in the youth field. Some are mainly organizational, others rather substantive:

1. Steps should be taken to increase all actors' awareness of the shift toward integrated and coordinated youth policy, including the promotion of a permanent dialogue with and within the nongovernmental sector;
2. Along with the existing ad hoc collaboration patterns on specific issues, more permanent cooperation networks and other collaboration formats should be created that build on and support contacts between different actors;
3. Cooperation and exchanges between public sector actors and youth field actors should be intensified to improve the application of expertise in youth work;
4. Increase the number of professional child care and mental health specialists and pay more attention to how to work with at-risk groups when training pedagogues and youth workers;
5. Given that a considerable amount of research on young people has been accumulated in different spheres, the goal should be to support communication and collaboration between research, policy, and youth work to reach knowledge-based decisions;
6. An overview of existing youth policies, a systematic descriptive study focusing on policy measures that affect young people, needs to be written; and
7. To gain an adequate understanding of outcomes of policies pertaining to youth, a systematic evaluation of measures affecting young people (taking into account the need to differentiate between specific groups within the youth population) should be done; and
8. In addition to what has already been achieved, the amount of resources allocated to programs supporting youth activism should be increased. Programs and materials should be developed to encourage both young people's readiness to participate as partners and stimulate public officials' enthusiasm for involving youth.



Youth and
Public Policy in

Estonia



Background to the Pilot Review

1

1.1 Rationale for the Pilot Review

This report evaluating youth policy in Estonia is part of a pilot series of six reports reviewing public policies affecting young people in the following countries: Estonia, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Serbia, and Uganda. The pilot project consisted of research teams on the ground to conduct analyses using a specially developed evaluation matrix, assisted and supported in the research process by international advisors. An International Editorial Board supervised and evaluated the pilot process.

The Open Society Youth Initiative (OSYI) provided funding for the pilot project. The Youth Initiative supports young people in their efforts to be agents of positive change and advocates for the full and effective participation of all young people in the political, social, and cultural life of their communities.

The pilot project had the following objectives:

- » To review public policies pertaining to youth (including, but not exclusively, youth-specific policies) in several countries using the draft evaluation matrix specifically developed for the purpose.
- » To make available research that will allow young people to engage in an informed debate on the public policies affecting them and their communities in the countries concerned.
- » To build a pool of young researchers capable of evaluating policies pertaining to youth, including specific youth policies.
- » To contribute to building the capacity of the youth sector in the countries concerned to research public policy issues.
- » To develop the evidence base for pilot advocacy activities in cooperation with the Open Society Youth Initiative (OSYI) and other partners.
- » To broaden the scope of IDEA and others to include elements of the national and international youth sector not yet participating in the network.
- » To develop the capacity of IDEA, the Youth Initiative, and others for evidence-based strategy development for young people and their issues.

1.2 Rationale for the Estonia Review

Estonia was selected as one of six case study countries in part because it is home to a national branch—the Open Estonia Foundation—of the Open Society Foundation (OSF) which promotes a number of important open society issues both within and beyond Estonia’s borders.

Estonia was also selected because it exemplifies most of the priorities laid out in the OSYI’s 2011–2012 strategy. This strategy listed priority countries as those that are conflict-affected; disproportionately affected by inward and/or outward (youth) migration; home to significant minority and/or marginalized communities; and in the process of implementing official youth policies.

Estonia has been an independent democratic country since 1991 with no major conflicts hindering its stable development. However, when analyzing Estonian youth policy, it is important to take into account the context of a transitional society. Estonia’s Soviet past and post-Soviet reforms are important factors that affect the situation of youth as well as policies pertaining to young people. It is also important to stress the impact of Europeanization—pre-accession reforms and joining the European Union in 2004—to the content and process of youth policies in Estonia. In addition to political factors, youth policies in Estonia should be viewed in the context of an ageing population.

1.3 Approach and Methodology

The review has a predominantly descriptive approach, analyzing existing documents, looking at statistics, and presenting different opinions from actors in the field of youth policy in Estonia.

The study involved a mixture of desk research, semi-structured interviews with stakeholders, requests for information from stakeholders, a youth poll, and a field visit with in-depth focus group interviews. The research team used the evaluation matrix as a research plan, adapting it to the Estonian context.

The desk study included analysis of documents, legislation, development plans, budgets, previous reviews of youth policy, youth research, me-

dia, statistics, etc. One of the aims of the desk study was to describe the dimensions of Estonian youth policy and to map the actors of the youth sector who are significant sources of information. During the desk research, the research team drew up a list of individuals to be interviewed and interview plans based on the results of the desk study.

In-depth interviews were conducted with officials, experts, grassroots organizations, and youth representatives—altogether 15 interviewees. Interviews were semi-structured, with open questions to get different opinions about different aspects. The interviews lasted approximately one hour each; all the interviews were recorded.

To get the general youth perspective, three questions were added to an Internet poll, which was carried out with the help of the Estonian National Youth Council (the umbrella organization for youth organizations in Estonia). The total number of respondents was 860. The questions were about youth participation, youth initiative, and what young people need or require from youth policy. The questions had an open structure, enabling respondents to express their opinions freely.

The field trip was held at the beginning of November 2011. During one week, three different focus group interviews were conducted in three different locations in Estonia: Tallinn, Narva, and Tartu. The aim of the focus groups was to discuss the main results of the desk research and individual interviews. The group interviews focused on different important topics that emerged from previous research:

1. The process, coordination, and organization of policies pertaining to youth.
2. Integration of Russian-speaking minority youth.
3. Problems of youth at risk and risky behavior.

1.4 Team Reflections on Drafting the National Report

The process of drafting the national report was intensive throughout. In the beginning, there was more teamwork, with meetings among researchers and the clarifying of the information to be included in each chapter. As chapters had been divided between researchers, it was necessary to agree on how some of the topics would be divided to avoid the repetition of in-

formation. However, repeating the same kind of information still became an issue in some cases and was addressed in the process of finalizing and editing.

The second part of the working process—individual work with documents (desk study) and interviews with stakeholders, analysis of the interviews, and drafting the first version of the report—took the most time. Results were discussed and decisions for improvement made by all Estonian team members before field trips and in the spirit of mutual understanding and support.

The third part of the process was the field trip—which was also very intensive, taking place within one week, although preparations were started some time earlier. The whole Estonian team actively participated in the process, and one or two team members were present at every focus group interview. The focus group interviews gave valuable information about and confirmed the previous findings and were integrated into the draft report shortly after the trip.

What researchers found most valuable during this project was the acquisition of new information and a clearer picture of the youth situation and youth policy in Estonia. Most of all, they appreciated the usefulness of this new knowledge in their other work and projects. The most interesting part of the work was conducting individual and focus group interviews. One researcher experienced hostility during one of the interviews but overcame it by rephrasing questions.

Working in English was perceived as quite an easy task, although checking the correct names of institutions and documents in English took extra time and was therefore considered an extra burden.

The web-based environment KARL was not found to be very helpful—most of the information was shared among Estonian team members through Dropbox and later through Google Docs. Emails, Skype, and phones were also used for regular communication. No major communication or information problems were experienced, with the ways of communication agreed on between team members working well.

All in all, cooperation between team members, communication, and mutual understanding and support were excellent and participation in this project highly valued by everyone.

1.5 Assumptions Underlying the Research Process

Discussions on the approach or, rather, on the relevancy and goal of the current research project and its outcome emerged as an important issue at the beginning of the project.

The team members agreed that in such a short time with the data-collecting methods suggested and available (documents, previous research, and additional valuable comments from experts and stakeholders), and within the given evaluation matrix, the final report could only be viewed as a descriptive short overview of Estonia's situation.

Although the question of youth seen as a “problem” or “resource” in Estonia was never expressly stated by team members during the research, it became obvious that, in general, youth policy in Estonia is driven by the “youth as a resource” philosophy—while the discussion in public on youth issues was predominantly driven by the “youth as a problem” approach. As some of the members of the research team had been quite active in the Estonian youth field before this project, these approaches were undoubtedly present and influential.

Throughout the process, youth policy was viewed as horizontal policy integrated into different policy fields. The researchers found the horizontal approach to be both the aim of policymakers as well as the current reality.

1.6 Conclusion


This introductory chapter has provided an overview of the motivations and goals of the Estonian country team. In addition, their modus operandi was briefly described. The following chapters will present the fruits of their labors. They start with a summary of background on youth in Estonia, delivering insight into the most important issues that affect young people's lives. Chapter 3 continues with an outline of the general policy context in the country, followed by a description of the existing legal framework and the predominant principles guiding the actions of different stakeholders in the youth field. Chapter 4 presents an extensive account of the policy realities affecting youth, including an overview of pertinent government programs and the frameworks for their implementation, as well as a num-

ber of reflections about their possible effects. Chapters 5 and 6 examine the effectiveness of existing policies in practice, shedding light on both policy outcomes and underlying processes. Finally, Chapter 7 concludes with an overall analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the current policy in Estonia and corresponding recommendations for the future.



Youth and
Public Policy in

Estonia

A grayscale world map is shown in the background. A white star is placed on the map, highlighting a specific location in Europe, likely in the Balkan region. The map shows the outlines of continents and countries.

The Situation of Young People

2

2.1 Introduction

To understand the political, demographic, cultural, and socioeconomic context of Estonia, its post-communist past must be taken into account. During and since World War II, Estonia has had two different occupiers—1940 the Soviet occupation, 1941–1944 Nazi occupation, and 1944–1991 again the Soviet Union.¹ After regaining independence from the Soviet Union on August 20, 1991, Estonia began the transition from a totalitarian society and centrally planned economy to a democratic society and market economy. It started with aggressive economic reforms, developing a very liberal economy with almost complete privatization of state land.² The economic growth and swift changes in society affected population groups and regions differently and increased the social and spatial stratification in Estonia. The end point of the post-communist transition period in Estonia is considered to be the date when Estonia joined the European Union³—May 1, 2004, which also could be considered to be the beginning of a new transition period.

Undoubtedly, the above-mentioned upheavals have been crucial to the situation of young people in Estonia (discussed in Chapter 2, which looks at some of the key issues confronting and challenging youth in different life stages). A big part of Chapter 2 relies on the statistics from the youth life-monitoring system Youth Monitor,⁴ which was developed by the Estonian Youth Work Center to help youth policy become more evidence-based.

1. Estonia.eu: Official Gateway to Estonia, www.estonia.eu/about-estonia/country/dates-from-estonian-history.html

2. Ann Realo, “Comparison of Public and Academic Discourses: Estonian Individualism and Collectivism Revisited,” *Culture Psychology* 9 (2003): 47.

3. M. Lauristin and P. Vihalemm, “Recent Historical Developments in Estonia: Three Stages of Transition (1987–1997),” in *Return to the Western World: Cultural and Political Perspectives on the Estonian Post-Communist Transition*, 73–126 (Tartu: Tartu University Press, 1997).

4. Youth Monitor, www.noorteseire.ee/en/

2.2 Demographics

The total population of Estonia in 2011 was 1,294,236, of whom 295,740 (22%) were ages 7–26.⁵ Demographically, Estonia is an ageing society: the number of young people has been decreasing since 2005,⁶ it has been projected that the youth proportion in the total population will drop again in the coming decades.⁷ In addition, only 9.5 percent of Estonians fall into the age 5–14⁸ cohort, which means that the age structure within youth will change as well, making 13–19-year-olds the largest group in youth population.⁹

The youth population includes a large proportion of ethnic Russians (26% in 2009).¹⁰ Other nationalities (Ukrainians, Belarusians, Finns, etc.) form a total of 2 percent of the youth population. In 2010, 7 percent of young residents of Estonia were not citizens.¹¹

The largest groups are those whose citizenship is unknown (12,087 young people) and those who are citizens of the Russian Federation (9,214 young people). The largest number of young people without Estonian citizenship fall into the 20–26 age group, which may be connected to their birth when Estonia was part of the Soviet Union (1991 was the year of Estonian independence). Perhaps, after independence, they did not apply for or receive Estonian citizenship.

Comparing the number of young people by counties, a large proportion (35.5%) live in Harju County, where Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, is located. Ida-Viru County, where most of the Russian-speaking minority lives, and Tartu County also have a bigger proportion of youth than other counties.¹² The center of Tartu County, the city of Tartu, has a particularly high

5. Statistics Estonia, www.stat.ee, preliminary data from the 2011 census

6. Youth Monitor, www.noorteseire.ee/en/indicators/123

7. Statistics Estonia, www.stat.ee

8. Ibid.

9. M. Taru, “Noored statistika peeglis,” in *Youth Monitoring Yearbook 2010: Young People and the Labor Market*, 7–24 (Tallinn: Praxis Center for Policy Studies, 2011).

10. Youth Monitor, www.noorteseire.ee/en/indicators/293

11. Ibid., www.noorteseire.ee/en/indicators/145

12. Ibid., www.noorteseire.ee/en/indicators/287#

number of young people as a large proportion of its residents are university students.¹³

2.3 Access to Information

Today, Estonia is described as “one of the most advanced e-societies in the world”¹⁴—it is the younger part of the population who most frequently use the Internet to get information and services. In 2010, 68 percent of households had access to the Internet at home.¹⁵ A number of different e-services are offered to citizens: e-elections, e-taxes, e-police, e-health care, e-banking, and e-school. Since 2003, all Estonian schools have been able to use the web-based school-home communication environment e-school, which is designed to engage parents more actively in the study process. The hope had been that the e-voting system would have a positive effect on youth participation in elections.¹⁶ Online versions of daily newspapers and other information portals are important sources of everyday information. However, a majority of Estonian youth is still barely interested in politics¹⁷ and, turnout in the last national elections by the youngest voters was comparatively low.¹⁸ In addition, as will be shown later in this review (e.g., section 3.3), not all categories of youth in Estonia have the same abilities and opportunities to get the information necessary for their individual situations.

A number of information and counseling sites help users find their way in a range of important areas like education, training, work, leisure, relationships, health, social security, and traveling in Europe. Webpages of secondary, vocational, and tertiary-level schools provide information on study and training opportunities. Online job-seeking portals and related webpag-

13. Statistics Estonia, www.stat.ee

14. Estonia.eu: Official Gateway to Estonia, estonia.eu/about-estonia/economy-a-it/e-estonia.html

15. Statistics Estonia, www.stat.ee

16. Estonia.eu: Official Gateway to Estonia, estonia.eu/about-estonia/economy-a-it/e-estonia.html

17. Youth Monitor, www.noorteseire.ee/en/indicators/246

18. Ibid., www.noorteseire.ee/en/indicators/244; Estonian National Electoral Committee, www.vvk.ee/varasemad/?v=rk2011

es can be used to apply for a job. Normally, websites of youth organizations, youth work organizations, and municipalities also give information on leisure activities. For offline counseling opportunities, please see section 4.3.1 (paragraph on counseling institutions).

2.4 Education and Employment

In Estonia, nine years of basic education are compulsory, after which secondary education can be continued in an academic gymnasium or a vocational school. Seventy percent of young people in the 7–26¹⁹ age group are in the formal education system. The number of students in higher education is 69,113, 60 percent of whom are female.²⁰ One of the most problematic issues in education is the high drop-out rate—in general education, the number of drop-outs was 442 in 2010. The relatively low, though increasing, popularity of vocational schools is also seen as problematic. The total number of students in vocational education in 2010 was 28,012, the drop-out rate in that year was as high as 5,887.²¹

According to the youth life-monitoring systems' Yearbook 2010, almost two-thirds of the country's youth are engaged in study.²² In the 15–19 age group, the largest proportion of young people are students (89% in 2010), with 8 percent active in the labor market. In the 20–24 age group, the proportion of students dropped to 35 percent in 2010, while economically active youth rose to 40 percent. In 2010, 15 percent of young people ages 20–24 were active both in the educational and economic fields. In the 25–29 age group, more were active in the labor market (76% in 2010) than in education. The proportion of young people ages 25–29 who were only studying, or studying and working, dropped to 10 percent. The changes in a young person's status in society are linked to the changes in their life cycle: young Estonians typically finish their education in their early twenties. The most problematic sector of the youth population in Estonia is those who are both

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19. Taru (2011, 10–11).

20. Statistics Estonia, www.stat.ee

21. Ibid.

22. Taru (2011, 8–10).

economically inactive and not in school, accounting for 7 percent of young people ages 15–26 in 2010.²³

The unemployment rate among young people (15–26 years old) in 2010 was 27.9 percent,²⁴ but the unemployment percentage itself tells only part of the story. When age is taken into account, we see how the unemployment rate varied from a high of 60 percent among 15–19-year-olds to 18 percent among 25–29-year-olds; this latter figure was close to the general population average (17%). However, the unemployment rates give only part of the picture since they do not take into account the economic activity rate, which varies significantly between these age groups. The proportion of unemployed persons was lowest in the age group of 15–19-year-olds (5%), the youngest age group is still mostly in school, but had the highest official unemployment rate (60%)—i.e., the percentage of people from this age group actively but unsuccessfully seeking employment. The proportion of unemployed persons was highest (18%) among 20–24-year-olds, who officially had an unemployment rate of 30 percent. The proportion of unemployed persons (15%) was a bit lower in the oldest age group, which had the lowest official unemployment rate (18%).²⁵ In comparison with previous years, the unemployment rate started to rise in 2007, connected, no doubt, to the global economic crisis. The youth population, compared with the rest of society, has proven to be most vulnerable to those developments.²⁶ The unemployment rate has increased sharply among males,²⁷ making them the most vulnerable group in the youth population.

The high unemployment rate among men has been attributed to the significant changes in the construction and manufacturing industries.²⁸ The gender differences in the labor market are also connected to level of education. For example, the highest unemployment rate is among those who have only primary education or less (46% in 2010), and lowest among those

23. Youth Monitor, www.noorteseire.ee/en/indicators/295

24. Ibid., www.noorteseire.ee/en/indicators/79

25. Taru (2011, 11–13).

26. M. Luuk, “Trends in Labor Market During the Crisis,” *Quarterly Bulletin of Statistics Estonia* (2009): 74–83, www.stat.ee/dokumendid/37731

27. Youth Monitor, www.noorteseire.ee/en/indicators/371

28. Luuk (2009).

who have higher education (11.9%)²⁹—almost 70 percent of college and university graduates are female.³⁰ Statistics also show that the unemployment rate is higher among non-Estonians (35.2% in 2010).³¹

When describing the socioeconomic situation of Estonian youth, it is important to note that, in 2009, 17 percent of young people (0–26) in Estonia were living in risk of poverty.³² The risk of poverty is especially high among non-Estonians.³³ The number of administrative and criminal offenses committed by minors (ages 14–17) has increased in recent years.³⁴ In 2010, arrested juvenile offenders represented 1.3 percent of the population, and those convicted accounted for 0.9 percent. Combined, arrested and convicted offenders ages 18–24 reached 20 percent.³⁵

2.5 Mobility and Migration

The most important group of young people spending a period abroad is youth ages 15–29, who constitute 34.6 percent of the youth population (almost the same as the EU average). Most young emigrants move to Finland, the United Kingdom, or Germany.³⁶ From 2005 through 2010, emigration among the youth population was essentially stable. However, an important change occurred in the percentage of youth immigrating—making the difference between the number of emigrating and immigrating youth drop from 1,523 (in 2005) to 370 (in 2009).³⁷ Despite the increase in immigration, net migration is still negative—thus, a number of young people have decided to stay abroad for a longer period.

29. Youth Monitor, www.noorteseire.ee/en/indicators/374

30. Statistics Estonia, www.stat.ee

31. Youth Monitor, www.noorteseire.ee/en/indicators/372

32. Youth Monitor, noorteseire.ee/en/indicators/127

33. Ibid., noorteseire.ee/en/indicators/83

34. Ibid., noorteseire.ee/en/indicators/302

35. Ibid., noorteseire.ee/en/indicators/290

36. Ibid., www.noorteseire.ee/en/indicators/224

37. Taru (2011, 8).

2.6 Health

The number of deaths in the youth population has changed substantially when compared with the years 2005–2010—deaths were highest in 2007 (242) and lowest in 2010 (133).³⁸ In the youth population (5–24 years) more than half the deaths (56%) occurred in the 20–24 age group.³⁹ More young males than young females died in the same timeframe. For example, in 2010, there were 80.6 percent more deaths among young men than women in the 20–24 age group.⁴⁰ Three main causes of death can be distinguished: injury and poisoning, accidents, and suicide—all of which are also connected to gender.⁴¹

Gender is also an important element in certain behaviors that may be harmful to health, with alcohol and drug use being higher among male youth (16–24 years) than among their female counterparts.⁴²

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in youth increased abruptly after Estonian independence, but, fortunately, have decreased since 2000.⁴³ The abortion rate, as well as the percentage of teenagers giving birth, is higher than in other European countries. However, both numbers have declined considerably since the 1990s and continue to drop.⁴⁴ This can be explained by an increase in sexual knowledge among young people: for example, the percentage of Estonian youngsters using condoms at first sexual intercourse is much higher than 10 or 20 years ago.⁴⁵

38. Youth Monitor, www.noorteseire.ee/en/indicators/147

39. *Ibid.*, www.noorteseire.ee/en/indicators/148

40. *Ibid.*

41. *Ibid.*, www.noorteseire.ee/en/indicators/222

42. *Ibid.*, www.noorteseire.ee/en/indicators/108; www.noorteseire.ee/en/indicators/164

43. World Health Organization (WHO), Amor Youth Clinic Network in Estonia (2009: 9).

44. Statistics Estonia, www.stat.ee/en; WHO, (2009: 11).

45. Youth Monitor, www.noorteseire.ee/en/indicators/406; WHO (2009: 12).

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has summarized some of the most important issues Estonian youth have been confronted with so far. Significant improvements have been made since independence from the Soviet Union: most notably, Estonian youth is remarkably competent in gaining access to and using information. The awareness of personal health, which used to be relatively poor among young people in Estonia, has increased considerably in recent years. However, Estonian youth continue to face a number of challenges: for example, Estonia being an ageing society is not without its implications for youth, both in terms of present visibility and future responsibility. Within Estonian youth, the Russian-speaking minority, a part of the country's Soviet legacy, is particularly vulnerable—young Russians have struggled more than their Estonian peers in several fields. The following chapter will explore how Estonian society, especially public policy, approaches such challenges.



Youth and
Public Policy in

Estonia



The Policy Context

3

3.1 Introduction

Estonia has been a parliamentary democracy since 1991. The Constitution of Estonia came into force in 1992. The Riigikogu, which has legislative power, is a unicameral parliament of 101 members; members are elected for a four-year term.⁴⁶ The last elections were held in March 2011, where the Estonian Reform Party, a center-right party with a classic liberal ideology, won a plurality of the votes (28.6%). Other parties that won seats in the Riigikogu were the Estonian Center Party (23.3%), the Union of Pro Patria and Res Publica (20.5%), and the Social Democratic Party (17.1%).⁴⁷

Executive power is exercised by the Estonian government led by the prime minister, currently Mr. Andrus Ansip of the Estonian Reform Party. The governing coalition consists of two political parties: Estonian Reform Party and Union of Pro Patria and Res Publica. There are 11 ministries: Ministry of Education and Research; Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Defense; Ministry of the Environment; Ministry of Culture; Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication; Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Internal Affairs (which has two ministers: the Minister of Internal Affairs and Minister of Regional Affairs); Ministry of Social Affairs; and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁴⁸

The president of Estonia has mainly representative functions, although he/she retains a number of executive powers: for example, he/she may veto a parliamentary bill. The president is elected for five years by the Riigikogu or, in case no candidate secures a two-thirds majority in the Riigikogu, by a special electoral body. In August 2011, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves was reelected for a second term.⁴⁹

The highest juridical power belongs to the Supreme Court. The court system is divided into three levels: courts of first instance (county and city courts and administrative courts), courts of appeal (circuit courts), and the Supreme Court. The legal system is based primarily on the German model,

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46. Estonia.eu: Official Gateway to Estonia, www.estonia.eu/about-estonia/country/estonia-at-a-glance.html

47. Estonian National Electoral Committee, www.vvk.ee/varasemad/?v=rk2011

48. Estonian Government, valitsus.ee/en/government/prime-minister-and-ministers

49. Estonia.eu: Official Gateway to Estonia.

especially within the field of civil law. The Estonian legal system is subject to international law as well as European Union law. Consequently, general principles and norms of international law and directly applicable rules of European Union law form an integral part of the national legal system.⁵⁰

The following sections of this chapter are concerned with those aspects of Estonian and international legislation that relate in one way or another to the lives of young people in the country. In addition, the principles and attitudes underlying such legislation are explained and compared and contrasted with the views of different stakeholders and young people themselves.

3.2 Key Definitions Underpinning Policymaking

According to the Estonian Youth Work Strategy 2006–2013,⁵¹ youth policy is defined as “a purposeful and coordinated activity in different spheres of life that proceeds from the actual needs and challenges of young people.” The Youth Work Strategy is the first and main official document that attempts to coordinate and integrate activities in different spheres into a coherent youth policy.

Age brackets that can be taken as definitions of youth are found in a number of legislative acts of the Republic of Estonia. For example the Youth Work Act,⁵² which provides the legal basis for the organization of youth work, defines a young person as “a person between 7 and 26 years of age.” More specific and narrow is the definition of the Juvenile Sanctions Act,⁵³ which lays out sanctions applicable to minors and gives rules on the competence of juvenile committees, in which a minor is defined as “a person between 7 and 18 years of age.” The Labor Market Services and Benefits Act⁵⁴ defines a young person as “16–24 years of age.” The Child Protection

50. Ibid.

51. Ministry of Education and Research of Estonia (2006), www.hm.ee/index.php?popup=download&id=7157

52. *State Gazette* (RT I 2010, 44, 262).

53. Ibid., (RT I 1998, 17, 264).

54. Ibid., (RT I 2005, 54, 430).

Act,⁵⁵ which provides for the internationally recognized rights, freedoms, duties, and protection of the child, defines a child as “a human being below the age of 18 years.” The last definition is also used, for example, in the Advertising Act.⁵⁶

As can be seen from the legislation, defining youth in Estonia is connected to age groups that are categorized as youth population. Different words referring to youth in Estonia include youth, child, juvenile, minor, etc. The variety of definitions of youth reveals that policies pertaining to youth are not rigidly structured across different policy fields.

Youth policy and youth work in Estonia are primarily based on the National Youth Work Strategy 2006–2013⁵⁷ and are implemented by the Department of Youth Affairs of the Ministry of Education and Research, together with the Estonian Youth Work Center (a government agency administered by the Ministry of Education and Research). For developing the strategy, the following documents have been primary review sources:

- » the white paper on the youth policy of the EU and other development issues specified in the framework of EU youth policy cooperation
- » the Council of Europe’s framework document for youth policy and documents of youth policy indicators
- » the European Council’s expert report of youth policy in Estonia
- » action plans passed at the second Forum of Estonian Youth Work (2003) and the 2004 assessments of their results by the area round tables sponsored by the Estonian Youth Work Center
- » the final document of the third Forum of Estonian Youth Work (2005)

The aim of the strategy is to draw together two areas:

1. **youth policy**—a more extensive area; unified approach to all activities targeted at young people in all areas of their life
2. **youth work**—a narrower area; one of the activity areas of youth policy that creates possibilities for young people from age 7 through age 26 for

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55. *Ibid.*, (RT I 1992, 28, 370).

56. *Ibid.*, (RT I 06.01.2011, 18).

57. Ministry of Education and Research of Estonia (2006).

development of their personalities in addition to curriculum education, jobs, and family

The necessity for a youth policy arises from the need to specify the actions that society must take to provide every young person in Estonia with the possibility for personal development, support and training for positive self-identification, self-education, self-affirmation, and self-respect and through these strengthen youth's ability and willingness to take responsibility for social welfare and development. As the paths of young people's development are very diverse and full of various influences, youth policy has to be a horizontal policy and reflect different aspects of young people's lives. It is essential to emphasize the actions targeted at young people, e.g., employment, education, cultural policies, as well as the activities targeted at the actual needs and challenges faced by young people, i.e., coordinated and purposeful action in different spheres of life or integrated youth policy.

As the result of an integrated youth policy, a young person is expected to get the experiences that will enable successful management of the challenges, choices, and opportunities ahead, including:

- » Participation opportunities and experience
- » Studying
- » Creativity and possibility of self-expression
- » Information and guidance
- » Experience in social membership
- » Safety and welfare
- » Prevention of problems and support in dealing with them

Integrated youth policy is grounded on the following principles:

- » Starting point is the young person's actual condition, interests, needs
- » Youth participation
- » Cooperation between different areas

In accordance with these principles, young people must be viewed as a diverse and heterogeneous group when planning measures and activities. In a broader context, the following differentiation of young people according to their age is possible: age groups 7–11, 12–17, and 18–26. These groups have

dissimilar needs. Within these groups, however, are several subgroups that might be based on cultural, national, gender, and health-specific realities. Thus, the integrated youth policy principle of “starting point is the young person’s actual state” has a special meaning and highlights the necessity for consistent study and analyses of young people’s lifestyles.

The main activity areas of youth policy where decisions about youth and young people’s lives are made are youth work, education, employment, health, culture, social policy, environment, national defense, and family policy.

The strategy also gives the fundamentals and principles of youth work, which are more specific than those for youth policy. Youth work is the creation of circumstances for the developmental activities of youth that enable them to act outside their families, curriculum, education, and work. Participation in youth work is voluntary—based on the free choice of young people. Youth work starts where young people, their views, opinions, and interests are. It creates the circumstances for youth’s personal (personality) and social development through the acquisition of new knowledge and skills in formal and informal educational environments. Youth work helps shape young people’s ethics, public spirit, and respect for other cultures. Youth work assists youth in learning about themselves, others, and their surroundings through planned and spontaneous activities. Youth work strives for youth participation in social order, encourages young people to take responsibility and make knowledgeable decisions about their lives, values and the development of society.

Principles of youth work:

- » Youth work is to be performed for youth and with youth by involving them in making decisions about youth work
- » Youth work proceeds from the needs, interests, and wishes of youth
- » Youth work is based on the participation and free will of youth
- » Youth work is based on the initiative of youth
- » Youth work is entwined with national and international integration
- » Youth work is done employing ethical principles and the principle of equal treatment

- » Youth work is based on the principle of tolerance and partnership in work with youth

Principles of the organization of youth work:

- » youth work is provided as near as is possible to young people's neighborhoods
- » the main organizers of youth work are local governments, youth associations, and youth work institutions
- » the execution and environment of youth work are safe, of good quality, varied, innovative, and directed toward creating new (surplus) value
- » the surroundings of youth work are accepted by youth and facilitate formal and informal learning
- » youth work organizers and youth workers are honest and open-minded about the aims and methods of youth work
- » with the nonprofit sector, the public sector enters into agreements for the fulfillment of some functions of youth work and funds their administration according to the financing principles set by local governments and/or the state
- » the structure of youth work enables youth to participate in decision making, primarily in the formulation of national and local municipality development plans and in planning and distribution of the financial means of youth work
- » youth work is to be planned, coordinated, and performed at different administrative levels in cooperation with different sectors
- » youth work needs purposeful planning, consistent analysis, and regular assessment
- » youth participation in and the quality of nonformal learning are indicators of the success of youth work

The National Youth Work Strategy also states that there is a need for evidence-based policy, which means consistent study and analysis of young people's lives. More specifically, the strategy notes that the following are required:

- » consistent and systematic assessment and analysis to enable comparison

- » improvement of the quality and capacity of youth studies
- » due consideration of study results in formulating policies

Analyses of various legislation show that the youth population is categorized differently depending on the context of the act:

The Constitution of the Republic of Estonia⁵⁸ declares that an Estonian citizen who has attained 18 years of age has the right to vote. In elections for local government councils, persons who reside permanently in the territory of the local government and have attained 18 years of age have the right to vote under conditions prescribed by law. Every Estonian citizen who has attained 21 years of age and has the right to vote may be a candidate for the Riigikogu. An Estonian citizen by birth who has attained 40 years of age may be nominated as a candidate for president of the Republic.

The General Part of the Civil Code Act⁵⁹ distinguishes between passive and active legal capacity, according to which persons shall be guaranteed the status as a subject of law pursuant to their age. According to the act, persons who have attained 18 years of age (adult) have full active legal capacity and minors between 7 and 18 years of age have restricted active legal capacity. A minor under the age of 7 is without active legal capacity—in this case transactions in the name of the minor shall be entered into by his or her legal representative. Also, the act regulates extension of restricted active legal capacity of a minor of at least 15 years of age, according to which a court may extend the restricted active legal capacity of a minor of at least 15 years of age if this is in the interests of the minor.

The Education Act⁶⁰ and **The Basic School and Upper Secondary Schools Act**⁶¹ determine the age for compulsory education. Children who attain 7 years of age by October 1 of the current year are subject to the obligation to attend school. A student shall attend school until such time as he or she has acquired basic education or attained 17 years of age.

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58. *State Gazette* (RT I 27.04.2011, 2).

59. *Ibid.*, (RT I 06.12.2010, 12).

60. *Ibid.*, (RT I 1992, 12, 192).

61. *Ibid.*, (RT I 2010, 41, 240).

The Family Law Act⁶² determines that only an adult (a person who has attained 18 years of age) may get married. For a minor between 15 and 18 years of age, a court may grant permission to marry. A child may be adopted only by a person with legal active capacity of at least 25 years of age. A court may, as an exception, allow a person who has attained at least 18 years of age to adopt. A child who is at least 10 years of age may be adopted only with his or her consent. A child shall grant his or her consent in person. Also, in other issues (e.g., the change of the given name or surname) concerning a child, the child's wishes will be considered if the child is at least 10 years of age (also stated in The Social Welfare Act). The wishes of a child younger than 10 years of age shall also be considered if the development level of the child so permits. A child who is at least 14 years of age may give consent for acknowledgment of paternity in person with the consent of his or her legal representative. The act also determines that a child of less than 18 years of age and an adult child under 21 years of age who continue full-time education are entitled to receive financial support from parents and/or grandparents.

The State Family Benefits Act⁶³ states that family benefits are granted and paid to: permanent residents of Estonia; aliens residing in Estonia who hold a temporary residence permit or who have a permit issued by a member state of the European Union, the European Economic Area or the Swiss Confederation; aliens residing in Estonia on the basis of a temporary right of residence; family members residing in Estonia and children who do not live with the family due to studying abroad have the right to receive family benefits. Every child has the right to receive a child allowance from birth until he or she attains 16 years of age. A child who is enrolled in a basic school, upper secondary school, or vocational school that operates on the basis of basic education or who is without basic education and is enrolled in a vocational educational institution has the right to receive a child allowance until he or she attains 19 years of age. When the child attains 19 years of age, the allowance shall be paid until the end of the school year.

.....
62. Ibid., (RT I 21.12.2010, 14).

63. Ibid., (RT I 2001, 95, 587).

The Republic of Estonia Child Protection Act⁶⁴ determines the restriction of freedom of movement of minors. A minor under 16 years of age is prohibited from being in a public place from 23.00 to 06.00 without being accompanied by an adult. During the period from June 1 to August 31, any minor is prohibited from being in a public place from 00.00 to 05.00 without being accompanied by an adult.

The Employment Contracts Act⁶⁵ states that a natural person who has attained 18 years of age and has active legal capacity or restricted active legal capacity may be an employee. It puts some restrictions on minors. An employer may enter into an employment contract with a minor of 13–14 years of age or a minor of 15–16 years of age subject to the obligation to attend school and allow them to work if the duties are simple and do not require any major physical or mental effort (light work). Minors of 7–12 years of age are only allowed to do light work in the field of culture, art, sports, or advertising. Contracts with minors need the consent of his or her legal representative. Contracts with minors of 7–14 years of age additionally need approval from a labor inspector and, in some cases from a child protection official.

The act determines also (full-time) working hours for minors:

- » employees who are 7–12 years of age may work 3 hours per day and 15 hours per seven days
- » employees who are 13–14 years of age or subject to the obligation to attend school may work 4 hours per day and 20 hours per seven days
- » employees who are 15 years of age and not subject to the obligation to attend school may work 6 hours per day and 30 hours per seven days
- » employees who are 16 years of age and not subject to the obligation to attend school and employees who are 17 years of age may work 7 hours per day and 35 hours per seven days

The Labor Market Services and Benefits Act⁶⁶ determines that a young person of 16 up to 24 years of age is deemed to be a long-term unemployed

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64. Ibid., (RT I 1992, 28, 370).

65. Ibid., (RT I 2009, 5, 35).

66. Ibid., (RT I 2005, 54, 430).

if he or she, for at least six months immediately preceding registration as unemployed, has not been engaged in work or in an activity equal to work. A person less than 16 years of age shall not be registered as unemployed; a person less than 13 years of age shall not be registered as a job seeker. The act also determines that unemployed persons of 16 up to 24 years of age, persons with disabilities, persons who are not proficient in Estonian and persons released from prison belong to the group of people with a higher risk of not finding employment and thus in need of special assistance.

Wage subsidies may be paid for the employment of unemployed persons of 16–24 years of age who have been registered as unemployed for more than six consecutive months and have not found work during that time. An unemployed person who is 16–17 years of age shall participate in public work for up to 7 hours per day or up to 25 hours per week. Business start-up subsidies may be applied for by an unemployed person who has attained at least 18 years of age.

The Penal Code⁶⁷ states that a person who at the time of commission of a criminal offense is less than 14 years of age shall not incur punishment.

The Code of Criminal Procedure⁶⁸ determines the specifications concerning hearing of witnesses who are minors: a witness under 14 years of age shall be heard in the presence of a child protection official, social worker, or psychologist.

The Juvenile Sanctions Act,⁶⁹ which provides sanctions applicable to minors and sets standards for the competence of juvenile committees, applies to a minor (less than 18 years of age) who has committed an offense (or a crime) and has not attained the age of criminal responsibility (i.e., is younger than 14 years of age). It also states that the minor can be influenced without application of criminal liability/without the imposition of a punishment or the application of criminal proceedings. A juvenile committee may apply to a court for permission to send a minor who is of 12 years of age or older to a school for students with special needs. In addition and as an

67. Ibid., (RT I 2011, 51).

68. Ibid., (RT I 2011, 45).

69. Ibid., (RT I 1998, 17, 264).

exception, a permit for sending to a school for students with special needs may also be applied for if the minor is of at least 10 years of age.

The Defense Forces Service Act⁷⁰ requires every male Estonian citizen to serve in the defense forces. The Defense Resources Agency registers a person eligible to be drafted when the person attains 17 years of age. Every male Estonian citizen between 16 and 60 years of age is liable to service in the defense forces. Persons eligible to be drafted shall be called up for compulsory military service between the ages of 18 and 27 (inclusive).

The Traffic Act⁷¹ sets the minimum age of drivers depending on the category of powered vehicle. The right to drive may be granted to persons who are at least:

A limited right to drive motor vehicles in category B may be granted to a person of 16 to 17 years of age on the condition that his or her parent (legal guardian) or a person authorized by the parent (legal guardian) is next to him or her in the power-driven vehicle.

A person of at least 10 years of age may cycle on a carriageway. A minor who is at least 8 years of age may cycle on a carriageway under direct supervision of a legal representative or a person authorized by the parent. A person of at least 14 years of age may drive a small moped. Cyclists between 10 and 15 years of age and moped drivers between 14 and 15 years of age shall hold corresponding driving privileges when cycling or driving on a carriageway.

The Weapons Act⁷² states that a person who is at least 18 years of age may own a sporting firearm, pneumatic or gas weapon, crossbow, or smoothbore gun. Such person may acquire and own a hunting gun with a rifled barrel or a combination hunting gun on the condition that he or she holds a hunting certificate. A person of at least 21 years of age may acquire, own, and possess all weapons that are permitted for use for civilian purposes, except for truncheons. Some weapons may be possessed, carried, stored, or conveyed by persons who engage in corresponding sports and have attained at least 10 years of age. Also, the act establishes that sporting

.....
70. Ibid., (RT I 2011, 58).

71. Ibid., (RT I 17.03.2011, 21).

72. Ibid., (RT I 04.05.2011, 8).

firearms may be rented to persons who are of at least 16 years of age. At a firing range of an educational institution or a shooting sports organization, a person who is at least 12 years of age may be issued a shooting firearm for use under the direct supervision of a shooting instructor or the minor's parent if the parent holds a weapons permit.

The Alcohol Act⁷³ and **the Tobacco Act**⁷⁴ determine that a person of less than 18 years of age (minor) shall not smoke or consume smokeless tobacco products and consume alcoholic beverages. To observe the prohibition, a seller may demand identification from the buyer and refuse to sell tobacco products or alcohol if the buyer fails to present such identification.

The Sport Act⁷⁵ establishes that minors residing in Estonia who are not citizens of another state have the right to participate in international championships in the Estonian national league or individually.

3.3 Visibility of Youth in Society

The visibility of youth by relevant stakeholders has become better in recent years. The shift has been supported by the Youth Work Strategy, which emphasizes the significance of coordinated and integrated youth policy. In the interviews with individuals from different institutions and organizations, various areas were pointed out that have not changed much in this respect and need some attention. For example, some institutions don't see youth as their target group and haven't developed programs for youth. Some departments have mentioned youth in official documents, but, in practical work, they lack the knowledge or resources to involve the youth population. Also, cooperation between different departments and NGOs in the youth field tends to be fragmented.

The field of youth policy in Estonia has different actors and structures. The Ministry of Education and Research has the Youth Department that is responsible for developing and implementing the concept of integrated youth policy as well as the youth work policy. Other ministries that have

.....
73. Ibid., (RT I 18.03.2011, 4).

74. Ibid., (RT I 18.11.2010, 5).

75. Ibid., (RT I 2005, 22, 148).

a relatively significant influence on policies pertaining to youth include the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Interior. In the Riigikogu, the Cultural Affairs Committee is in charge of youth issues.

In May 2011, several MPs helped to form a parliamentary group to support management of youth issues. Currently, the group has 15 members.⁷⁶

Several nonpublic actors and organizations participate in discussions about youth issues and offer youth services. Some of these central organizations are the Estonian Association of Youth Councilors; the Estonian Open Youth Centers Association; the Estonian National Youth Council; the Federation of Estonian Student Unions; the Estonian School Student Council Union; the Estonian National Committee of UNICEF; the NGO Open Republic for non-Estonian Youth; the National Agency of the Youth in Action Program; and the Estonian Youth Work Center. In 2010, youth councils working together with county governments were operational in all 15 counties of Estonia, with youth councils being operational in 43 municipalities.

To understand how youth is perceived, interviews show some of the different subjects and dimensions connected to youth. The main subjects highlighted by the Youth Unit of the MER and by the Estonian Youth Work Center were youth participation; youth at risk; the school drop-out rate; least-advantaged youth entering the labor market; the role of youth work; juvenile offenders; crime prevention strategies; resocialization of prisoners; long-day schools; sports and hobby education; youth organizations; health education; HIV and AIDS prevention strategies; alcohol, smoking and drug prevention strategies; volunteering; child protection; protection of vulnerable groups; cross-cultural integration and tolerance issues; child allowance; support systems for children and young families; child poverty; quality of education; youth with disabilities; unemployment; health care in schools and in specialized schools; abortion (legal aspects for minors); and health issues among military conscripts.

The departments of Children's Rights, Social Security, Labor Market, and Health of the Ministry of Social Affairs handle various policy issues connected to youth. The main themes that came out of the interviews were

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76. Parliament of Estonia, www.riigikogu.ee/?op=ems&page=view_pohiandmed&lang=ee&pid=1350852&u=2011111035030

child protection and rights; career information and services inside the education system; youth at risk; youth with disabilities; programs for young people to resume interrupted tertiary education (TULE) and vocational education (KUTSE); promoting vocational education; resocializing persons with criminal backgrounds and their entrance into labor market; business start-up support; and knowledge of rights. The interviewees stated that in the Ministry of Social Affairs youth is not their specific responsibility. The functioning of the ministry is subject-based—unemployment, disabled people, family policy, and youth-related themes and issues constitute integral aspects of its policy areas. There is no specifically youth-oriented policy, although policy measures also pertain to young people.

The Labor Market Department of the Ministry of the Interior defines youth differently from the Youth Work Strategy. While the latter defines youth as that part of the population ages 7–26 years, the Labor Market Department considers the youth population to be ages 16–24 years. In the labor policy area, youth-related policy measures are defined by the Labor Market Services and Benefits Act. The department sees youth as a group at risk, but the department is neither currently developing nor planning to develop specifically youth-oriented policy measures because it doesn't want to divide people into smaller groups. Unemployment issues are not seen as age-specific, but rather related to a lack of education or skills.

The subjects highlighted by the Department of Cultural Diversity and Integration in the Ministry of Culture were cross-cultural integration policy; learning programs in museums for youth and immigrants; sports; youth programs; formal and informal language learning; youth cooperation activities; identity formation; and national community. The Department of Cultural Diversity and Integration defines integration as a way to have different ethnic and other groups move successfully into the wider society. The department sees young persons from other ethnic groups as members of society whose participation in the labor market will help integrate them. According to interviewees, language knowledge is no longer the main issue, but rather the degree of interaction with others to practice and improve existing language skills.

The Criminal Policy Department in the Ministry of Justice concentrated on the following youth-related themes: juvenile proceedings; monitoring of juvenile victims; juvenile crime statistics; violence issues within families;

youth with serious behavior problems; crime prevention programs; and support systems.

The Estonian National Agency of the Youth in Action Program highlighted: youth participation and involvement in different ministries and local governments; youth councils; voluntary service; and youth-initiative projects. Members of the agency see themselves as a link between state institutions, NGOs, and the youth population in general.

The Association of Estonian Open Youth Centers, which is a national nongovernmental umbrella organization of youth centers, was most concerned about services for socially excluded young people; youth belonging to risk groups; nonformal education; and involving youth with youth work activities. The interviewee stated that the overall opinion is that the youth in youth work centers are mainly young outcasts, but in reality those young people, who somehow do not fit so well in the school environment, are positively active in youth work centers.

The representative of UNICEF Estonia stated in the interview that one of their objectives was to support implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The interviewee pointed out that most of the measures are concentrating on young children, but not enough attention is being paid to the teenaged youth population. Other subjects touched on were youth entrepreneurship; youth at risk; charity projects with schools; value-based knowledge; and the role of youth workers. UNICEF sees itself as an advisory body that contributes to democratization of society. Also, UNICEF contributes to youth visibility in the wider society with different projects and programs like Child Friendly Cities.

The Estonian School Student Union was most concerned with subjects in the field of education: evaluation of creative subjects; values education; free school lunch also for high school students; teachers' salary and their position in society; examination systems in high schools and entrance examinations in universities; youth activities and youth initiatives; socially less-privileged students; disabled and excluded groups; and child poverty. In political discussions, the group sees itself as discussants and partners who propose possible solutions. They believe that they have become equal partners with the Ministry of Education and Research, which is seen as an opportunity to get things done. The interviewee stated that youth's posi-

tion in youth policy is quite good, citing the high number of different youth organizations representing different groups. The general problem involves youth's position in society and youth not taking the initiative or not being very active in public discussions or standing up for their rights.

The interviewee from the Estonian Gay Youth organization highlighted: youth education; youth work; youth information; equal access to education and hobby schools; and gender issues in curriculums and textbooks. The interviewee stated that Estonian Gay Youth as an organization has a position in the youth policy field in Estonia and is involved in different discussions. But, still, their voice seems to not be taken into account in the practice when developing different measures and policies. Also of concern was that LGBT issues are seen in society as a problem and the opportunities for gay youth to get information or services are few. Also, in the media and in political discussions, LGBT issues are only discussed in the context of legislation on HIV and AIDS, without going any further. The interviewee stated that gay youth should be seen more as a vulnerable group in society and should have more involvement in youth policy measures.

Generally, the relevant stakeholders divide youth in Estonia into three groups, depending on how they spend their free time: those who belong to youth organizations and actively participate in civil society, those who are active in sports or other areas of interest, and those who do nothing in their spare time and who are seen as youth at risk. The stakeholders realize that young people's opinions, which are mostly received through youth organizations, are the views of the active and organized part of youth. What is problematic is getting the opinions of the least-advantaged groups or at-risk groups who do not belong to any politically active organization—but are those to whom they want to offer their services. Youth at risk is seen in the context of poverty, school drop-outs, delinquency, as well as HIV and AIDS.

Other youth groups were quite visible in the interviews, e.g., members of the Russian-speaking minority and disabled young people. Russian-speaking youth suffer from poor knowledge of their rights in relation to different support systems because they have problems finding information. As for disabled young people or youth with special needs, the stakeholders are aware that too few effective measures or programs are available.

Young people's involvement in youth policy is still rather modest. According to the interviewees, the reasons are twofold: on the one hand, society lacks genuine openness to youth and the youth policy system is seen to be fragmented—both of which can discourage young people from getting involved. On the other hand, according to policymakers, young people often don't have the knowledge to express and then generalize their own concerns. Therefore, stakeholders continue to use experts instead of youth themselves as resources for information.

3.4 Rights and Responsibilities Addressed by Policies Pertaining to Youth

The Constitution of the Republic of Estonia⁷⁷ delineates fundamental rights, freedoms, and duties that shall be the same for all Estonian citizens and for citizens of foreign states and stateless persons in Estonia. The constitution states that every child with one Estonian parent has the right to Estonian citizenship by birth. No one shall be deprived of Estonian citizenship because of his or her beliefs. Everyone is equal before the law. No one shall be discriminated against on the basis of nationality, race, color, sex, language, origin, religion, political or other opinion, property or social status, or on other grounds.

Everyone has the right to the protection of the state and of the law, to life, to free self-realization, to liberty and security of person, to compensation for moral and material damage, to the inviolability of private and family life, to the protection of health, to freely choose his or her area of activity, profession, and place of work, to engage in enterprise and to form commercial undertakings and unions, to education, to receive instruction in Estonian, to freely disseminate ideas, opinions, beliefs, and other information by word, print, picture or other means, and to preserve his or her national identity. National minorities have the right, in the interests of national culture, to establish self-governing agencies under certain conditions and pursuant to procedure provided by the National Minorities Cultural Autonomy Act.

⁷⁷. *State Gazette* (RT I 27.04.2011, 2).

Everyone has a duty to preserve the human and natural environment and to give recompense for damage caused to the environment by him or her, to be loyal to the constitutional order, and to defend the independence of Estonia.

The Family Law Act⁷⁸ states that a minor child and a child who continues to acquire basic or secondary education in basic school, upper secondary school, or vocational school as an adult (but not after he or she attains 21 years of age) has the right to receive care. Until a child no longer resides with his or her parents and the parents raise or maintain him or her, the child is required to assist his or her parents in the household in accordance with his or her abilities. Parents and children are required to support and respect each other and take each other's interests and rights into account.

The Child Protection Act⁷⁹ provides for the internationally recognized rights, freedoms, and duties of the child and protection thereof in the Republic of Estonia. The act determines the rights of the child:

1. To life and development—every child has an inherent right to life, health, development, work, and well-being
2. To identity—every child has the right from birth to a name, nationality, general education in his or her national culture, and to know and be cared for by his or her parents
3. To receive assistance and care—the child has an equal right to receive assistance and care and to develop, regardless of his or her sex or ethnic origin, regardless of whether the child lives in a two-parent family or single-parent family, whether the child is adopted or under curatorship, whether the child is born in wedlock or out of wedlock, or whether the child is healthy, ill, or disabled
4. To freedom of thought, conscience, religion, and experience—the child has the right and shall be accorded the opportunity to seek, receive, and impart diverse humanistic information and to engage in organizations and movements

.....
78. Ibid., (RT I 21.12.2010, 14).

79. Ibid., (RT I 1992, 28, 370).

5. To rest and leisure to engage in recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child in accordance with his or her health, wishes, and opportunities
6. To privacy, acquaintances, and friends
7. To protection from economic, physical, and mental exploitation—the child shall be protected from economic exploitation and from performing work that is hazardous, beyond the child’s capabilities, harmful to the child’s development, or may interfere with the child’s education. The child shall not be subjected to physical or mental exploitation
8. To full maintenance by the state—in the case of an orphan or child deprived of parental care
9. To participate in the development of child protection programs

The act also lists the duties of the child:

1. Toward his or her parents and family:
 - » The child shall honor his or her parents and persons who contribute to raising the child as they shall honor the child.
 - » The child shall assist his or her parents, grandparents, siblings, and persons responsible for raising the child who are in need of assistance.
2. Toward society—which evolve with the age of the child. The child shall:
 - » fulfill his or her constitutional duties toward the Republic of Estonia
 - » respect public order and the law
 - » protect cultural property and the environment
 - » observe behavioral norms and the regulations of his or her place of residence, work, and education
3. Toward fellow human beings:
 - » The child shall treat his or her fellow human beings with respect.
 - » In exercising his or her rights, the child shall not harm the legal interests and rights of other children or adults.
4. Toward school:
 - » The child shall attend school in accordance with the Republic of Estonia Education Act.
5. Toward health:

» The child has a duty to maintain his or her health.

The act also sets restrictions on freedom of movement of minors. Children are required to observe public order, and a minor under 16 years of age is prohibited from being in a public place from 23.00 to 06.00 without an accompanying adult. During the period from June 1 to August 31, a minor may not be in a public place from 00.00 to 05.00 without being accompanied by an adult.

The Social Welfare Act⁸⁰ determines the rights of a child who is subject to foster care. If a child is in foster care and a case plan is prepared for him or her, the wishes of a child who is at least 10 years of age shall be taken into account. The wishes of a child younger than 10 years of age shall also be considered if the development level of the child so permits. Before granting consent, the child has the right to get acquainted with the person who wishes to become a caregiver, his or her family members and home, and receive information about them. The child has the right to bring his or her personal effects when he or she settles with the family of the caregiver. A child who is separated from his or her home and family has the right to receive information about his or her origin, the reasons for separation, and issues pertaining to his or her future.

Orphans and children left without parental care are subject to foster care if:

1. Their parents are dead, declared fugitive, or missing
2. A guardian has been appointed for their parents because of restricted active legal capacity
3. Their parents are deprived of parental rights
4. They have been removed from their parents without deprivation of parental rights
5. Their parents are in custody pending trial or imprisonment

The Republic of Estonia Education Act⁸¹ requires education for children of school age. A child shall attend school if he or she will have attained 7 years

.....
80. Ibid., (RT I 03.03.2011, 16).

81. Ibid., (RT I 1992, 12, 192).

of age by October 1 of the year in question. A student shall attend school until such time as he or she has acquired basic education or attained 17 years of age. The obligation to attend school may be met by home schooling. Also, children of citizens of foreign states and of stateless persons who reside in Estonia, except children of representatives of foreign states, are subject to the obligation to attend school. The act also determines that persons with physical disabilities, speech impairments, or sensory or learning disabilities and persons who need special support have the right to the opportunity to study at an educational institution established for that purpose.

The Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act⁸² declares that each child subject to the obligation to attend school has the right to study in the nearest school to the place of residence. Also, after attendance at a sanatorium school or a school for students with special needs is no longer necessary, a student has the right to continue his or her studies in his or her former school. Students who are acquiring basic education and whose mother tongue is not the language of instruction at the school must be given the opportunity to learn their mother tongue and to learn about their national culture with the objective of preserving their national identity.

According to the act, students are required to follow the internal rules of a school established by the teachers' council. Students shall be praised and punished pursuant to the procedure prescribed by a regulation of the Minister of Education and Research, the statutes of the school, and the by-laws of the school.

Students have the right to:

1. Choose a school suitable to their interests and abilities, to choose subjects from among the elective subjects taught at the school, or to pursue studies on the basis of an individual curriculum pursuant to the procedure established by a regulation of the Minister of Education and Research
2. Form a student representative board in the school and form organizations, clubs, activity classes, and hobby groups, providing the goals and activities of which are not in conflict with the educational objectives of the school and the home

82. Ibid., (RT I 2010, 41, 240).

3. Participate via the elected student representatives in solving the problems of school life; students of upper secondary schools have the right to be elected to the board of trustees of the school
4. Use the buildings, premises, library, teaching aids, sports equipment, technical means, and other equipment of their school for extracurricular activities free of charge
5. Receive material assistance from the sums or funds allocated therefor pursuant to the prescribed procedure
6. Be granted travel fare concessions and other benefits to the extent and pursuant to the procedure established by the government of the Republic and the local government council
7. Receive information from the school about the organization of study, the rights of students, and basic information about the opportunities for study
8. To file a challenge if an examinee is not satisfied with the result of a final examination
9. Upon disagreement with a decision of the teachers' council and in the case of points of dispute about teaching and education, students and their parents have the right to address the board of trustees of the school and the official in charge of state supervision of the school

Student self-government gives students the right to decide and manage independently, in accordance with law, the issues of student life based on the interests, needs, rights, and obligations of students. The student body has the right to elect a student representative board that shall represent students in relations within the school and in relations with national and international organizations, agencies, and persons.

Student bodies have the right to:

1. Form associations and organizations with other student bodies on the basis of and pursuant to the procedure provided by legislation
2. Become members of the corresponding international organizations or cooperate with such organizations
3. Decide and manage all other issues of student life that, pursuant to law and directives issued on the basis thereof, are within the competence

of a student body and that, on the same grounds, have not been transferred to any other person to decide or manage

The Professional Higher Education Act⁸³ sets forth the rights and obligations of students of institutions of professional higher education.

Students have the right to:

1. Choose up to 10 percent of the subjects for their curriculum from other curricula
2. Use the lecture halls, laboratories, computer rooms, libraries, equipment, facilities, and other assets of the university free of charge for study pursuant to the procedure established in the institution of professional higher education
3. Elect their representatives to and be represented in the student council of the institution of professional higher education
4. Submit a reasoned application to the Rector through the student council about the unsuitability of a member of the teaching staff to teach a subject
5. Obtain a study allowance and a study loan under the conditions and pursuant to the procedure provided for in the Study Allowances and Study Loans Act
6. Have at least eight weeks of holiday in each academic year
7. Take academic leave, generally of up to one year, once at each academic level—pursuant to the procedure established by the board of the institution of professional higher education—and additional academic leave of up to two years for health reasons, of up to one year in the case of service in the defense forces, and to care for a child until the child attains three years of age
8. Obtain information related to the organization of studies from an institution of professional higher education
9. Obtain a student identification card pursuant to the procedure established by a regulation of the Minister of Education and Research

⁸³. Ibid., (RT I o8.11.2010, 8).

10. Be granted scholarships pursuant to the procedure established in the statutes of the institution of professional higher education
11. Exercise other rights provided for students by law and the statutes and internal procedure rules of the institution of professional higher education and other legislation

Students of an institution of professional higher education form the student body. Student bodies shall decide on and manage independently, pursuant to law and legislation issued on the basis thereof, issues of student life based on the interests, needs, rights, and obligations of students.

Student bodies have the right to:

1. Form associations and organizations with other student bodies on the basis of and pursuant to the procedure provided by legislation
2. Become members of corresponding international organizations or to cooperate with such organizations
3. Elect their representatives to the board of the institution of professional higher education
4. Decide on and manage all other issues of student life that, pursuant to law and directives issued on the basis thereof, are within the competence of a student body and that have not been awarded on the same grounds to any other person to decide or manage

The responsible representative body that governs a student body is the democratically elected student council, which represents the student body in relations with the institution of professional higher education and with Estonian and international organizations, agencies, and persons. All students at an institution of professional higher education have the right to elect the student council. The Rector shall organize the elections of the first student council on the basis of democratic principles provided for in the statutes of the institution of professional higher education.

The Hobby Schools Act⁸⁴ delineates the rights and obligations of students of hobby schools. A student has the right to:

.....
 84. Ibid., (RT I 2007, 4, 19).

1. Examine, prior to commencing the studies and during the studies, the curricula of hobbies, statutes and internal rules of the hobby school. Request that the activities be in compliance with the hobby curriculum.
2. Participate, through an elected representative, in the activity of the board of trustees of the hobby school
3. Form a student self-government body and participate in its activities
4. Exercise other rights established by law and the statutes of the hobby school

A student is required to:

1. Observe the internal rules of the hobby school
2. Preserve the property being used by the hobby school
3. Perform other obligations provided by law and the statutes of the hobby school

The Youth Work Act,⁸⁵ which provides the legal basis for the organization of youth work, determines the right for annual grants for youth associations.

A youth association—the membership of which includes at least 500 young persons and the local units of which operate in the territory of at least one-third of the counties—has the right to apply for an annual grant from the state budget.

The Non-profit Associations Act⁸⁶ states that only minors who have active legal capacity have the right to be members of the management board.

The Employment Contracts Act⁸⁷ determines the conditions and working hours for minors (see Chapter 3, subsection 3.2). It also requires that a minor's legal representative (parent, guardian, etc.) give consent to both the employment of a minor and to the employment contract.

The act also delineates annual holidays for minors—a minor employee's annual holidays are set at 35 calendar days unless the employee and the employer have agreed on a longer period of annual holidays. Minors with

85. Ibid., (RT I 2010, 44, 262).

86. Ibid., (RT I 04.02.2011, 8).

87. Ibid., (RT I 2009, 5, 35).

an obligation to attend school have the right to demand the annual holiday at a suitable time. Finally, the act also directs employers to create suitable working and rest conditions for minors and ensure their safety.

The Defense Forces Service Act⁸⁸ defines the legal status of persons who are in service in the defense forces or in alternative service. As mentioned in Chapter 3, subsection 3.2, every male Estonian citizen is required to serve in the defense forces. Anyone eligible to be drafted has the right to postpone service to:

1. Commence studies at a vocational educational institution, institution of applied higher education, or university directly after completion of secondary education
2. Complete general secondary education in daytime study or vocational education in school-based and full-time study
3. Run as a candidate in local government council elections, Riigikogu elections, or elections to the European Parliament until the announcement of the election results or until the end of the period during which he is a member of a local government council, the Riigikogu, or the European Parliament.

A student's place shall be retained for a person eligible to be drafted for the period during which he performs his service.

The Juvenile Sanctions Act⁸⁹ sets forth the rights and obligations of minors and their representatives. At the hearing of a juvenile offense case in a juvenile committee, a minor and his or her representative have the right to:

1. Know which case is to be heard
2. Know which materials the hearing is based on and examine the collected material
3. Participate in the hearing on the juvenile case
4. Receive information about the consequences of giving testimony
5. Receive information about possible sanctions applicable to the minor

.....
88. Ibid., (RT I 08.07.2011, 58).

89. Ibid., (RT I 1998, 17, 264).

Upon receipt of a summons, a minor and his or her representative are required to appear before a juvenile committee. A representative of a minor has the right to make relevant requests and protests.

If the interests of the legal representative of a minor are in conflict with the interests of the minor, the minor has the right to apply for designation of a new representative.

At the hearing in a juvenile committee, a representative of a minor is required to:

1. Provide relevant information to the minor
2. Explain to the minor the consequences of his or her testimony
3. Make the testimony and requests of the minor understandable and to submit these to the juvenile committee based on the interests of the minor

The Penal Code⁹⁰ determines sanctions that are applicable to minors. Taking into account the level of the moral and mental development of a person of 14-to-18 years of age and his or her ability to understand the unlawfulness of his or her act or to act according to such understanding, the court may release the minor from punishment and impose the following sanctions on him or her:

1. Admonition
2. Subject to supervision of conduct
3. Placement in a youth home
4. Placement in a school for pupils who need special treatment because of behavioral problems

3.5 Needs of Young People Considered in Policies Pertaining to Youth

The general goal of youth policy is to ensure youth participation in the decision-making process and to take into account their interests and needs in all activity areas of youth policy. Determining their actual needs requires

.....
90. Ibid., (RT I 08.07.2011, 51).

consistent and systematic assessment and analysis of possibilities. Such assessment and analysis enable comparison and increase the quality and depth of youth studies. Ultimately, they are used in formulating policies. Apart from research-based knowledge, the Youth Work Strategy also states that young people must be incorporated in decision-making processes and policy formulation that concern them. Also in the context of taking into consideration the needs of youth, the formulation, planning, and implementation of an integrated youth policy must be executed, without fail, in cooperation with different partners.⁹¹

The main areas of youth policy where decisions about youth and young people's lives are made are youth work, education, employment, health, culture, social policy, environment, national defense, and family policy. One of the strategic objectives of the National Youth Council for 2009–2012 was to successfully participate in the shaping of policies about young people and youth associations at both the state and local government levels. The platform reflects the Estonian National Youth Council's (ENL) positions in the following areas: participation of young people; high-quality youth work; voluntary activity; financing youth associations; involvement of young people in the public sector; social guarantees; democracy in youth associations; young people's health; cooperation and networking between youth associations; tolerance for and discrimination against young people; employment of young people; mobility of young people; special youth work; recognition of nonformal education; education; informing and counseling young people; the environment and sustainable development; ENL's international activities; young people with special needs; and integration of non-Estonian youth.⁹²

The interviews revealed several needs and gaps (what has not been done, what should be changed, or what should be given more attention to) in youth policy:

1. Youth policy in Estonia is still in a transition period—the problems are still structural; issues arise in how the different ministries and actors use the youth policy principles in their practical work.

91. Ministry of Education and Research of Estonia, 2006.

92. Estonian National Youth Council, www.enl.ee/en/politics/Youth-Policy-Platform

2. Distinction between youth policy and youth work—how to make youth policy more about youth than about youth work?
3. Cooperation between ministries and departments—more departments should be involved in the youth policymaking process; also, there is a need for preventive cooperation.
4. Using youth research in the development of different measures affecting youth—currently, youth have no effective means, support systems, knowledge, and practice of receiving or using information from youth research.
5. Involving youth—some in the field of youth policy do not have enough practice in involving youth in the decision-making process. Although some good examples of involving youth have occurred, it still seems to be largely theoretical. For decision makers, the biggest questions are: whom to involve, who represents whom, are those opinions relevant, and how to reach those young people who are not organized?
6. The quality of youth work and youth workers—youth work should be more connected to lifelong learning and it should be more flexible. Instead of being project-based, youth policy should be more program-based with 5–10-year perspectives and goals.
7. Child protection workers—requirements for child protection workers should be reviewed; the number of child protection workers in different locations is often insufficient.
8. Youth information—youth information is fragmented, with too many different sites and channels offering information; youth information often does not reach its target group. The technology and content are changing faster than structure. More alternative information channels should be used. Improvements are needed in teaching young people how to search for information.
9. Russian-speaking minority—no effective measures are in place for connecting with and involving youth of the Russian-speaking minority. They rarely use information sources and often do not receive information about their rights and opportunities.
10. Questions about rights—more protection should be given to the rights of young people. In legislation, age systems should be reexamined. For example, discussions have been held about lowering the voting age to

16 for local government elections but nothing has come of them. Youth are not aware of the responsibilities that come with their rights and the consequences of their actions. Awareness of youth rights in the labor market is especially poor.

11. Young people in at-risk groups—both youth workers and youth policy-makers lack information about how to reach youth at risk. While the problem is recognized, no effective systematic measures have been put in place. Youth regarded as being in risk groups are connected with other problems, such as dropping out of school, poverty, delinquency, drug addiction, HIV and AIDS.
12. Child poverty—poverty is higher in the 15+ age group; support systems should be stronger for that group.
13. Situation of children with special needs and disabled people.
14. Juvenile delinquency—more preventive measures should be put in place; the duration of juvenile proceedings should be reduced from two months to one; parents should be more involved; juvenile committees discussing offenders' cases are no longer effective.
15. Need for awareness of LGBT as an at-risk group in the field of youth policy.
16. LGBT-affirming information availability for youth population.
17. LGBT issues should be more integrated into the education system.
18. Children's rights issues in regard to LGBT cohabitation and legislation
19. Career services for young people—availability of career services in the labor market, availability and regulation of career information in education system.
20. Availability of services and information varies greatly geographically.
21. Improving health education in the school system.
22. Prevention of abortion.
23. Resources on the local level—youth is one of the most vulnerable groups in budget discussions.
24. Cooperation with the private sector.

To get the youth perspective about their needs in youth policy, a small poll was carried out during the pilot project with the help of ENL. One of the

questions was about topics/problems in political discussions that young people would like to be involved in. The total number of responses analyzed was 860.

A large number (17%) of respondents did not answer the question about topics/problems; 10 percent stated that they did not know the specific topics or problems in which they would like to be involved. This could be attributed to lack of interest or understanding of youth policy among young people. Five percent of respondents were not interested in participating in political discussions at all—which could be connected to the overall image of the public sector in Estonia.

The main discussions youth would like to take part in involve the field of education (24% of all respondents). Topics vary from free school lunch in high school to social guarantees for university students. Other important subjects or problems indicated: social problems; support systems; recreation; foreign policy; job market; environment; risky behavior; violence in school; youth involvement and participation; delinquency; social exclusion; health; culture; integration; economy; human rights; equality; access to services; people with special needs; voluntary action; tolerance, and immigration.

The focus group interviews also revealed several needs and gaps in youth policy. In regard to cooperation between different institutions and stakeholders, the main gap was considered to be the coordination system in the youth policy—the system is still under development, with more coordination needed between the Ministry of Education and Research and the Estonian Youth Work Center. As for integrated youth policy, the most problematic level is local government and the cooperation between the local government and NGOs.

In the case of Russian-speakers in Narva (which is 85%), a need for better integration measures was voiced. The focus group held with youth in Narva showed that the problems with Russian-speaking youth are connected with language skills, procedures for applying for citizenship, the impact of the economic crisis on the well-being of families, and difficulties in getting relevant information in Russian. The Russian speakers in East Estonia seem to be living in a closed community; accordingly, they do not receive

enough information (which is often available only in Estonian) about different opportunities, rights, and responsibilities.

3.6 Conclusion

As has been shown in this chapter, the interaction between young people, public authorities, and other stakeholders in the youth field is far from perfect. Policies pertaining to youth are not rigidly structured across different fields—that youth are mentioned in policy documents does not assure their appropriate consideration during decision making and in practical work. In addition, the connection between youth policy and youth work, as well as the use of relevant research, still leaves a lot to be desired. Although the visibility of youth in society has increased in recent years, they still suffer from a lack of attention by society, which often puts their interests to the rear in budget discussions. This is especially true of the Russian-speaking minority, LGBT youth, and other youth at risk.

Apart from a number of gaps and insufficiencies in both legislation and knowledge exchange, significant structural changes (they took into account many international, mainly European, policy documents) have recently been proposed and accepted. In accordance with the spirit of the National Youth Work Strategy 2006–2013, a horizontal and integrated approach to youth policy, which recognizes youth as a heterogeneous population with different needs according to the individual groups, has been agreed on by most of the stakeholders. The more concrete policies building on such a philosophy, as well as their potential to affect young people's lives in several domains, will be discussed in the following chapter.



Youth and
Public Policy in

Estonia

A grayscale world map with a white star over the United Kingdom. The map shows the outlines of continents and countries. The star is positioned over the British Isles in the North Atlantic.

Policy Realities

4

4.1 Introduction

Building on the existing legal framework and newly recognized principles described in the preceding chapter, more concrete government programs, initiatives, and action plans have been developed in Estonia. In addition to an overview of such policy documents and their possible impact on young people's lives, this chapter will present the most important institutions involved in one way or another in policy implementation.

4.2 Existence of Policies

4.2.1 Overview of National Programs

This section gives a brief overview of ministerial-level strategic development plans, policies, development trends, and national programs (made available on the government's webpage) that mention youth as one of their target groups or have the potential to influence young people.

The **Youth Work Strategy 2006–2013**⁹³ draws together the strategic aims of two areas:

- » youth policy—a more extensive area with a unified approach to all activities targeted at young people in all areas of their lives
- » youth work—a narrower area. One of the activity areas of youth policy that creates possibilities for young people ages 7–26 for broad development of their personality in addition to curriculum education, jobs, and family.

The strategy is a basis for achieving the goals of youth policy and its financing plan, for ensuring the unity, cost effectiveness, purposefulness, and effectiveness of youth policy and youth work development plans of national and local governments and the nonprofit sector.

The strategy has a potential to significantly influence young people's lives; it is targeted at all of Estonia's young people. The youth work part of it is more strictly delineated—according to the Youth Work Act, the entire

⁹³ Ministry of Education and Research of Estonia, 2006.

group of 7–26-year-olds is entitled to the youth work service. The youth policy part of it is looser, with target groups defined within each policy area by a concrete strategy or developmental plan. Policy goals and measures are targeted toward groups that are defined by more criteria than just age bracket.

Youth work service—a service provided by the Estonian Youth Work Center and other service providers (local municipalities, NGOs, youth organizations, hobby schools, county governments)—adheres to internationally approved quality standards and operates within a national legal, organizational, and financial youth work service provision framework.

The **Estonian Entrepreneurship Policy 2007–2013**⁹⁴ foresees support for entrepreneurship education, both in the formal education system and in learning-by-doing/hands-on nonformal learning environments.

The policy is relevant to youth primarily through formal and nonformal entrepreneurship education. Increased entrepreneurial knowledge, attitudes, and behavior might provide additional opportunities for young people to integrate into society—more specifically, into the labor market.

The policy potentially influences a large number of young people though its goals are sharply focused; similar competencies are also supported by other youth work activities, making it complicated to discern specifically the effects of this program.

The **Estonian National Dwelling/Lodging Development Plan 2008–2013**⁹⁵ mentions young specialists, young families, children without parental care, families with more than three children, and students as target groups with special needs for housing. The main measure to support them is providing (additional) state guarantees to mortgage loans taken to buy a home.

The plan could potentially influence a relatively small fraction of young people but it does address a basic human need.

94. Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, 2007, www.mkm.ee/failid/Estonian_Enterprise_Policy_2007_2013.pdf

95. Ibid., 2008, www.kredex.ee/public/Eluasemevaldkonna_arengukava_eng_19.09.2008.pdf

The main goal of the **Estonian Population Policy 2009–2013**⁹⁶ is to provide conditions for continuity of the Estonian nation. It has several strategies:

- » Measures meant to encourage Estonians to have children and ensure a secure environment for raising them. Measures attempting to improve health conditions and health behavior
- » Measures targeting migration flows

The policy affects children and young people through principles and goals related to children and families and through principles and goals related to migration. The strategy foresees a wide variety of financial and nonfinancial supports to children and young families with children.

The **Fertility Support Development Plan 2007–2010**⁹⁷ has goals for communicating information on infertility risks, testing, and counseling for young people, including pupils in general secondary education and vocational schools. The plan also foresees amending national curricula to include topics on the prevention of venereal diseases and avoiding other threats to reproductive health. Other measures include counseling and venereal disease testing (including HIV) of all women under 25 years and offering medical treatment in case of need.

The main goals of the **Estonian Higher Education Strategy 2006–2015**⁹⁸ include:

- » Assuring internationally competitive quality of higher education in Estonia
- » Assuring an adequate number of positions for prospective students in institutions of higher education
- » Developing adequate structures for provision of higher education
- » Developing a system of financial and organizational supports for students

.....
96. Ministry of Social Affairs, 2009, www.monitoringris.org/documents/imp_nat/Main_principles_of_population_policy.pdf

97. Ibid., 2008, valitsus.ee/UserFiles/valitsus/et/valitsus/arengukavad/sotsiaalministeerium/viljatusravi_toetamine_aruanne.pdf

98. Ministry of Education and Research of Estonia, 2006, www.hm.ee/index.php?149743

The strategy has the potential to influence those young people who continue education at the tertiary level through shaping conditions and outcomes of study. It also has the potential to widen access to tertiary education through implementing a system of financial and other supports for youth.

The strategy could influence a high percentage of young people in a very significant area of life—formal education.

The **Adult Education Development Plan 2009–2013**⁹⁹ includes the goals of developing the services of career counseling, offering counseling services to the unemployed and to those in risk of unemployment, increased provision of study opportunities for employed people (distance learning, evening programs), and increased provision of nonformal learning opportunities for adults.

The plan is targeted at those ages 25–64, thus it is relevant to a small portion of young people—within this age group only a small fraction (priority is given to the unemployed) is targeted.

The **Estonian Vocational Education Development Plan 2009–2013**¹⁰⁰ has three goals directly relevant to young people:

- » Increase access to vocational education by providing additional study opportunities to various target groups (e.g., people without elementary education), providing counseling services to students, improving living conditions (e.g., renovating student housing) during the course of study
- » Increase quality of vocational education
- » Increase integration of vocational education with the needs of society

The plan has the potential to affect different groups of young people:

- » Those with limited education and limited capabilities to acquire qualifications higher than elementary education
- » Those interested in acquiring qualifications for a particular profession

General Education Development Plan 2007–2013¹⁰¹ the main goals of the general educational system are to provide all students with equal oppor-

99. Ibid., 2009, www.hm.ee/index.php?149743

100. Ibid.

101. Ibid., 2007, www.hm.ee/index.php?149743

tunities and conditions to acquire an education in accordance with their abilities and interests so that they are able to continue their studies if they so choose.

Development activities are carried out in three areas:

1. Smooth transitions from lower-school level to the next
2. High quality of education
3. Access to study opportunities

The strategy is deeply significant to young people since it does influence the acquisition of a wide range of competencies, factual knowledge, contacts and networks, attitudes, and other personal features relevant to many different areas.

The **National Health Plan 2009–2020**¹⁰² aims to increase the number of years lived free of disease by 2020 for men to 60 years and for women to 65 years; it also aims to increase lifespan for men to 75 years and for women to 84 years.

Consistent development of children and youngsters is one of five priority areas of the program. The main goal of the youth-related priority area is to lower the number of youth deaths, to lower the frequency of psychological and behavioral problems among youth, and to improve the overall health of youth (measured by young people's self-assessment of their health status).

The plan has a potential to affect all young people irrespective of their backgrounds.

The main goal of the **National HIV and AIDS Strategy 2006–2015**¹⁰³ is to achieve a permanent decrease in the spread of HIV in Estonia. The strategy specifies five action steps:

1. Prevention on HIV infection among various target groups
2. HIV testing and counseling
3. Prevention of transmission strategies for those with HIV or AIDS
4. Medical treatment and caretaking of those with HIV or AIDS

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102. Ministry of Social Affairs, 2008, www.sm.ee/fileadmin/meedia/Dokumendid/ASO/RTA/National_Health_Plan_2009_2020.pdf

103. Ibid., 2005, hivaidsclearinghouse.unesco.org/search/resources/StrategyPlan_Estonia.pdf

5. Monitoring and assessment of the national rate of HIV/AIDS; developing human resources to handle the situation

The strategy considers young people under 30 as the main target group for measures against HIV and AIDS.

The general goal of the **Heart and Coronary Disease Prevention Strategy 2005–2020**¹⁰⁴ is to achieve a permanent decrease in heart and coronary diseases among the population. The strategy has three subgoals that have direct impact on young people:

1. Increase in physical activity in the 16 years or older population
2. Improve nutrition and eating habits, especially in the 11–15-year-old group
3. Permanent decrease in the percentage of smokers, especially among 13-year-olds but also in the general population

The strategy has a potential to influence all young people in Estonia.

The main goal of the **National Drug Prevention Strategy 2012**¹⁰⁵ is to protect children and youths from starting the misuse of psychoactive substances as well as creating a drug-free environment in different regions and localities. By 2012, both supply and demand for drugs had decreased and a system of medical treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts was functioning.

The strategy potentially influences all young people through their knowledge, attitudes, and behavior in relation to tobacco, alcohol, and drugs.

Main Directions of National Security Policy until 2015¹⁰⁶ the document mentions that various policy measures, including measures targeted at young people, should be developed and implemented to lower the risks of being attacked or otherwise become a victim of a crime.

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 104. *State Gazette*, 2005, www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/852525

105. Ministry of Social Affairs, 2004, valitsus.ee/UserFiles/valitsus/et/valitsus/arengukavad/sotsiaalministeerium/Narkomaania_ennetamise_riiklik_strateegia.pdf

106. Ministry of the Interior, 2008, www.siseministeerium.ee/29744/

Development Directions for Criminal Prevention Policy until 2018:¹⁰⁷

the main goals of this policy are: a) reducing recidivism and b) prevention of minors' criminal activity. For prevention of minors' criminal activity, the following subgoals and measures are contemplated:

- » Local municipalities should develop a monitoring system for discovering those living with poor parental care and at risk of engaging in criminal activity
- » The Ministry of Social Affairs, together with local municipalities, should offer classes to parents to improve their parenting skills
- » The Ministry of Social Affairs, together with local municipalities, should aim to improve cooperation and teamwork between specialists and experts
- » The schools should be more secure
- » Operation and quality of juvenile committees should be improved
- » Special schools for juvenile delinquents should teach and reinforce law-abiding behavior and autonomy in society
- » Reduce the time needed to process minors' law cases in court
- » Reduce the number of criminal acts sparked by minors' alcohol abuse
- » Fight against cyber-crime should focus on preventing teenage trafficking and different forms of cyber-crime

The **Violence Reduction Development Plan 2010–2014**¹⁰⁸ has three goals directly relevant for youth:

1. Reduction of violence directed against children
2. Prevention and reduction of violent acts committed by minors
3. Prevention and reduction of human trafficking

The plan has potentially different effects on different groups. For children, it is a set of measures that attempt to keep them from becoming the target of violence. The same safeguarding holds for young women who are often

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107. Ministry of Justice, 2009, www.just.ee/orb.aw/class=file/action=preview/id=50982/Guidelines+for+Development+of+Criminal+Policy+until+2018.pdf

108. Ibid., 2010, www.just.ee/orb.aw/class=file/action=preview/id=52311/Development_Plan_for_Reducing_Violence_for_Years_2010-2014.pdf

victims of trafficking. For a certain category of minors, the plan foresees measures that attempt to keep them from committing a crime.

The main goal of the **Estonian Traffic Security Program 2003–2015**¹⁰⁹ is to achieve no more than 100 road deaths annually by year 2015. To achieve this goal, a total of nine target groups were identified. Among the target groups, children and youth were mentioned twice:

- » Children and the elderly
- » Young drivers, drivers with little experience

Five different kinds of measures are foreseen by the program:

1. Shaping of relevant attitudes
2. Training
3. Monitoring
4. Traffic environment
5. Planning

The program has the potential to influence a large proportion of children and young people, shaping their attitudes and behavior in traffic situations.

Museums of the 21st Century. Development Directions 2006–2015¹¹⁰ the strategy specifies the role of museums in three fields:

1. A museum as a valuable institution in society
2. A museum as an institution for collecting and preserving cultural heritage
3. A museum as a functioning organization

The strategy is relevant to youth since it foresees subgoals and measures directed at increasing the role of museums as institutions of remembrance and memory, as educational institutions, as recreational institutions, and as institutions that have influence on lifestyle. As such, museums help to

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109. Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, 2003, www.valitsus.ee/User-Files/valitsus/et/valitsus/arengukavad/majandus-ja-kommunikatsiooniministeerium/liiklusohutusprogramm_2003_2015.pdf

110. Ministry of Culture, 2006, www.kul.ee/webeditor/files/museumid/060517_muuseumid_arengu_pohisuunad.doc

build historical/ethnic/cultural identity and keep traditions alive. The influence of museums on youth occurs through shaping their identities and shaping their understanding of the role of different historical events, circumstances, and developments in forming contemporary society.

The **Estonian Rural Development Strategy 2007–2013**¹¹¹ has the goal of encouraging young people to move (back) into rural areas, specifically to work in agricultural and rural jobs. Measures include improving access to relevant education, improving working conditions, supporting rural and agricultural entrepreneurship, and supporting (professional) associations in rural areas.

The strategy has the potential to influence the life of rural youth; potential influence on urban youth is likely to be weaker.

The **Estonian Fisheries Strategy 2007–2013**¹¹² contains goals of a) supporting young fishermen in general and b) increasing maritime security for all and hygiene among young fishermen.

The strategy potentially influences only a small number of young people and only certain aspects of their professional work.

National Program “Estonian Manor-Schools: Preservation of Cultural-Historical Legacy and Development of Modern Learning Environment”¹¹³ the program is important for schoolchildren attending a range of educational institutions: kindergartens, elementary schools, gymnasiums, vocational schools. The program enriches their study by incorporating historical-cultural legacies into their lessons.

The total impact of the program on youth cannot be large because, first, the number of children going to manor-schools is small—less than 4 percent. Second, though the pleasant and unique learning environment might create more motivation to participate in school, it does not influence content of national curriculums, teacher training, or study aids.

111. Ministry of Agriculture, 2006, www.agri.ee/public/juurkataloog/MAAELU/MAS/ERDPS2007-2013.pdf

112. Ibid., 2007, www.agri.ee/public/juurkataloog/KALAMAJANDUS/EKF/EFS_2007_-_2013/Estonian_Fisheries_Strategy_2007-2013.doc

113. Ministry of Culture, 2005, www.kul.ee/index.php?path=ox893

The **Physical Activity Development Program 2011–2014**¹¹⁴ foresees providing places for a variety of physical exercise and sports both indoors or outdoors. Also, the plan posits the development of a coaching system and a system providing information on physical exercise, recovery, over-training, and injury prevention.

The plan has a potential impact on young people through creating opportunities for engaging in different sports and physical exercises; accordingly, it will influence lifestyle choices among young people. It might lead them to choose a healthier way of living and might lead to safer sporting practices.

The **Estonian Language Development Plan 2011–2017**¹¹⁵ supports a good command of the Estonian language among graduates of general and vocational schools. Non-Estonian pupils should reach level C1 by the end of elementary school and B1 by the end of gymnasium. At the tertiary level, the plan foresees strengthening of the position of Estonian as a language of research and science. The plan makes allowance for the protection of regional dialects.

The plan has a potential impact on youth primarily through the formal education system. It also has a potential to support local identities and make certain localities more attractive.

The main goal of the plan is to provide all residents of Estonia with an equal opportunity to participate in society, irrespective of their ethnic background or mother tongue.

The plan foresees two main directions that are relevant for youth. First, non-Estonian youth should have opportunities to learn the Estonian language. Language-learning goals are best achieved within a formal education system by a) language lessons, b) learning some subject in Estonian, or c) attending a language immersion class that makes use of both methods. Second, young people with different cultural backgrounds should have more opportunities to have immediate contact with one another. This goal

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114. Ibid., 2010, www.kul.ee/webeditor/files/liikumisharrastus/Liikumisharrastuse_arengekava_2011-2014.pdf

115. Estonian Language Foundation, 2011, ekn.hm.ee/system/files/Eesti+keele+arengekava+inglise.indd_.pdf

can be achieved through making use of existing youth work structures and practices.

The **Information Society Development Plan 2013**¹¹⁶ foresees updating all national curriculums so that they support active participation in the labor market and, more generally, in a society that, to a large extent, is information exchange and knowledge-based. The plan also foresees preparation of a sufficient number of highly qualified IT specialists.

The plan has relevance for youth because of its potential impact on national curricula; it also has the potential to influence youth through specifying the number of state-supported placements at colleges.

The **National Defense Strategy**¹¹⁷ foresees increasing involvement of young people in activities of the Defense League.

Such involvement has the potential to improve young people's skills (self-management, social, intercultural, technical, and others), networks and contacts, and physical and mental health.

The **Military Defense Development Plan 2009–2018**¹¹⁸ specifies length and content of military service and training.

The plan influences the lives of healthy and law-abiding young men holding Estonian citizenship who are listed as conscripts.

The **National Regional Development Plan 2005–2015**¹¹⁹ mentions young people in the context of maintaining population balance between rural and urban areas and preventing migration from small settlements to big towns. The plan also addresses youth emigration.

The main measure to reduce, prevent, or reverse both internal and external migration flows is making local living conditions more attractive.

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116. Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, 2006, www.riso.ee/en/system/files/Estonian%20Information%20Society%20Strategy%202013.pdf

117. Ministry of Defense, 2010, www.kmin.ee/files/kmin/img/files/KM_riigikaitse_strateegia_eng%282%29.pdf

118. Ibid., 2009, www.mod.gov.ee/files/kmin/nodes/9440_SKAK_eng.pdf

119. Ministry of the Interior, 2005, www.siseministeerium.ee/public/Eesti_regionaalarengu_strateegia_2005_2015_eng_tolge.doc

The **Civil Society Development Plan 2011–2014**¹²⁰ has a goal of promoting the values of civil society and community engagement among youth at the local and national levels.

The plan is relevant to young people primarily by supporting their civic activism. It does not foresee independent activities, instead, it focuses on cooperative activities with youth work institutions and organizations according to the Youth Work Strategy. It also foresees developing, incorporating, and supporting the teaching of civic education in the formal education system.

The **National Program Development of Values in Estonian Society 2009–2013**¹²¹ is targeted at the whole of Estonian society, but it emphasizes the values education of children and adolescents. Values education is understood, in a broad sense, to involve fostering personality development to help young people achieve emotional, social, and moral maturity. Values education is an integral part of school life—rules, events, feedback, social relationships, teaching methods and content, traditions, and the overall learning environment.

The program is carried out across four areas:

- » Values education in pre-school
- » Values education in school
- » Nonformal values development
- » Values development for the public

The purpose of the first two areas is to create the conditions necessary for the implementation of systematic, properly advised, and consistent formal values education in Estonian pre-schools and schools. The second two areas are aimed at broader values development in support of formal values education.

The main goal of the program **Safe School**¹²² is to increase security at schools by focusing on:

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 120. Ibid., 2011, www.siseministerium.ee/29949/

121. Ministry of Education and Research, 2009, www.ethics.ut.ee/orb.aw/class=file/action=preview/id=802621/Value+Development+in+Estonian+Society+2009%2F0962013.pdf

122. Ibid., 2009, www.hm.ee/index.php?0512479

- » Fire safety and security
- » Health protection
- » Relationships in/at school
- » Use of mass media and the Internet
- » Traffic safety and security
- » Assuring school attendance

4.2.2 Human Rights and Youth-Pertaining Policies

The review of national policy documents that mention young people as their target group or have some potential to influence their lives indirectly allows the conclusion that these policies offer young people various opportunities to participate in society and to develop their capabilities according to their needs and preferences. A number of policies aim at guaranteeing the rights collectively recognized as human rights.

None of the policies contains goals or activities that limit young people's participation in civil and political life. On the contrary, the **Youth Work Strategy**¹²³ mentions youth participation as one of the pillars of youth work and youth policy. Efforts are made to include active young people in policy processes. Interviews reflect that the “supply” of participation opportunities from public administration institutions tends to be adequate or even greater than the “demand” from young people.¹²⁴

However, in some cases, while young people are included in policy processes, their opinions are not fully taken into account.¹²⁵ Holding consultations with organized young people is relatively easy—reaching unorganized youth and hearing their opinions are more complex tasks. The primary challenge is that the information obtained from single individuals is a poor representation of the thoughts and opinions of a large, inchoate group.¹²⁶

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123. Ibid., 2006, www.hm.ee/index.php?popup=download&id=7157

124. Interviews with experts from the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Justice, the National Youth Council, and UNICEF Estonia.

125. Interview with expert from Estonian Union of Open Youth Centers.

126. Interview with expert from the Ministry of Culture.

None of the policies contains goals or activities that threaten the physical integrity and safety or discriminate against young people on the above-mentioned grounds.

Standards have been put in place to guarantee special treatment of young people in courts and in juvenile committees as well as by police in general. On the policy level, the National Security Policy foresees that the trying (and settling) of lawsuits involving adolescents should be as quick as possible (and limited to one month). On an operational level, juveniles who have broken the law are treated by specially trained police officers—with the juveniles directed also to other specialists (psychologists, social workers, etc.). Each young person receives or is expected to receive case-specific attention and assistance from a network of specialists. The support net is still being developed.¹²⁷

4.3 Policy Implementation and Delivery

Different patterns of implementing policies can be distinguished, with different aspects of strategies implemented at different levels. Some policy goals are achieved at the institutional level, through shaping educational institutions (e.g., the number of state-financed IT courses) or supporting organizations that affect the lives of young people (e.g., Junior Achievement—an organization that supports entrepreneurship education).

In general, policies are implemented by the ministry responsible for the policy. Each ministry has a system of subordinate units that work to achieve its policy goals. For instance, education, employment, and unemployment counseling are offered by the Ministry of Social Affairs in counseling centers located in county centers. Youth school vacation activities foreseen in the Youth Work Strategy developed by the Ministry of Education and Research are carried out by the Estonian Youth Work Center (a subordinate unit of the ministry) in temporary and permanent camp locations.¹²⁸

127. Interview with expert from Ministry of Justice.

128. Ministry of Education and Research, 2006, www.hm.ee/index.php?popup=download&id=7157

Much cooperation exists between different ministries in implementing one another's policies. For instance, the Estonian Youth Work Center participates in activities aimed at achieving policy goals of: the Ministry of Justice (criminal prevention, resocialization); Ministry of Social Affairs (employment, unemployment, health); Ministry of Cultural Affairs (Estonian language skills and integration). The Integration and Migration Foundation Our People (Ministry of Cultural Affairs) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs jointly carry out programs aimed at supporting integration. The particular patterns of cooperation and joint actions depend on the needs and interests of those involved, the programs, and projects. No institutionalized and permanently working cooperative networks exist. However, cooperation on some issues might be prolonged (for instance, the prevention of juvenile delinquency and criminal behavior).

4.3.1 Youth Work

Youth work is a set of practices aimed at supporting the personal development of young people, mostly those between 10 and 20 years of age but might be younger or older (the Youth Work Act defines youth as ages 7 to 26). Some organizations and institutions have specialized in working with this age group and also share their expertise with other institutions that have goals linked to that age group but lack expertise and resources to carry out activities adequately.

The **Estonian Youth Work Center (EYWC)**¹²⁹ offers its expertise and resources to other ministries to assist them in carrying out various plans. The EYWC, founded in 1999, is a national center for youth work under the administrative authority of the Ministry of Education and Research (MER); its main objective is to develop and organize youth work within the framework of the national youth policy.

The EYWC cooperates with government and youth work agencies, local governments, youth associations, and other institutions to develop youth policy and youth work, to provide valuable advice and information, and to represent, promote, and protect the interests and values of youth work.

129. Estonian Youth Work Center, www.entk.ee/eng/intro

In cooperation with the Youth Department of MER, the EYWC is responsible for the achievement of the goals of the Estonian Youth Work Strategy 2006–2013 and for carrying out the actions specified in the implementation plan of the strategy.

The EYWC and Youth Department of MER also work toward improving the services provided to youth, to make them more suitable to the needs of young people and for the goals of youth policy, and to enhance general quality and availability of services.

The principal target groups of the EYWC include:

- » Youth workers
- » Youth and youth work organizations and agencies
- » Young people
- » The general public (including representatives of other policy fields, parents, politicians, employers)

The tasks of the EYWC in youth work are:

- » Implementing the Estonian Youth Work Strategy 2006–2013 and performing other functions arising from the Youth Work Act and other relevant laws
- » Developing international cooperation
- » Coordinating networking activities
- » Implementing the European Social Fund program
- » Developing youth work quality
- » Awarding prizes for good work by and recognizing professional qualifications of youth workers
- » Recognizing the knowledge and skills acquired through youth work
- » Assessing the quality of youth work
- » Monitoring the welfare of young people
- » Organizing training courses on youth work
- » Financing projects and programs
- » Managing the Kloogaranna Youth Camp;
- » Organizing the Youth Information Fair—Teeviit

The **Youth Work Act**¹³⁰ stipulates that carrying out youth work activities is to a large extent the responsibility of local municipalities. Most local municipalities' activities in this field are not done in direct contact with young people; the local municipalities mostly finance and control activities of the various youth work organizations that provide opportunities to engage in developmental leisure activities. However, to some extent, municipalities are also directly involved in work with young people. Hobby rings, youth centers, youth organizations, youth events, and projects are financed by local municipalities—albeit not 100 percent. The operation of youth work organizations is, to a large degree, project-based; to carry out their activities, youth work organizations apply for and receive financial support from other sources.

The **Union of Open Youth Centers**¹³¹ is another partner in implementing activities for young people between 10 and 20 years of age. Around 250 youth centers, located in all counties of Estonia, are operational in 2012. The centers have expertise and resources (space, equipment, appropriately trained personnel). According to survey research, around 40 percent of the targeted age group has been to youth centers. The predominant participation pattern is occasional, with mainly short visits, but a relatively small group of young people go to youth centers frequently and are intensely involved.

Hobby Schools and Hobby Rings are an educational institutions operating in the field of youth work that create opportunities for multifaceted development of an individual. There are two kinds of hobby schools:

- » Municipal hobby schools—operate in accordance with the Hobby Schools Act;¹³²
- » Private hobby schools—operate in accordance with the Private Schools Act¹³³ and the Hobby Schools Act.

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 130. *State Gazette* (RT I 2010, 44, 262).

131. Union of Open Youth Centers, www.ank.ee

132. *State Gazette* (RT I 2007, 4, 19).

133. *Ibid.*, (RT I 1998, 57, 859).

In the study year 2010–2011, 53,660 young people ages 7–26 years were enrolled in hobby schools.¹³⁴

In addition to hobby schools hobby rings are operating. The main difference between them is that hobby schools have a clearly structured learning process that resembles the one implemented in formal education system (curriculum, teaching hours, exams), while hobby rings offer a more flexible environment. Young people can join and leave hobby rings easily, there is no curriculum leading to a certificate.

According to survey research, around two-thirds of young people ages 12–18 years are involved in hobby rings and clubs.¹³⁵ Another survey found that around 90 percent of young people have taken part in hobby activities within the preceding three years.¹³⁶

Youth Organizations: the Estonian National Youth Council (ENL)¹³⁷ is the main umbrella organization for youth organizations in Estonia. It promotes cooperation of youth associations and active participation of young people in society and works for the recognition of youth participation.

According to the ENL’s webpage, its mission is to be “a recognized organization protecting the interests of youth associations and enhancing all forms of cooperation between them, so that youth participation and youth initiative would be valued in the society.”

ENL’s vision: “Each journey begins with a dream. We dream of strong and competent youth associations. We see many active young people who influence the society and change it for the better. We know that the decisions about youth are not made for them but with the contribution of young people. We want to guarantee that not a single good idea that young people have would be lost due to lack of funds, interest, or skills. We want the voice of our young people to be heard far beyond Estonia. We dream that there would always be dreams!”

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 134. M. Taru, “Noored statistikapeeglis. Kogumikus Noorteseire aastaraamat,” Statistical Portrait of Youth, *Youth Monitoring Yearbook 2010* (2010).

135. Ibid.

136. K. Pihor, M. Taru, and V. Batueva, Noorte osalemise noorsootõös. Poliitikaülevaade/ Policy Brief: Youth Participation in Youth Work (Praxis, 2012).

137. Estonian National Youth Council, www.enl.ee/en/ENL

A wide range of youth events are arranged by youth organizations. Contacts for the organizations are found on the webpage of the National Youth Council.¹³⁸

Counseling Institutions: career counseling is coordinated and developed by the National Resource Center for Guidance of the Foundation for Lifelong Learning Development.¹³⁹ The Youth Work Center offers similar counseling services, albeit as one choice within a set of more numerous counseling choices. Seventeen counseling centers offer educational and career counseling.

The Estonian Youth Work Center¹⁴⁰ (EYWC) has 19 centers offering young people counseling on spending one's leisure time, hobby education, relationships with peers, and health.

The Estonian Sexual Health Association (ESHA)¹⁴¹ is a nonprofit organization that aims to promote sexual and reproductive rights and to guarantee access to sexual and reproductive health information and services for all people, including vulnerable groups. ESHA offers sexual health counseling at 19 counseling centers all over the country, over the Internet (www.amor.ee), and on the phone. It arranges trainings and courses and prepares and distributes informational materials.

National Agency of the Youth in Action Program: Youth in Action¹⁴² is the EU program for young people ages 15–28 (in some cases 13–30). It aims to inspire a sense of active citizenship, solidarity, and tolerance among young Europeans and to involve them in shaping the Union's future.

Youth in Action promotes mobility within and beyond the EU borders, nonformal learning, and intercultural dialogue. It encourages the inclusion of all young people, regardless of their educational, social, and cultural background.

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138. Estonian National Youth Council, www.enl.ee/en/ENL/members

139. Foundation for Lifelong Learning Development, www.innove.ee

140. Estonian Youth Work Center, www.entk.ee/eng/intro

141. Estonian Sexual Health Association, www.amor.ee/?set_lang_id=5

142. Estonian National Agency for Youth in Action Program, www.euroopa.noored.ee/en

Our People¹⁴³ is a foundation subordinate to the Ministry of Culture. The foundation promotes integration processes in Estonia, coordinates activities related to immigration and emigration, publishes information in this regard, and produces overviews. Integration promotes harmony among the various nationalities living in Estonia and Estonians, encouraging all to work, study, promote culture, and be a full and valuable member of society. The foundation offers help to those who wish to return to Estonia as well as to those who wish to leave; it also supports reuniting families of different nationalities.

Since 2008, the foundation's activities have been based on the Estonian Integration Strategy 2008–2013.¹⁴⁴ It has three goals:

- » educational and cultural integration
- » social and economic integration
- » legal and political integration

In the strategy for 2008–2013, the foundation has been given the practical role of planning and carrying out activities. The foundation initiates and supports projects/activities that promote integration into Estonian society and coordinates the efficient use of different resources. It is a partner of the ministries responsible for the measures of the Development Plan. Foundation activities are funded within the state budget and also from foreign sources, including EU programs that are funded through the budgets of other ministries.

The **Estonian Olympic Committee** (EOC)¹⁴⁵ is responsible for implementing the Physical Activity Development Program 2011–2014.¹⁴⁶ It also is responsible for organizing different sports, primarily Olympic sports. The EOC has 59 member organizations representing different sports. These member organizations are umbrella organizations within specific sports.

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143. Integration and Migration Foundation Our People, www.meis.ee/about-the-foundation

144. Ministry of Culture, 2008, www.kul.ee/webeditor/files/integratsioon/Loimumiskaava_2008_2013_ENG.pdf

145. Estonian Olympic Committee, www.eok.ee

146. Ministry of Culture, 2010, www.kul.ee/webeditor/files/liikumisharrastus/Liikumisharrastuse_arengukava_2011-2014.pdf

Through this structure (Ministry of Cultural Affairs → EOC → umbrella organizations → sports clubs and local organizations), the ministry implements its plans in the area of sports and physical activity.

4.3.2 Coordination Networks

The various Estonian ministries have no permanently functioning youth field cooperation or collaboration structure in place. Cooperation is issue-based—even though that might prolong resolution of some problems. In practice, a ministry that perceives a problem or a challenge in its area of responsibility has the pertinent official inform officials from other ministries and then form a working group. That working group holds meetings, but much of the work is done individually. For the most part, communication is handled via the Internet and e-mails.

Integrated youth policy is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research, Unit of Youth.¹⁴⁷ In the Riigikogu, youth issues are discussed in the Permanent Cultural Affairs Committee.¹⁴⁸

Youth does participate in the formation and implementation of policy measures in different contexts. At the ministerial level (MER), seven youth umbrella organization are involved in youth (work) policies through the National Youth Policy Council.¹⁴⁹ The council is active in the following areas:

- » monitors and conducts analysis of national-level strategic documents in the youth field
- » develops proposals for financing organizations and activities in the youth field
- » develops proposals for international cooperation in the youth field
- » advises the minister of education and research about youth policy and youth work
- » participates in shaping Estonian positions on questions pertaining to the European Union

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147. Ministry of Education and Research, *Youth Affairs*, www.hm.ee/index.php?1511897

148. Parliament of Estonia, Cultural Affairs Committee, www.riigikogu.ee/index.php?id=35287

149. Estonian National Youth Council, www.enl.ee/en/ENL

» annually reports its activities to the minister of education and research

At the county level, youth is involved through the county youth council. A working youth council is linked to every county government. County government is responsible for information distribution and operation of juvenile delinquency committees. Young people may partake in discussions of other policy issues, too.

At the local level, youth is involved through municipal youth councils. In 2010, municipal youth councils were operating in 45 municipalities. These councils permit young people to influence the life of their city or town.

At the school level, youth is involved through school and college student councils. High school and college student councils have separate umbrella organizations that are involved in National Youth Policy Council.

At the organizational level, young people are involved in youth organizations as well as in other activities that are designed and created for them with the goal of providing support for personal and civic development. These organizations and activities include open youth centers, youth projects, youth camps, and youth events. The umbrella organization of youth organizations—Estonian Youth Council—is involved with the National Youth Policy Council.

4.3.3 Financial Appropriations

According to the Youth Work Strategy Implementation Plan for 2011–2013,¹⁵⁰ the youth field will be allocated the following sums:

1. 2011: €587,477
2. 2012: €542,422
3. 2013: €556,867

The implementation plan, which builds on the Youth Work Strategy 2006–2013,¹⁵¹ is developed and implemented by Estonian Youth Work Center.

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150. Ministry of Education and Research, www.hm.ee/index.php?popup=download&id=11201

151. *Ibid.*, 2006, www.hm.ee/index.php?popup=download&id=7157

Before each budgeting period, general youth policy objectives are specified and priorities are set on the bases of national and European development plans as well as on the internal logic of development within the field of youth policy and youth work. Activities and financial appropriations in the implementation plan are developed in cooperation with a range of organizations active in the youth field.

In addition to national-level activities, each municipality develops and carries out its own youth work plan. In addition, various youth work institutions sponsor individual activities. However, at the policy level, youth work activities carried out by different organizations constitute one area of youth policy.

4.4 Recognition of Youth in Policies

Recognition of youth in policies varies. In youth work policies, youth is the central aspect; in other policy areas, while youth is not the central concern, the nature and target group of those policies (e.g., education, crime prevention) result in youth actually being central. In many policy areas, for instance, employment, entrepreneurship, health, and housing, youth is approached as “a special case.” Supporting youth entrepreneurial spirit and teaching entrepreneurship skills to young people are part of a wider set of policy measures aimed at increasing entrepreneurial activity in general. In some policy areas, such as retirement or environmental conservation, youth plays no notable role at all.

4.5 Policy Coherence

In general, policy measures within a specific policy field are developed by a ministry responsible for that policy field. With the adoption of the Youth Work Strategy 2006–2013,¹⁵² for the first time the Estonian government recognized the need to specifically take into account young people when developing policy measures that affect them. The period from 2006 through 2013 was meant to be a transition period from the state of “no youth poli-

¹⁵². Ibid.

cy” to a state whereby all policy measures in all fields pertaining to young people would be planned in a coordinated manner. However, creation of one central coordinating unit (the Ministry of Youth) was not the goal. The vision of the integrated and coordinated youth policy was built on the idea of information exchange between different actors and the Youth Unit of the Ministry of Education and Research as the main coordinator of policies affecting youth, subsequent coordination of goals and actions, and reasonable allocation of resources.¹⁵³

Some steps toward realizing this goal have been made. First and foremost, networks and working groups that bring together different ministries and other partners are a common practice for resolving problems and challenges pertaining to young people. Through this co-working format, decisions in different policy fields are coordinated. In addition to networks and working groups, exchange of information and round tables, coordination of official documents, distribution of quality knowledge and information emerging from operation of (government) organizations must be mentioned as tools supporting coherence in youth policy measures.

Interviews with experts from the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Research, and the Estonian Youth Work Center reveal that common use of resources offered by the Youth Work Center and other youth work organizations is another strategy that supports coherence of policy measures.

Connection between policies and the real world of young people is aided by the utilization of quality information on young people when developing, implementing, and evaluating policy measures. Quality information includes statistical data produced by Statistics Estonia, data emerging from the operations of (government) organizations, activity reports, financial reports, analytical reports produced by analysis departments of specific ministries, and commissioned (evaluation) studies. The data does not always need to be youth-specific, but, in many cases, the data can be mined for youth-specific information. Youth-specific commissioned studies also give good insight into the situation of young people.

153. Interview with an expert from the Ministry of Education and Research.

Information on young people is found in the National Youth Monitoring System,¹⁵⁴ which has three parts:

1. Statistical overview of the situation of young people. The Youth Monitoring System includes indicators in the following fields:
 - » Population
 - » Education
 - » Labor market
 - » Subsistence and welfare
 - » Health
 - » Justice and security
 - » Youth work
 - » Civic participation and attitudes
 - » Free time
2. Analysis of statistical data and in-depth investigation into some aspect of youth or youth policy. The Youth Monitoring Yearbook is published annually as are several policy briefs.
3. An overview of research in the youth field—a database of research projects.

4.6 Policy Alignment with Regional and International Frameworks

In 2010, the Ministry of Education and Research signed two international cooperation protocols; one with Finland and a second with the Flemish community of Belgium¹⁵⁵ in the framework of joint multilateral cooperation between Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Flanders. The cooperation with Finland is currently the most extensive.

154. Youth Monitor, www.noorteseire.ee

155. Ministry of Education and Research, 2011, www.hm.ee/index.php?popup=download&id=11596

Starting in 1998, youth work has been supported by the Youth for Europe (up to 1999), Youth (2000–2006), and Youth in Action (starting in 2007) programs.

The last program is managed by the National Agency of the Youth in Action Program, which finances youth exchanges, volunteer service, youth initiatives, and the training of youth workers.¹⁵⁶

To participate in the legislative process of the EU, the Ministry of Education and Research has established an internal unit that coordinates EU-related information—the European Union Office of the Ministry of Education and Research (EUOMER). The EUOMER was formed retroactively as of January 1, 2003, as an independent division of the Public and Foreign Relations Department of the Ministry of Education and Research. The main task of the EUOMER is to coordinate cooperation and exchange of information to ensure timely development of national positions about education, training, science, youth, and recognition of professional qualifications with regard to draft EU legislation.

EUOMER is the main coordinator of EU-related work and information in the area of administration of the Ministry of Education and Research. To coordinate and monitor EU-related cooperation, the position of deputy secretary general of European integration has been created.

According to the national coordination plan, the Ministry of Education and Research must form national working groups if it is to successfully participate in the EU legislative process. The working groups are to analyze the initiatives of the European Commission and the positions of the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament and assess Estonian national positions about education, training, youth, and research. These groups also play a significant role in discussing some other EU issues as well as in exchanges of information about education, training, youth, and research.

Currently, three permanent working groups are functioning at the Ministry of Education and Research.

156. Estonian National Agency for Youth in Action Program, www.euroopa.noored.ee/en

EURODESK¹⁵⁷ gives information on opportunities for travel, lodging, and financing in relation to an individual's studies, work, volunteering, and leisure trips in the countries of the EU.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed extensively how the existing legal framework in Estonia has been successfully put in place by several means: many of the laws passed have been translated into relatively tangible government programs, which may affect youth in one way or another. In addition, a number of institutions have been entrusted with tasks and provided with competencies to ensure that young people's interests, issues, and involvement are taken into consideration. The important role of nongovernmental actors, as well as Estonia's interconnectedness with European policy projects, is quite noticeable. However, awareness of youth issues varies considerably across policy areas and among stakeholders involved. The actual impact of the abovementioned programs and frameworks on the actualization of young people's human rights has not yet been verified.

157. Youth Information Network EURODESK, www.eurodesk.ee



Youth and
Public Policy in

Estonia

A grayscale world map is shown in the background. A white star is placed over the United Kingdom. The text is overlaid on the map.

Impact of Policies on the Achievement of Human Rights of Young People

5

5.1 Introduction

After having investigated the existing policy frameworks and their potential influence on the lives of young people, in this chapter we are going to analyze the actual impact of such policies on the achievement of the human rights of Estonian youth. Among other issues, the following sections concentrate on youth rights in the fields of social welfare, education, and participation in the decision-making process.

5.2 Observations on the Outcomes of Policy Implementation

In 2003, the government of Estonia approved the Strategy for Guaranteeing Children's Rights—the most important goal of which was to guarantee all children the basic rights mentioned in UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Other goals included: guarantee the basic needs of children; fulfillment of special needs of children; and fulfillment of children's needs to be supported by family, community, and appropriate environment.¹⁵⁸ The Strategy for Guaranteeing Children's Rights was the first goal-oriented attempt to plan and analyze the situation of children and youth in Estonia, react to UN feedback on the Estonian report of the situation of children and youth from the perspective of rights issues, and also act to fulfill duties enumerated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, it was later concluded that the strategy was too declarative and, therefore, its efficiency was not clearly measurable. For a short period, resources for implementing the strategy were gathered by the Ministry of Social Affairs, but otherwise all other ministries would need to have their own resources planned for connecting with the issue and implementing the strategy. This did not always work, as described in the report of the Strategy evaluation in 2009.¹⁵⁹ In 2010, the chancellor of justice gave a speech during the open hearing of the Riigikogu's Social Commission, drawing attention to the fact that, although the Strategy for Guaranteeing Children's Rights had its weaknesses, at least it was a guide for addressing these issues during 2004–2008,

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158. Government of Estonia, 2003.

159. Ministry of Social Affairs, 2009, www.sm.ee/fileadmin/meedia/Dokumentid/Sotsiaalvaldkond/lapsed/lastekaitse/LOTS_2004-2008_taitmise_aruanne.pdf

but had not since been made a priority in any other document, strategy, or development plan. The chancellor also noted that the Child Protection Act in Estonia is older than the constitution and is expressed so abstractly that implementing it is difficult. The chancellor averred that dealing with the coordination and cooperation between ministries was especially important, for example, on the question of schools for youth with behavioral problems and rehabilitation services for drug addicts. He admitted that the question of a children's ombudsman was not yet resolved in Estonia.¹⁶⁰ (In a positive development, the chancellor was given the extra duty as children's ombudsman in 2011.)

The Estonian Union of Child Welfare wrote to the Ministry of Education and Research in April 2011, referring to the same problem of absence of strategy for issues of children's rights but also prioritizing some of the urgent issues:

1. Prevention of violence at schools and kindergartens;
2. Needs and regulations of work with children and youth with special needs, e.g., understandable models of work for special schools, juvenile committees, alternative forms of education for children with special needs, leisure time of children in need.¹⁶¹

The field visit and focus group interview held with professionals working with youth at risk confirmed that there was, indeed, a gap between the laws providing measures to influence juvenile offenders and the reality—the measures are often not applicable in reality, special programs for offenders are lacking, the support system and networks are weak, and alternative education options are missing. It was stressed that there should be measures to influence and support families. Education of childcare professionals, with special attention given to their attitudes, as well as work overload was also mentioned. Problems with special boarding schools appear to be unresolved and, although education is provided there, social support and the principles of social pedagogy are not employed and work with families while offenders are at a special school is totally missing. Professionals

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160. Chancellor of Justice, 2010, <http://lasteombudsman.ee/et/indrek-teder-et-tekanne-laste-oiguste-tagamine-riigikogus>

161. Estonian Union of Child Welfare, 2011.

also confirmed during this focus group interview that early prevention is a weak spot, another is lack of trained professionals—especially child psychiatrists. What emerged in the other focus group interview with policymakers (representatives of different ministries and also umbrella organizations in the youth field) was that, in general, cooperation between public bodies within the youth field has improved, especially in working with problematic issues.

Although no current strategy on children's rights is in place, the official from the Ministry of Social Affairs interviewed for the study assured us that the new development plan on matters of children and families for 2012–2020 (approved by the government on October 20, 2011) will also cover the topic of rights. This has also been included in the State Report on Human Rights.¹⁶² The new Child Protection Act is to be ready in 2013; its provisions will be significantly greater and implemented on a much wider basis with certain specific actions prescribed that are missing in the current law.

The main issues raised by both important actors (the chancellor of justice and the Union of Child Welfare) were the question of rights of children and youth in the areas of education and leisure time. They also were concerned about the coordination and cooperation among the ministries and other actors. In the strategies involving education, justice, and leisure time, the question of children and youth with special needs has been raised and adequately addressed. The General Education Development Plan concludes that to help and support children and youth with special (education) needs, more professionals (speech therapists, child psychologists, special pedagogues) should be available. For example, at the pre-school level, no positions for psychologists were ever established.¹⁶³ At the same time, justice policymakers are expecting local governments to start to develop a system of early identification of children at risk; in addition, the education system should pay more attention to preventing school drop-outs, low school performance, avoiding bullying at schools, and ensuring the quality of juvenile committees and sanctions applied by them.¹⁶⁴

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162. Human Rights Council, 2010, www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4d54eef72.html

163. Ministry of Education and Research of Estonia, 2007, www.hm.ee/index.php?149743

164. Ministry of Justice, 2009, www.just.ee/orb.aw/class=file/action=preview/id=50982/Guidelines+for+Development+of+Criminal+Policy+until+2018.pdf

Those involved in the leisure time field also pay attention to special youth work (e.g., crime prevention), which is described as work done mainly through juvenile committees. The work of juvenile committees is based on the Juvenile Sanctions Act (1998). These committees are one of the main institutions (a committee must be formed in every county and can also be formed on the local level; 53 committees have been formed) in Estonia to work with juvenile offenders through nine different sanctions.¹⁶⁵

Some of the research and statistics show that, although included in all relevant strategies, the real situation of education for youth with special needs, crime prevention, and sanctions for juvenile offenders is far from admirable. For example, the obligation to go to school and drop-outs: as the National Audit Office showed in 2007, the number of youngsters who avoid attending school has remained the same for years—around 2 percent of all pupils. This percentage holds even in the face of (based on Estonian Education Information System [EHIS]) schools using alternative teaching methods and other support strategies (support systems at school: counseling, social pedagogy, etc.).¹⁶⁶ At the same time, school avoiders and drop-outs are seen as the most difficult group directed to juvenile committees. These youngsters commonly have other, more serious problems that have not been addressed. With the small number of child care officers (see also 5.5 below) and professionals available in Estonia in the field of children's mental health care, these actions are not surprising.¹⁶⁷ In 2009, the chancellor of justice had drawn the Riigikogu's attention to the lack of mental health professionals, especially child psychiatrists, and a lack of attention to the specific age group—stating that there are only a limited number of places in mental health care institutions for minors. He also declared that the system of rehabilitation services for young drug addicts is underdeveloped in Estonia and needs special attention, including quality development and wider accessibility (today, rehabilitation services for young drug addicts or youth

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165. Ministry of Education and Research of Estonia, 2006, www.hm.ee/index.php?popup=download&id=7157; *State Gazette* (RT I 1998, 17, 264).

166. National Audit Office of Estonia, 2007, www.riigikontroll.ee/DesktopModules/Digi-Detail/FileDownloader.aspx?FileId=10973&AuditId=1999

167. I. Rannala, A. Tiko, and A. Rohtla, *Youths with Behavioral Difficulties and Application of Prescribed Levers of Influence in Juvenile Committees* (Ministry of Justice of Estonia, 2006), www.just.ee/orb.aw/class=file/action=preview/id=23249/alaaalised28-06-2006.pdf

with psychiatric problems are not provided in every county).¹⁶⁸ The profession of child psychiatrist is not recognized in Estonia (although recognized in most European countries) and long discussions on adding the profession separately to the list of medical specialties have been held between the Estonian Psychiatric Association and the Ministry of Social Affairs with no results.¹⁶⁹

The issues of education for children and youngsters with special needs and crime or violence prevention are considered all the more important because of the position of the chancellor of justice and his focus on the rights of those who are temporarily isolated from society. Some of the interviewees mentioned other issues that should be more prominent in the discussions of the rights of children and youngsters: children in poverty; youth unemployment; education, leisure time, and participation issues of disabled children and youth; and child trafficking or exploitation, which have not yet been researched or addressed in Estonia. The issue of two communities—Russians and Estonians—existing more or less separately influences youth as well; the latest research shows that the gap between the two is still large; for instance, one-third of Estonian youth is afraid of Russians.¹⁷⁰

Based on integration strategies, the main goals are improving communication, creating a shared field of information for the Estonian- and Russian-speaking communities (primarily by increasing the trust of Russian-speakers in Estonian media sources), and working toward equality in social and economic opportunities and aspirations. Evaluation of the previous strategy (2000–2007), however, clearly shows that these goals are far from being reached.¹⁷¹

168. Chancellor of Justice, 2009.

169. A. Susi, “Ei ole eriala, ei ole spetsialiste,” in *MeditSiini Uudised*, 2010. www.mu.ee/Print.aspx?ArticleID=efd75e57-7683-4d5f-af71-edd64f9877ca

170. R. Vetik, “Russian Soft Power in the 21st Century, an Examination of Russian Compatriot Policy in Estonia” (2011).

171. Ministry of Culture, 2008, www.kul.ee/webeditor/files/integratsioon/Loimumiskava_2008_2013_ENG.pdf; Government of Estonia, 2000, www.kul.ee/webeditor/files/integratsioon/state_programme111.pdf

5.3 Access to Rights and Opportunities Guaranteed by Policies

In all their actions, all institutions and administrative agencies in Estonia that work for the benefit of people must consider the rights of children. Child welfare service providers are the main guardians, guarantors, and protectors of children's rights. Data varies about the number of local government child welfare workers (see also section 5.5)—the numbers range between 155 and 162.¹⁷² This works out to fewer than one worker per 1,000 children; the average number of child welfare workers appears to be one per 1,300 children. Some areas of Estonia report an even worse ratio—one worker per 5,000 children. In the new developmental plan, the Ministry of Social Affairs has changed focus—rather than calling for one worker per 1,000 children, quality of service is now emphasized. Accordingly, the role of nongovernmental organizations in this field is very important. Estonia has many respected organizations working with children and on youth issues: Union of Child Welfare, UNICEF Estonia, Estonian Children's Fund, and others. In 2009, child welfare and children's and youth's rights umbrella organization, the Children's Advocacy Chamber (in 2011, it had 15 members) was formed. The Children's Advocacy Chamber has publicly raised the following issues and questions: duties of the children's ombudsman under the supervision of the chancellor of justice; lack of support measures for parents (annually, more than 200 judicial decisions remove parental rights; the number of the cases is not decreasing); children living in relative poverty; health and risk behaviors of youth (up to one-third of youth age 15 smoke, for example); guaranteeing rights of children who are hospitalized alone; after-school day care possibilities for children, etc.¹⁷³ Most of these issues are also of concern to other actors in youth or related fields. Additional concerns include relative poverty and, an adjunct, the question of one warm meal per day (free school meals. Discussions are ongoing about also providing free school meals in high school—currently, one daily hot meal

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172. Human Rights Council, 2010, www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4d54eef72.html; Ministry of Social Affairs, 2008, www.sm.ee/tegevus/lapsed-ja-pere/lastekaitse-korraldus.html

173. Advisory Center for Families and Children, www.perenou.ee/index.php?id=10570

is provided only through basic school). A daily hot meal becomes problematic during summer vacations, when some children and youth do without for three months. Nõmme Child Welfare Organization, together with other partners (UNICEF Estonia and the Open Estonia Foundation, among them), has initiated the so-called Summer Soup program. Summer Soup, with the help of child welfare organizations and local social care offices, gives selected children meals and offers recreational activities.

The risk of relative poverty among children in Estonia was estimated in 2007 to be as great as 23 percent—among the six highest in Europe and was in correlated with expenditures on family policy (1.2% of GDP in 2007).

The less spent by government, the greater the risk of relative poverty.¹⁷⁴ In 2009, general relative poverty stood at 15.8 percent; state-provided family benefits have lessened poverty.¹⁷⁵ Those at greater risk for relative poverty include single-parent families (38% are in poverty) and families with both parents unemployed (80% of children of these families live in poverty). Families with children are three times more likely to be poor, even if both parents work as much as they can.¹⁷⁶

Sixty percent of families with disabled children have less leisure time, thus disabled children have fewer opportunities to spend leisure time with their families and even less possibility of having leisure time of their own. Twenty-five percent of families with disabled children have experienced problems with the education system—mostly having no alternative when an appropriate situation is not locally available for their child; 1.6 percent of Estonian disabled children and youth age 7–17 are not in the education system at all.¹⁷⁷

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174. A. Trumm, *Perede rahaline toetamine Euroopa Liidus 2007*. Uuringuraport. Tartu Ülikool, 2009, www.sm.ee/fileadmin/meedia/Dokumendid/Sotsiaalvaldkond/kogumik/perede_rahaline_toetamine.pdf

175. Valitsuse kommunikatsioonibüroo, February 28, 2011, www.valitsus.ee/et/uudised/taustmaterjalid/28542/suhtelise-vaesuse-maar-langes-2009-aastal-158-ni

176. Statistics Estonia, February 21, 2011, statistikaamet.wordpress.com/tag/vaesusrisk/

177. *Puudega lastega perede toimetuleku ja vajaduste uuring* (Custom Research Baltic: Sotsiaalministeerium, 2009), www.sm.ee/fileadmin/meedia/Dokumendid/Sotsiaalvaldkond/kogumik/PLU2009_loppraport.pdf

By looking back to 2001 and 2002, when initial and follow-up Estonian reports on the Convention on the Rights of the Child were submitted and additional comments by nongovernmental organizations were made¹⁷⁸—most of the problems mentioned then are still unresolved and are described also in this chapter. The Child Protection Act (proclaimed definitive by various professionals and organizations) has not yet been renewed, a systematic approach to assuring child welfare is still lacking, the number of child care officers on the local level is few, and assessing the impact of different decisions (also budget) on children is not common. Also acknowledged was that at the beginning of this century awareness of rights of children was (and remains) low and should be raised among children, youth, and the adults working with them. The question of living arrangements of children and youth in orphanages and protection of their rights, especially in the process of moving back and forth between orphanage and foster families, was also raised in these earlier reports.¹⁷⁹

When interviewed, youth, however, considered their awareness of their rights and duties to be sufficient. Student and youth organizations claim to discuss this topic through social media, different campaigns, etc. Also, UNICEF Estonia is known for emphasizing the topic of children's rights in different campaigns, events, publications, and trainings. In a couple of interviews conducted during this pilot project, some participants maintained that, in general, Estonians know their rights and obligations, including the youth of the nation—but there is always room for more awareness. A low level of knowledge and awareness of rights is even more the case in the Russian-speaking community. Gay youth are another subset of the Estonian population that has more than their share of issues, including their position in society, how society perceives them (including general attitudes but also mixed messages from government institutions), how the rights of gay youth are seen, questions of availability of useful information, tolerance, and acceptance.

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178. Lapse õiguste konventsiooni täiendav aruanne. Eesti valitsusväliste organisatsioonide täiendused, kommentaarid ning ettepanekud, 2002, www.sm.ee/fileadmin/mee-dia/Dokumendid/Sotsiaalvaldkond/lapsed/lastekaitse/Taeiendav_raport_mittetulundusuehingutelt.pdf

179. *Initial and Second Report Submitted by Estonia Under Article 44 of the Convention on Rights of the Child*, 2001, web-static.vm.ee/static/failid/487/CRC_report_Estonia_2001.pdf

5.4 Effectiveness of Policy Implementation

All policies mentioned in this chapter have implementation plans, are monitored for efficiency, and are based on analysis (research) of the current situation. Education, as described in various places in this chapter, is accessible to Estonia's children and youth. Different forms of nonformal education and participation apparently have become more and more accessible to young people as well: 16 percent of youth between 7–26 are participating in various forms of nonformal education, 44 percent of school-age youth visit youth centers (one-third of those 44% do so regularly), 14 percent are participating in youth organizations or in some other group. In 2010, career counseling was offered 90,236 times in 17 centers throughout Estonia. Also in 2010, counseling for youth on health, relationships, nonformal education, and other topics was provided 72,004 times in 19 centers. The Estonian Sexual Health Association provides counseling and lectures in 19 centers or counseling rooms throughout the country. Still, according to the interview with gay youth representatives, education on sexual health and adequate information are lacking or insufficient. Working experience for youth is provided through specific work camps (*õpilasmalev*); within the last three years, more than 15,000 youngsters have gained work experience during the summer in these camps. Work experience can also be garnered in the programs of Junior Achievement—which includes student activities where, in 2010, more than 600 students were involved. Close to 30,000 youngsters attended summer camps in 2010.¹⁸⁰ Most of the activities mentioned above are supported by the state and sometimes also co-financed by local governments.

Those responsible for implementation of the Education Development Plan for 2007–2013 have reported that most of the 2009 subgoals have been met (the 2010 report is not yet ready). The development of a system of support for students with special educational needs and those engaging in risky behavior just began in 2009 and has not yet been implemented. Some new study materials for visually impaired children have been distributed.

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180. Ministry of Education and Research, Report on Compliance of Youth Work Strategy Objectives and Implementation on the Year 2010, www.hm.ee/index.php?popup=download&id=11202; Estonian Sexual Health Association, amor.ee/?set_lang_id=5; Junior Achievement Eesti, www.ja.ee

In addition, 11 schools and student homes for children with special needs were renovated with European Regional Fund resources. Other accomplishments: the action plan 2009–2011 for the program Safe School (preventing school violence), under the Ministry of Education and Research, has been developed. Its greatest success has been in having the safety issues at schools included in the new Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act—which makes safety plans obligatory for every school.¹⁸¹ In addition, hot meals for basic school students were provided, as well as support for transportation of state gymnasium and state boarding school students.¹⁸² Although the opportunity to work on juvenile committees in the justice system is not voluntary or even desired, the quality of the judicial system and work with minors within the system are important. Accordingly, how the Guidelines on Development of Criminal Policy until 2018 will develop needs to be monitored.

Some of the plan's provisions include shorten the time of pre-court procedures for juvenile offenders—much improvement has been made from 2008 (172 days vs. 81 days in 2010). However, procedures in Juvenile Committees still take more time than allowed by law—an average of 45 days, instead of 30 days. In 2010, the pilot project on early prevention was also started by the Ministry of Justice together with UNICEF. The hope is that strategies for early prevention developed during this project will eventually be available to all local governments.¹⁸³ Interviews confirmed that the development of the new system for Juvenile Committees, including renewing the Juvenile Sanctions Act, has been started by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Justice. Crafting an early-prevention model and working in cooperation with local governments about implementation were deemed to be difficult because of less-than-optimal networking skills.

The developmental plan for children and families has only recently been approved. Therefore, assessing its efficiency is not yet possible. How-

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181. Ministry of Education and Research, 2006, www.hm.ee/index.php?0512479

182. Ministry of Education and Research, 2009, Üldharidussüsteemi arengukava 2007–2013 rakendusplaan 2009 täitmise aruanne, www.hm.ee/index.php?03236

183. Ministry of Justice, presentation for Riigikogu, Kriminaalpoliitika arengusuunad aastani 2018: 2010, aasta täitmise ettekanne Riigikogule, www.just.ee/orb.aw/class=file/action=preview/id=53521/Kriminaalpoliitika+arengusuunad+aastani+2018_2010++aasta+t%E4itmise+ettekanne.pdf

ever, what can be assessed is the impact of family benefits. The civil servant from the Ministry of Social Affairs who was interviewed emphasized that within the social insurance system the effects of benefits are tracked and indicators of efficiency are in place. This plan is greatly affected by budgetary constraints.

Implementation plans for the integration strategy have been evaluated for 2008–2010 and renewed for 2011–2013. Many activities continue to focus on improving communication between the Russian- and Estonian-speaking communities, e.g., language studies in different formats for both youth and youth workers. During the evaluation of the integration strategy of 2000–2007, only language teaching in different formats was considered and acknowledged as efficient. The other three main goals were determined to not have been reached in most aspects, and, therefore, many of the same goals have been brought into the new strategy.¹⁸⁴ In some parts (the use of the Estonian-friendly media by the Russian community, for example), goals seem to be unrealistic even in 2011—two years before the end of the new strategy period.

5.5 Efficiency of Appropriated Resources

Estonia has more than 24,000 teachers at different levels of the educational system—one-third of them at the pre-school level. Estonia's teachers are older than the average in Europe—for example, 40 percent of math teachers are more than 50 years old. Most of the teachers (75%) have a university degree, but many young men and women with teaching degrees prefer to take better-paying jobs in private or other sectors¹⁸⁵ rather than teach in a classroom.

Costs for the entire system have risen incrementally and were, in 2009, at 6.2 percent of GDP (greater than average for in OECD countries¹⁸⁶).

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184. Ministry of Culture, 2008, www.kul.ee/webeditor/files/integratsioon/Loimumiskava_2008_2013_ENG.pdf; Government of Estonia, 2000, www.kul.ee/webeditor/files/integratsioon/state_programme111.pdf

185. Ministry of Education and Research, www.hm.ee/index.php?1511055

186. Government of Estonia, 2010 Estonian Human Resources Report.

The basic minimum annual statutory salary for secondary school teachers is 10 times lower in Estonia (€7,298 in 2009/2010) than in Luxembourg (€72,332);¹⁸⁷ understandably, teachers are dissatisfied.¹⁸⁸ The average monthly salary is between 608 and 888 euros (depending on length of service and evaluation).¹⁸⁹ These salaries are in no way comparable with those of many other European, especially Nordic, countries. Estonian media maintain an ongoing discussion¹⁹⁰ on this subject; in addition, those running for office make the position and future of Estonian teachers an issue in their campaigns. Since 2008, the state has been offering so-called starting money to young teachers to come to work at schools. Some municipalities offer extra payment to their teachers; the state-financed “lap-top program for teachers,” a motivational program,¹⁹¹ is also in place.

An estimated 5,000 youth workers (including all part-time workers, volunteers, youth leaders, etc.) are active in Estonia.¹⁹² Among them, 50 percent are working full-time and one-fifth as volunteers (based on a recent questionnaire answered by 511 respondents). Youth workers (31% of whom have a university degree; 24% have a college-level education) work mainly at youth centers and schools. Thirty-one percent of the youth workers are between 17 and 26—in this group most probably can also be found youth leaders from youth associations. Morale and motivation of youth workers are quite high; however, more than half of them are dissatisfied with their salaries and the lack of recognition.¹⁹³

Estonia has a chronic shortage of child care officers. Organizing child care is the local government’s responsibility. In 2007, child care officers em-

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187. European Commission, Eurydice, 2011, Teachers’ and School Heads’ Salaries and Allowances in Europe, 2009/10.

188. Õpetajate Leht, September 23, 2011, www.opleht.ee/?archive_mode=article&articleid=6029

189. Government of Estonia, 2010.

190. Õpetajate Leht, September 24, 2010.

191. Ministry of Education and Research, www.hm.ee/index.php?1511055

192. E. Schlummer, Noorsootöö olemus ja sisu. Noorsootöö siin ja praegu. Artiklite kogumik. Eesti Noorsootöö Keskus (2009).

193. Eesti noorsootöötaja, tema pädevused ja koolitusvajadused, Tartu Ülikool (2010).

ployed by local governments numbered 155.¹⁹⁴ The Estonian Union of Child Welfare estimates that around 70,000 children in different municipalities do not have a child care officer available to them. Professional opinion is that one child care officer per 1,000 children is optimal; in 2010, Estonia had one child care officer per 1,378 children.¹⁹⁵ Ninety-five percent of child care officers are women—one-third of them have a university degree in social work; 5.4 percent are still working on their degree in social work. Altogether, 60 percent of child care officers have a university degree in another field, for example, in pedagogy, psychology, and agricultural science (10.8%).¹⁹⁶ This last fact demonstrates the processes of a transitional society, where, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, collective farms (among other institutions) were ended and, suddenly, many individuals were out of a job and so had to transform and connect with new processes.

Social work as the “new” field was a solution for women, who just moved from one field to another. At the beginning (1990s), of course, the quality of their professional social work was pretty low. University-level courses of study in social work were begun at in 1991 and at the college level in 1990.¹⁹⁷

Estonia persists in having too few child psychiatrists—this lack was also regularly brought up in the focus group interview held with professionals working with youth at risk. As was mentioned above, Tartu University offers no specialization in child psychiatry; psychiatrists are educated and trained at Tartu, which does not then offer a child psychiatric residency. Although Tartu University seems to offer a specialization in child psychiatry through a special program, it is rarely applied for—with only a few young students beginning it and even fewer completing it. This state of affairs is attributed to the unclear status of child psychiatrists in the nation and the lack of a residency program. The current status and future of the profession

194. Ministry of Social Affairs, 2009, www.sm.ee/tegevus/lapsed-ja-pere/lastekaitse-korraldus.html

195. Ministry of Social Affairs, National Development Plan for Children and Families 2012–2020, www.sm.ee/fileadmin/meedia/Dokumendid/Sotsiaalvaldkond/kogumik/Laste_ja_pere_de_arengukava_2012_-_2020.pdf

196. Ministry of Social Affairs, 2004, www2.sm.ee/lastekaitse/failid/Kusitlus%20lastekaitseto%20tegitate%20seas%202004.doc

197. Tallinn Pedagogical College, www.tps.edu.ee/uus/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1305&Itemid=286

are unclear. Years ago, one psychiatrist per 10,000 children was the desired goal—Estonia is still way behind that number. In 1998, the Ministry of Social Affairs issued certificates to 25 child psychiatrists; today, after a new certification process implemented by the Estonian Psychiatric Association, Estonia has 18 child psychiatrists. Many of them are older and near retirement—who will replace them?¹⁹⁸

Estonia has well-developed systems of evaluation in place and also specific criteria for professional qualifications, including for teachers, youth workers, and social workers. The professional qualification system, developed and administered by the Estonian Qualifications Authority,¹⁹⁹ links the educational system and the labor market and endorses lifelong learning and the development of professional competence, assessment, recognition, and comparison.

During 2008–2013, a lot of resources (total of 4,708,559 euros) have been and will be directed into the development of youth work quality and trainings for youth workers and others working in the youth field through the European Social Fund.²⁰⁰ Two main strategic priorities are raising the professionalism of youth workers and developing a quality-measurement system for youth work. International cooperation and exchange are also supported. Further use of European Structural Funds will be necessary to develop different aspects of youth policy.²⁰¹

As mentioned earlier, in 2009, 6.2 percent of GDP was used for education costs.²⁰² In basic education, state support has been given to owners (local governments) of the schools. Salaries, trainings, instructional materials, and investments have been included in this state support, with the number of pupils, the number of pupils with special needs, and the size of the local government being considered. This system was operational from 1996 to 2005, but discontent with it was high. The new system is cost-based, with

198. Susi, 2010, Estonian Psychiatric Association, www.psy.ee

199. Estonian Qualifications Authority, www.kutsekoda.ee/en/index

200. Estonian Youth Work Center, www.entk.ee/esf

201. Ministry of Education and Research, Report on Compliance of Youth Work Strategy Objectives and Implementation in the Year 2010.

202. Government of Estonia, Estonian Human Resources Report (2010).

criteria for assessing costs (for example, costs for teaching hours and costs for teaching one class).²⁰³

As also mentioned earlier, more than 4,000,000 euros from the European Social Fund have been and will be used for the development of quality Estonian youth work, for trainings of youth workers, and for the research and improvement of information in the youth work field during 2007–2013.²⁰⁴

Through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), 20 youth centers or hobby schools will be renovated between 2007 and 2015. This is significant investment in Estonian youth work infrastructure—altogether the support is 20,199,276 euros.²⁰⁵

Every year, the Ministry of Education and Science measures the fulfillment and the cost of the implementation plan of the Estonian Youth Work Strategy 2006–2013. For example, 12,274,345 euros were spent (including ESF and ERDF) in 2010 for implementation of the strategy and three of the four main goals were met.²⁰⁶

Organizing youth work is the responsibility of local government in Estonia. In many (42%) areas, budget for youth work is between 3–5 percent of the total budget of the local government; in 29 percent of the country, the budget is greater than 5 percent of the total budget.²⁰⁷

5.6 Youth Participation in Policy

Youth participation is considered to be important in Estonia and is addressed in legislation, specifically in the Youth Work Act, which defines the participation format for the local level (youth council) and assigns the responsibility to form one. The act also allocates the budget for local youth

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203. Ministry of Education and Research, General Education Funding, www.hm.ee/index.php?1511071

204. Estonian Youth Work Center, www.entk.ee/esf

205. Government of Estonia, a korraldusega nr 282 “Elukeskkonna arendamise rakendus-kava” prioriteetse suuna Hariduse infrastruktuuri arendamine” (June 19, 2008).

206. Ministry of Education and Research, Report on Compliance of Youth Work Strategy Objectives and Implementation in the Year 2010.

207. U. Reitav, and S. Krusell, *Noorsootöö rahastamine kohalikes omavalitsustes* (Eesti Noorsoo Instituut, 2008).

councils. The Youth Work Act also gives legal definitions of youth organizations and the union of youth organizations.²⁰⁸ School student councils and student councils are defined and supported by the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act as well as in the Universities Act.²⁰⁹ Umbrella organizations exist in Estonia for all categories: the Estonian National Youth Council (with around 60 member organizations and a total of approximately 40,000 members), the Estonian School Student Councils Union (with around 190 councils, representing almost 100,000 students), and the Federation of Estonian Students Unions (representing 95% of Estonian students—more than 64,000).²¹⁰ At the state level, participation possibilities include the National Youth Policy Council and the Student’s Board, which advise the Ministry of Education and Research. Every county has a participation assembly (total 15, about 300 youngsters involved); on the local level in 2010, local assemblies numbered 45.²¹¹ Comments on county and local participation assemblies, made in the interview with representatives of the Estonian National Youth Council, are rather negative, especially on the county level, suggesting that a lack of interest and support from the county civil servants are affecting participation. At the same time, support for the youth assemblies on the local level through consultations and trainings provided by the National Youth Council (and supported by the state) and changes in the Youth Work Act are positively influencing participation at the local level.

The Ministry of Education and Research maintains a registry of youth associations. Based on this registry, around 7 percent of Estonian youth are estimated to be involved in different youth organizations.²¹² Other recent research on the local level has shown this number to be higher—up to 17

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208. *State Gazette* (RT I 2010, 44, 262).

209. *Ibid.*, (RT I 2010, 41, 240), (RT I 08.11.2010, 8).

210. Estonian National Youth Council, www.enl.ee/en; Estonian School Student’s Councils Union, www.escu.ee; Federation of Estonian Student Unions, www.eyl.ee/index.php?page=3&

211. Ministry of Education and Research, Report on Compliance of Youth Work Strategy Objectives and Implementation in the Year 2010.

212. *Ibid.*

percent in Tartu, for example.²¹³ Finally, registered youth associations can apply for yearly support from the state.

All major political parties support political youth organizations that share their worldview, with 7 percent (approximately 15,000²¹⁴ young men and women as of March 2011) of youth between ages 15 and 30 engaged with political parties.²¹⁵ Interviews reveal that youth organizations are considered to be the most effective way to influence politics and policies for young people and let the voice and opinions of youth be heard. All interviewed representatives of youth umbrella organizations maintained that they were listened to and involved in decision-making processes as partners. Students are mostly involved with educational questions, the National Youth Council with youth policy issues. As for local and county participation, some skepticism was expressed—mostly because of lack of participation traditions at these levels. As the state stopped supporting youth chapters of political parties in 2010,²¹⁶ possibly the opinions of youth chapters will be considered less neutral or credible in the future.

The National Youth Work Strategy 2006–2013 defines youth participation as the creation of diverse opportunities for youth for participating in decision-making processes and the development of motivation of among youth to participate. The National Youth Work Strategy defines youth participation as young people's active or passive intervention in social processes and their impact on the decisions made in society. Active partici-

213. M. Taru, P. Hillep, T. Tammeveski, E. Trubetskoi, and R. Pärnamets, *Noorte ja lastevanemate rahulolu arendavate vaba aja veetmise võimalustega Tartus 2010 aastal* (Eesti Uuringukeskus, 2010), [http://www.tartu.ee/data/Noorte_ja_lastevanemate_rahulolu_vaba_aja_vimalustega_Tartus_%E2%80%8B2010_\(raport\).pdf](http://www.tartu.ee/data/Noorte_ja_lastevanemate_rahulolu_vaba_aja_vimalustega_Tartus_%E2%80%8B2010_(raport).pdf)

214. Council of Europe, 2011, youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/documents/Questionnaires/Participation/2011/information_sheet_participation_of_young_people_Estonia_2011.pdf

215. M. Taru, R. Mäe, E. Reiska, and M. Laanpere, *Avatud noortekeskuste kordusuuring* (Tallinn: Tallinn University, Institute of International and Social Studies, 2010); M. Taru, E. Reiska, and G. Nimmerfeldt, *Tallinna noorte osalemine noorsootöös. Koolinoorte ja lastevanemate arvamus* (Tallinn: Tallinn University, Institute of International and Social Studies, 2010), www.tallinn.ee/est/g6143s52799

216. Estonian National Youth Council, Press Release, January 19, 2010, www.enl.ee/et/Organisatsioonist/uudiskiri/Uudised/73/pressiteade-minister-lukase-noorteuhenduste-rahastamata-jatmise-otsus-on-kahetsusvaarne/

pation—young people make decisions and propose solutions themselves; passive participation—participation in activities provided by society. The Youth Work Strategy 2006–2013 proposes three measures to promote youth participation:

- » Create possibilities for nonorganized youth to be represented at national, county, and local levels
- » Support the formation of youth councils and their sustainability through devising and adopting their operating principles and advising local governments
- » Development of motivation in youth and a commitment to participate²¹⁷

Most of the umbrella organizations mentioned earlier and other larger youth organizations have different programs and projects, webpages kept current, and also regularly issue a variety of materials. Bigger projects include the Shadow Elections (in 2008 and 2010) organized by the Estonian National Youth Council or educational projects that support participation at the local and county levels.²¹⁸

Methods employed to promote youth participation include publishing instructions about the possibilities for youth to participate in the work of local governments; a functioning youth council in every county; a campaign to introduce youth participation. The National Youth Work Center²¹⁹ employs a chief expert on youth participation and information who oversees services offered to young people and also is involved in advising young people.²²⁰ Based on Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation²²¹ and examples provided, the young people of Estonia are, to a great degree, consulted and informed.

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217. Ministry of Education and Research of Estonia, 2007, www.hm.ee/index.php?149743

218. Estonian National Youth Council, www.enl.ee

219. National Youth Work Center, www.entk.ee

220. Council of Europe, 2011, youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/documents/Questionnaires/Participation/2011/information_sheet_participation_of_young_people_Estonia_2011.pdf

221. Croatian Youth Network, 2011, http://www.mmh.hr/files/ckfinder/files/youth_ready_steady_participate.pdf

Two-thirds of Estonian youth were engaged in some form of study in 2010: the 15–19 age group had an 89 percent participation rate; 35 percent of the 20–24 age group were involved in some form of study—39.7 percent worked and 15 percent simultaneously studied and worked; the 25–29 age cohort had 75.5 percent working, while 7 percent were both studying and working.²²² At the beginning of 2010, the unemployment rate of young people (15–24) was 40.6 percent; by the end of that year, their unemployment rate had dropped precipitously to 23.4 percent. The average unemployment rate of young people in 2010 was 32.9 percent. Young people tend to be unemployed for longer periods than other age groups in the labor market; accordingly, integrating long-term unemployed young people into the labor pool becomes more difficult as time passes—which may bring other problems.²²³

A study conducted in 2006 polled young people about different ways of participation and the benefit of them: traditional voting during elections was considered to be a very useful form of participation (58.9% for youth ages 15–25 in Tallinn and 50.7% for rest of Estonia); participation through media (39.7% and 38.4%, respectively); work in and through political parties (34.3% and 25.7%, respectively). Estonian youth considered boycotts, illegal protests, or violent protests the least effective ways of participation.²²⁴

Those who seem least interested in participating are those young people who engage in risky behavior. These young men and women not only fall between different systems (educational, social, juridical), but also are not brought into the decision-making process about their own lives and choices. Although the Juvenile Sanctions Act (1998) has been in force for more than a decade, in practice, it is rarely used because of a lack of time, a lack

222. Ministry of Education and Research, Report on Compliance of Youth Work Strategy Objectives and Implementation in the Year 2010.

223. Ministry of Social Affairs, Working and Managing, 2012, www.sm.ee/eng/activity/working-and-managing.html

224. M. Taru, *Tallinna noorte sotsiaal-poliitiline aktiivsus võrdluses Helsingi piirkonna noorte ja Eesti teiste piirkondade noorte aktiivsusega* (Tallinn: Tallinn University Institute of International and Social Studies, 2006).

of human resources, or a lack of knowledge and skills among those who are supposed to support and influence youngsters.²²⁵

During this pilot project and report writing, a small online poll was conducted (n = 860) with the help of the Estonian National Youth Council; two questions about participation were asked:

1. How to make discussions concerning youth problems more interesting to youth?
2. Has youth been given enough opportunities for participation in political discussions?

The most popular answer (42%) to the first question was connected with different nonformal learning paths. Also mentioned were discussions, concrete examples, role models, using the youth-to-youth method, games, etc. Approximately 10 percent of respondents were convinced that concrete actions, projects, programs, or camps could make youth issues interesting to youth. Seven percent suggested the wiser use of different media; only 4 percent thought that discussions of youth problems should be held in more formal settings, mostly school. Other answers included: “you should give presents to young people,” “you should scare them with bad examples,” “nothing can really make discussions like that interesting,” “I don’t know,” and “use individual approach.”

To the question had youth been given enough opportunities for participating in political discussions, 43 percent of the respondents answered “no,” while 23 percent answered “yes.” Six percent did not know or answered “no opinion,” and 28 percent gave a variety of answers, mostly stating “possibly.”

225. I. Rannala, “Young Offenders and Juvenile Committees in Estonia: The Need for Dialogue,” in *Research, Planning and Policy: Emerging Trends in Baltic and Nordic Lifelong Learning*, edited by Paul Isley, Jarmo Karing, and Michele Kerulis (Tampere: Juvenes Print, 2008): 93–107.


5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has pointed out the extent to which existing policies in Estonia are suitable for the realization of young people's human rights. Estonian policy documents usually include developmental strategies and concrete action plans—which should facilitate the implementation of youth policies. However, a number of issues remain entirely or partially unresolved. Bridging the gap between Estonians and Russian-speakers has so far proved impossible. More than two decades after independence, Estonian society is still divided into two more or less separate communities, which carries through to younger generations. A lack of professionals and specialists can still be identified in some areas of the youth field. In connection with these gaps in Estonian policy implementation, we should again pay attention to the important role played by both nongovernmental actors and international organizations, such as the ERDF, the ESF, and UNICEF. National strategies in the youth field often arise from corresponding international conventions or action plans and therefore require a certain degree of coordination with—or adaptation to—the respective institutions. Intersectorial coordination in the youth field within national policies in Estonia is described in the next chapter.



Youth and
Public Policy in

Estonia



Intersectoral Coordination and
Cooperation in the Youth Policy Field

6

6.1 Introduction

So far this report has attempted to delineate the situation of young people in Estonia as well as the legal and ideological foundations for the development of youth policies. It has also shed light on existing policies, analyzing both their potential and actual effects on youth. This chapter is concerned with the different ways of evaluation and monitoring within national policymaking in Estonia and the mechanisms of intersectorial coordination between several public actors and other stakeholders in the youth field.

6.2 Existence and Implementation of Action Plans for Youth Policies

Normally, each strategy or development plan has a yearly or two-year implementation schedule, with the two-year schema being more common. An implementation plan, which is usually fairly detailed, starts with a description of the background and the general situation in a particular field and then moves on to more concrete descriptions. The plan consists of indicators that define policy goals in operational terms and give target levels that are expected to be achieved by a certain year (not necessarily within one year; an implementation plan normally gives a target level for several consecutive years). The implementation plan also specifies activities that are to be carried out to achieve a particular goal, the cost of the activity designed to achieve the goal, organizations responsible for carrying out the activities, partners, and sources of finances that will be used for carrying out the activities.

The youth work strategy currently has a three-year implementation plan from 2011 to 2013. The 35-page document has 28 pages detailing indicators and related figures, the rest give background information. Five main priorities are listed, including prevention of social exclusion, better youth participation, and better cooperation within the youth field. The 32 measures have four subgoals with 103 activities planned under them with indicators, implementers, and costs. The cost of the implementation plan, which has 15 main partners for 2011–2013, is more than 26 million euros. The main implementer is the Estonian Youth Work Center, but much responsibility is

shared with the Foundation of Lifelong Learning Development, the Youth in Action Estonian Bureau, and the Estonian National Youth Council.²²⁶

The Development Plan of Basic Education System for 2007–2013 is probably the next most important document influencing a lot of Estonian youth. Yearly implementation plans are divided according to three main goals of the plan; for example, the implementation plan for 2010 has 8 subgoals, 20 measures, and 65 activities.

The Ministry of Education and Research, the National Examinations and Qualifications Center, local governments, and county governments are the main implementers. Indicators are set at the subgoal level. Cost for implementing the development plan in 2010 are more than 222 million euros.²²⁷

Other strategies and development plans do not consider youth aspects separately, although in some areas they might. In the Estonian Integration Strategy 2008–2013 and its implementation plan for 2011–2013, the main focus is on youth in their educational-cultural package, where two main goals and eight subgoals deal with young people. Again, indicators are set at the subgoal level. Financing institutions are mentioned rather than implementers.²²⁸

The Developmental Plan for Reducing Violence 2010–2014 and the implementation plan for the same period also address topics that concern youth: mainly focusing on reducing juvenile crimes, educating on Internet violence, and on school safety issues. Considering the long span of the implementation plan, indicators are mostly very generally formulated; finances are not specified or calculated in detail.²²⁹

226. Ministry of Education and Research of Estonia, Youth Work Strategy Implementation Plan for 2011–2013, www.hm.ee/index.php?popup=download&id=11201

227. Ministry of Education and Research, 2009, www.hm.ee/index.php?popup=download&id=10353

228. Ministry of Culture, 2010, www.kul.ee/index.php?path=0x1377x1496x1784

229. Ministry of Justice, 2010, www.just.ee/orb.aw/class=file/action=preview/id=52311/Development_Plan_for_Reducing_Violence_for_Years_2010-2014.pdf

6.3 Existence and Implementation of Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks

Within the field of policy evaluation, two different practices can be pointed out:

First, evaluation based on indicators in the implementation plan. This practice uses mostly information (e.g., activity reports, financial reports) obtained through regular ministry operations, its subordinate organizations, and partners. Information from the National Statistical Office²³⁰ is also used.

The second practice in assessing policies is the use of evaluation studies. Evaluation of a strategy or a particular policy measure is done through a separate study, which is conducted by a professional research institution or a consortium of such institutions. For instance, the national integration strategy (Ministry of Cultural Affairs) has been evaluated by several universities. The Ministry of Social Affairs has commissioned a number of studies to evaluate the impact and success of different policy measures. The evaluations have been carried out mostly by the think tank Praxis.²³¹

It needs to be added that the two approaches are not mutually exclusive but rather complement each other. For instance, the Ministry of Social Affairs uses both indicators in the implementation plan and also separate evaluation studies to monitor the effectiveness of its policy measures. The Ministry of Cultural Affairs relies mainly on evaluation studies, not so much on indicators in the implementation plan. In fact, that ministry's implementation plan does contain mainly qualitative descriptions of goals.

In general, youth as a distinct group is not specifically monitored. Ministries are responsible for implementing their strategies and these usually have much wider scope than only young people or any other specific age group.

Therefore, implementation plans and indicators don't limit themselves only to youth issues but also cover wider policy areas. However, if a specific interest in an issue is linked to young people, then that particular aspect or

230. Statistics Estonia, www.stat.ee/en

231. Praxis, Center for Policy Studies, www.praxis.ee/index.php?id=96&L=1

policy measure might be investigated intensively. For instance, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs monitors a language immersion program and has commissioned an evaluation study for that purpose. Youth unemployment is monitored regularly, as well as juvenile crime statistics.

In a particular policy field, youth might well be the dominant group. For instance, youth is central in education policy and in different strategies in this field. Implementation plans in this policy area contain indicators that describe the situation of young people.

The Unit of Youth Affairs of the Ministry of Education and Research uses information obtained mainly from activity reports of its subordinates and partners, financial reports, and statistical data produced by Statistics Estonia. Starting from 2011, two additional activities were initiated: the youth monitoring system and a youth work quality management system in local municipalities.

The youth monitoring system²³² consists of three components:

1. a set of indicators that describe a number of aspects of youth life in Estonia. The selection of indicators is based on a range of indicators that are used by other ministries and that are supplied with up-to-date and adequate information by Statistics Estonia, such as number of graduates in higher education, number of deaths, and the employment rate among 15–26-year-olds. In the case of some indicators, information comes from research projects.
2. an in-depth analysis of a selected aspect of youth policy that is published as an annual yearbook. The key theme changes every year. At the time of release of the yearbook, a thematic conference is also held. In addition to the yearbook, policy briefs are published and seminars organized.
3. a database of research on youth issues. The database contains references to academic and other research reports on various aspects of youth, youth policy, and youth work. The database does not contain the reports themselves.

232. Youth Monitor, www.noorteseire.ee/en/

In addition to the monitoring system, a youth work quality management system is being developed and implemented. The youth work quality management system is a set of indicators that describes different aspects of youth work offered by a municipality. The main purpose of the indicator system is to give feedback to municipalities on the variety and quality of youth work services within the administrative borders of the municipality. Information on the levels of the indicators in a municipality is obtained through a combination of self-evaluation and external evaluation.

Both the youth monitoring system and the youth work quality management system are implemented within a national program—Improving Youth Work Quality, 2008–2013.²³³ This program is so far the largest national youth work and youth (work) policy development program in terms of goals, activities, target groups, and finances.

6.4 Existence and Effectiveness of Intersectorial Coordination Mechanisms

Cooperation between different ministries and their subordinate organizations for developing and implementing youth-related policies is, for the most part, issue- or theme-specific.

The case might be one of coordinating positions in an official document, e.g., a development plan or a strategy. Here, no further communication or collaboration between ministries or other organizations would be necessary. Legislative initiatives are coordinated by relevant departments in the ministries that are affected by a particular legislative move.

In the case where a youth-related issue has been identified and deemed of sufficient concern to be addressed at the policy level, a working group will be set up by the institution that identified the problem. The group will consist of representatives of several institutions and/or organizations and might also include participants from organizations outside the public administration system. The working group will meet until the issue is resolved. At different stages, the working group might comprise ministerial

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233. Estonian Youth Work Center, ESF Program, “Developing Youth Work Quality,” www.entk.ee/eng/developing%20youth%20work%20quality

officials (planning stage) or public servants from subordinate organizations of the ministries (implementation stage). During the focus group interview with policymakers and representatives from umbrella organizations, it was stated that such cooperation within the public sector on youth-related issues is much improved, as is cooperation within the third sector, nongovernmental organizations. A gap might be seen in cooperation between the public and “third” sectors.

A slightly more integrated form of cooperation is sometimes engaged in. For instance, a working group on career services is jointly steered by the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Social Affairs. This form of cooperation and coordination is characterized by a higher degree of involvement of both parties at ministerial level.

In the future, the Youth Unit of the Ministry of Education and Research and the Estonian Youth Work Center (EYWC) expect to have a more central position in youth-related legislation, policies pertaining to youth, and youth work. This shift is attributable to the movement toward a more integrated youth policy. With the signing of the Youth Work Strategy 2006–2013, Estonia entered into a transition period from having no youth policy to that of moving toward having an integrated youth policy. The transition period started in 2006 and is expected to last until the end of 2013. The transition is planned to lead to an institutional configuration whereby the Youth Unit and the EYWC become coordinating bodies in the youth field and also take on the role of being centers of expertise and knowledge in the field. Note, however, that no “Ministry of Youth” or other central power center will be established. The reform essentially entails increased utilization of youth-specific knowledge by already existing government agencies. For instance, it would mean that (un)employment issues will remain the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs but resolving particular issues, planning, and implementing concrete measures will more centrally involve the Youth Unit (YU) and the EYWC. The YU and the EYWC possess youth-specific knowledge as well as the resources necessary to involve young people in policy processes, thus using their knowledge and resources would increase the quality of planning, decision making, and implementation.

A working example of the expected situation: consider cooperation between the ministries of Education and Research, Social Affairs, and Justice. A joint working group comprising the Youth Unit, representatives of the

Ministry of Social Affairs (labor market), and representatives of the Ministry of Justice has been working on a program aimed at supporting integration of vulnerable youth into the labor market.

Within this working group, each of the partners brings specific expertise: the Ministry of Education and Research in youth hobby education and hobby activities, education and boarding schools; the Ministry of Social Affairs in employment and unemployment; the Ministry of Justice in resocialization of criminal convicts and early intervention. Intense cooperation between the partners has led to a common frame of reference and common vocabulary and most likely will also increase quality of the ultimate jointly developed program. A significant aspect of the process has been deliberate integration of expertise on youth. Currently, the process of increasing integration of youth-specific expertise and resources into different policy areas is under way, with the first signs of a new level in coordinating youth-relevant policies becoming visible. Ultimately, existing government structures should make more use of the youth-specific expertise and youth-specific knowledge of the Youth Unit and the EYWC. The YU and the EYWC also have resources to increase inclusion of young people in policy processes that lead to decisions that affect their lives.

6.5 Conclusion

By presenting the different frameworks and mechanisms for the evaluation of youth policymaking, along with the results of various activities, this chapter has again illustrated the shift toward an integrated youth policy in Estonia. Both policymaking and monitoring are supposed to be issue- and theme-oriented—aiming at wider coverage than just the youth of the country. On the one hand, this can facilitate the flexible integration of the youth perspective into policymaking; on the other hand, the need for constant and conscious insistence is always present to assure young people of their appropriate share of attention. Specific recommendations on this and other questions are considered in the last chapter.



Youth and
Public Policy in

Estonia

A dark gray world map with a white star over the United Kingdom. The map shows the outlines of continents and countries. The star is positioned over the British Isles.

Conclusions and Recommendations

7

7.1 Introduction

The conclusions and recommendations of the present review are drawn for and given to certain actors with the aim of supporting the achievement of certain goals. The current overview of youth and policies pertaining to young people attempted to provide a broad picture of the current state of the youth field. Its central features are related to actors in the public administration system and, more generally, in the public sphere. Our conclusions and recommendations, therefore, have been developed to support such actors.

The most significant current process is the shift toward an integrated youth policy. Estonia comes from the situation where public administrators usually paid little attention to youth issues in their areas of responsibility and did not coordinate youth-related decisions. Currently, Estonia is moving toward establishing a degree of communication and cooperation wherein legislators and policymakers routinely develop programs in a coordinated manner. Although we can see the first fruits of the process, it clearly is very complex and time-consuming. We are still at quite an early stage of the integrated youth policy. However, the very existence of the initiative and the will to put in place and implement the integrated youth policy are the most significant positive findings of the review.

The conclusions we drew and recommendations we developed are aimed at supporting the process. Some of them are predominantly organizational, others mainly substantive. Conclusions fall into eight separate but interrelated categories.

7.2 Awareness of the Shift Toward Integrated Youth Policy

The main findings from document analysis and interviews tell us that the overall awareness of public sector and youth field actors of the transition period to the integrated youth policy is low. While representatives of the Estonian Youth Work Center and the Ministry of Education and Research place awareness of this transition among their most significant goals, interviewees from other organizations did not even mention it. Albeit thinking in terms of the transition is not inevitable, being aware of the change would

help to achieve the goal. Currently, we saw no signs from the important actors in the public sector of being aware of the transition or contributing to the process.

- » We recommend that the MER and EYWC **take steps aimed at increasing other actors' awareness of the ongoing transition process to an integrated and coordinated youth policy.** As the nongovernmental sector appears to be an active and important partner in carrying out youth policy measures and, in some respects, also more aware of integrated youth policy, we recommend the promotion of continuing dialogue with and between these partners to assure their continued awareness of youth policy goals with communication on expectations and roles of each partner.

7.3 Cooperation Between Actors

As outlined in the policy review, cooperation between actors involved in policies affecting youth is mainly issue-based. We also saw other cooperation patterns, but the predominant collaboration pattern was still ad hoc cooperation on specific issues. Normally, cooperation is initiated by the actor directly involved in resolving a specific issue or achieving a goal. When the goal is reached, the working group is dissolved. This kind of cooperation certainly has its place. However, a more permanent cooperation would support the exchange of information and development greater mutual understanding between actors, as well as the possibility for joint actions and the sharing of resources. In the longer perspective, it would also influence the visibility of youth and youth matters in general.

- » We recommend **creating more permanent cooperation networks** and other collaboration formats that build on and support contacts **between different actors.**

7.4 Usage of Expertise in Youth [Work]

Interviews with representatives of youth work organizations as well as review of various documents show that a significant amount of expertise in youth work exists in Estonia. The review of policies showed that the exper-

tise could be used for achieving goals of other organizations. In fact, the use of expertise in youth and cooperation of these experts with other institutions were mentioned repeatedly. This is certainly a positive situation. However, a lot of expertise that could be used by other actors is still lying idle.

- » We recommend **increasing cooperation and exchanges between public sector actors and youth field actors.**

7.5 Increase in Number of Experts and Specialists

In some spheres, the lack of professional workers (and resources to hire professional workers) is evident. For example, child care, children's mental health, and alternative pedagogy are some of the areas that suffer from a lack of specialists. Without an adequate number of qualified specialists in these areas, the focus on cooperation and networking suggested above cannot have the expected effects.

- » We see a need to **increase the number of professional child care and mental health specialists** available throughout Estonia and to pay more attention to the topic of how to work with risk groups when training teachers and youth workers.

7.6 Usage of Knowledge on Youth: Cooperation Between Research Field and Youth Field

A considerable amount of research on young people has been accumulated in different spheres. Universities and research organizations employ a great number of qualified researchers who could contribute to policymaking and evaluations. Existing knowledge and expertise is currently underused—it could be employed more extensively and more effectively to support planning, decision making, and evaluation.

Communication between policymakers and researchers in academia is complicated since goals, values, and operating patterns in these spheres differ significantly. Also, the youth field itself is highly complicated divided as it is among different administrative levels (from organizational to European) and different areas of ministerial responsibility.

- » While we recognize all steps that already have been taken, we recommend continuing to pursue the goal of **supporting communication and cooperation between research, policy, and youth work**.

7.7 Overview of Youth Policies

Youth is mentioned in a number of national development plans in various policy areas. Altogether 31 national programs mention youth to one degree or another. Some of them are explicitly or predominantly devoted to youth (e.g., Youth Work Strategy, educational strategies), some give significant attention but do not put youth in the first place (e.g., National Health Development Plan), and some only mention youth (e.g., Estonian Fisheries Strategy). All have set certain goals and foresee specific actions needed to achieve the goals. Implementation of the various strategies results in youth being pushed and pulled by a number of forces in different directions. As different strategies have different goals and are targeted toward different groups, subgroups of young people are influenced by different actions. In some cases, young people's initiatives influence how the plans are implemented.

Currently, no in-depth analysis of the policies is available. An overview describing all policies affecting youth is needed if we are to understand the outcomes of all these varying forces that influence the lives of young people. A description of intended goals and expected outcomes of different actions would be a minimum first step to map the landscape of the forces that influence young lives and young people's integration into society. This report is a good start and introduction to a more thorough analytic exercise.

- » We recommend **undertaking a systematic descriptive study focusing on policy measures that affect young people** in Estonia.

7.8 Evaluation of Outcomes of Policies Pertaining to Youth

Currently, policies pertaining to youth are evaluated by different ministries, which pay attention to different aspects of youth issues, depending on the role of youth in their policy field. No general overview of the effects of policies that affect young people is available—no systematic picture of

how various policy measures affect selected aspects of the lives of specific youth groups. However, in the framework on integrated youth policy, such an overview would be necessary. Knowledge-based planning, implementation, and evaluation are norms in all policy decisions. To adequately understand the youth field as a sector that crosses many other policy areas, a specific analysis of the effects of various measures that affect young people's lives is needed.

- » We recommend **undertaking a systematic evaluation of measures affecting young people**, taking into account the need to differentiate among specific groups of young people.

7.9 Inclusion of Youth and Support of Youth Participation

Youth is not extensively involved in designing policies pertaining to youth. This finding, however, does not point directly to a shortcoming in the youth sphere but rather to a delay in youth inclusion in policy processes. As has become obvious from interviews and from analysis of documents, young people have plenty of opportunities to participate in national, county, and municipal policy processes and also in management of many organizations. Appropriate structures are operating and practices are recognized (including, but not limited to, youth and student councils, youth organizations, consultation practices), participation opportunities are guaranteed by law, youth participation in policymaking is allocated financial and organizational resources. The main obstacles that keep youth from using the opportunities more intensively seem to be:

1. The passiveness of young people themselves
2. Lack of enthusiasm on the part of ministerial and municipal officials for including youth in policy processes

Neither interviews nor the analysis of documents pointed to any official who did say or would have said that youth activism is too great or that youth activism should be limited. On the contrary, the officials interviewed were supportive of youth inclusion—provided that young people are ready to take responsibility and be true partners in these processes.

The policy review process led us to think that, in general, Estonia needs to keep doing what it is doing now.

- » We recommend **increasing the amount of various resources** (financial, organizational, contacts/networking, legislative) that are allocated to programs **supporting youth activism**. They should be aimed at increasing youth interest in society, in policy processes, as well as their readiness to participate in the policy development and evaluation.
- » We deem educating civil servants about participation issues equally important if we want to see more “enthusiastic” officials involving youth in policymaking. We recommend **developing programs and materials that support public officials** at different levels.
- » As inclusion of youth in policy processes involves a complex set of practices—a **common frame of reference and recommended practices** would be appropriate.

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Appendix I: Research Plan

Stage 1: Preparation Phase

The research team members met on May 2–4, 2011. The key discussion items of that orientation meeting are summarized below.

1.1 Aims and Scope of the Project, Clarifying the Focus of the Study

The team agreed to focus the study on the following questions:

- » To what extent are the rights of young people fulfilled in reality?
- » What environments do the existing policies create for young people?
- » What are the gaps in the existing policies (what issues seen as problems by stakeholders are not addressed by the policies)?

A particular emphasis was set on the rights of marginalized, migrant, and minority youth (in Estonia's case, the Russian-speaking minority population).

1.2 Approach and Methodology

The approach and methods of the study were based on the guidelines given by the International Editorial Board (IEB)—a primarily descriptive study employing a creative combination of scientifically established evidence and personal impressions/opinions of researchers. Based on IEB's suggestions, the methods chosen included desk study, individual interviews, and focus group interviews. It was agreed that individual interviews would primarily be used for data collection and thematic focus group interviews for corroboration of the results.

1.3 Initial Mapping of Key Youth-Related Topics to Explore in the Study

The key issues identified included education, staying in school, access to higher education, gender and education, youth unemployment, links between education and (un)employment (labor market needs, vocational education), gender and unemployment (including the effects of structural changes caused by the economic crisis), patterns of migration, uniting work and studies, situation of Russian-speaking minority youth, youth health situation, dangerous lifestyles, substance abuse, risky behavior, juvenile delinquency, measures for juvenile offenders, rights of sexual minorities (potential discrimination, the absence of regulations for same-sex civic partnerships), youth participation in civil society and policy processes, youth work, nonformal education, funding of youth projects, young people with lesser opportunities, youth autonomy, young parents (including situation of young single mothers), poverty, overall image of young people in society (resource vs. problem).

1.4 Contextualization of the Evaluation Matrix

The evaluation matrix was adopted largely as proposed by the IEB, adding four key context-related factors:

1. Transition society (How do the Soviet past and post-Soviet reforms affect the context for the situation of youth in Estonia and the policies pertaining to young people?)
2. Ethnic composition (What consequences do the ethnic composition and the existence of a large ethnic minority have for the realities of young people? Are there any differences between youth of Estonian and Russian ethnicity? How do the two communities interact? Are there social divides/conflict?)
3. Europeanization (How does the EU influence policies pertaining to youth in Estonia or the context in which policies are made?)
4. Information society (How does the information society affect the life of young people, e.g., access to information, new opportunities for participation?)

Youth bulge and conflict were omitted from the original list of context-related factors.

1.5 Initial List of Groups/Organizations Potentially to be Interviewed

Group/Organization	Topics
Ministry of Education, Youth Department	youth policy
National Youth Council	youth participation, youth work
Federation of Estonian Student Unions School Student Union	education, social issues
NGO Open Republic Russian youth NGOs	minorities, Russian-speaking youth, integration
Ministry of Culture Integration Foundation	integration, language learning, talented children, sports
Ministry of Social Affairs Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund Innove Foundation Chamber of Commerce Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication	employment/unemployment, entrepreneurship, career counseling
Ministry of Education Estonian Cooperation Assembly	education (problems, incl. school drop-outs), transition to bilingual instruction at Russian-language schools
National Institute for Health Development	health issues, risky behavior, substance abuse
Estonian Union for Child Welfare UNICEF Estonia	rights of children and youth, problems
Estonian Association of Youth Workers Open Youth Centers Union	youth work, nonformal learning

Center for Policy Studies PRAXIS	youth policy, youth work, research/knowledge-based policymaking
Estonian Youth Work Center National Agency of the Youth in Action Program	youth work in general, state's view on youth work, Youth in Action priorities vs. profile of grantees
Local municipalities (youth workers)	regional dimension of youth work and youth policies, differences and similarities, small municipalities
NGO EAPN Estonia	child/youth poverty
Youth NGOs Estonian National Youth Council	youth participation in society
Youth wings of political parties	youth participation in politics
Estonian Gay Youth Association	sexual minorities—rights, concerns
Ministry of Justice Local/regional juvenile committees	juvenile delinquency
Union of Foster Families	Orphans
Estonian Sexual Health Association National Institute for Health Development NGO AIDS Prevention Center	HIV/AIDS & STIs
Ministry of Social Affairs, gender equality commissioner	gender (in)equality
Estonian Human Rights Center	human rights situation in general
MTÜ Üksikvanema Heaks	young single parents
NGO Volunteer Development Estonia	volunteering

1.6 Guidelines for the Structure of the Report

We decided that the structure of the report would follow the guidelines proposed by the IEB.

1.7 Division of Tasks and Roles

The roles and tasks were divided according to the professional experience and personal preferences of researchers, using the guidelines for the structure of the report as a framework to structure the work of researchers. The original division of tasks was as follows:

- » Marius Ulozas and Simon Bart (International Advisors)—introductory information, terms of reference and rationale for the review, assumptions/presumptions underlying the research process
- » Liisa Mürsepp (local researcher)—approach/methodology, Chapter 2 (Situation of Young People), Chapter 3 (Policy Context), conclusions and recommendations
- » Ilona-Evelyn Rannala (local researcher)—team reflections on the process of drafting the report, Chapter 5 (Impact of Policies on the Achievement of Human Rights of Young People), Chapter 6 (Intersectoral Coordination and Cooperation in the Youth Policy Field), conclusions and recommendations
- » Marti Taru (local researcher)—Chapter 4 (Policy Realities), Chapter 6 (Intersectoral Coordination and Cooperation in the Youth Policy Field), conclusions and recommendations

1.8 Initial Timeline for the Project

The team agreed on the following preliminary timeline (with a slight buffer to be able to accommodate any unexpected delays):

2011	
May	Finalization of the list of interviews; desk research
June	Desk research
July	Desk research; first draft report
August	Preparation for interviews; conducting interviews
September	Conducting interviews; analysis of interviews; field visit program; second draft report—initial deadline September 16

October	Field visit
November	Submission of final report—initial deadline November 11
December	Feedback from IEB, any necessary changes and additions to the report

1.9 Knowledge Management, Ways of Work, and Communication with Each Other

We agreed that Dropbox would be used for sharing the report in its different stages. Youthpolicy.org was used for international communication and resources. Communication between researchers and International Advisor would be needs-based, updates and questions exchanged primarily via e-mail.

Stage 2: Data Collection Phase

2.1 Desk Study (May–July 2011)

The desk study was carried out by the three local researchers and included an analysis of documents, legislation, development plans, budgets, previous reviews of youth policy, youth research, media, statistics, etc. One of the aims of the desk study was to describe the dimensions of Estonian youth policy and to map the actors in the youth sector who are relevant as sources of information. During the desk research, the research team drew up the final list of people to be interviewed and interview plans, which were based on the results of the desk study.

2.2 Interviews with Stakeholders (July–September 2011)

In-depth interviews were conducted with officials, experts, grassroots organizations, and youth representatives, altogether 15 interviewees (see Appendix II for the final list). The interviews were semi-structured, with open questions to get different opinions about different aspects. The duration of the interviews was approximately one hour each; all the interviews were recorded.

2.3 Internet Poll (July–August 2011)

To put the data collected in a general youth perspective, three questions were added to an Internet poll, which was done with the help of the Estonian National Youth Council. The total number of respondents was 860. The questions were about youth participation, youth initiatives, and needs of young people in youth policy. The questions had an open structure, enabling respondents to express their opinions in free format.

2.4 Drafting the Report

Stage 3: Submission of the First Draft to the IEB

The first draft was submitted to the IEB in mid-November 2011 by the International Advisor.

Stage 4: Corroboration of Initial Results

4.1 Focus Group Interviews (November 7–11, 2011)

To discuss the initial results and plan the focus group interviews, the first preparatory meeting was held in September by the local research team and local coordinator. In October, the second preparatory meeting was held with the participation of the International Advisor. During the meetings, team members discussed the results of the desk study and individual interviews, made suggestions for improvement, and outlined the main questions for the focus group interviews.

The field trip was held at the beginning of November. During one week, three different focus group interviews were conducted in three different locations in Estonia: Tallinn, Narva, and Tartu. The aim of the focus groups was to discuss the main results of the desk research and individual interviews. The group interviews focused on different important topics that emerged from earlier research:

- » The process, coordination, and organization of policies pertaining to youth
- » Integration of Russian-speaking minority youth
- » Problems of youth at risk and risky behavior

4.2 Review of the Existing Draft, Adding Results from Focus Groups

Stage 5: Editing and Finalization of the Report

5.1 Feedback from the IEB

The research team received the first feedback from the IEB at the end of November 2011.

5.2 Second Round of Review, Submission of the Second Draft to the IEB

The research team was able to resubmit the revised report by the end of February 2012.

5.3 Finalization and Editing by International Advisor, Submission of the Third Draft

With the close collaboration with the research team, the new International Advisor submitted a third draft of the report on March 20, 2012.

5.4 Feedback from IEB

The IEB provided its feedback on the third draft by the end of March 2012.

5.5 Submission of the Final Report

The final draft was resubmitted to the IEB in the second week of April 2012.

Appendix II: List of Interviews and Focus Groups Conducted

(As well as questions used)

Individual Interviews with Relevant Stakeholders

List of interviewees

Anne Kivimäe, Ministry of Education and Research, Head of Youth Department

Anni Metstak, Estonian National Youth Council

Anu Leps, Ministry of Justice, Criminal Policy Department, Analysis Division

Edgar Schlümmer, Estonian Youth Work Center, Director

Eimar Veldre, Federation of Estonian Student Unions, Chair

Heli Paluste, Ministry of Social Affairs, Health Department, Acting Director

Katre Pall, Ministry of Social Affairs, Social Security Department, Head of Benefit Policy

Kuldar Rosenberg, Estonian School Student Councils Union, Chair

Maret Ney, Estonian Gay Youth Union, President of the Board

Natalja Eigo, National Institute for Health Development, Head of Department of Health Statistics

Peeter Taim, Estonian Youth Workers Union, Chair

Reet Kost, Estonian National Agency of the Youth in Action Program, Director

Riina Vaap, Estonian Open Youth Club Union, Chair

Silver Pramann, Ministry of Culture, Department of Cultural Diversity and Integration

Tea Danilov, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Economic Development Department, Director

Tõnu Poopuu, Ministry of Social Affairs, Department of Children and Families, Head of Children's Rights

Toomas Palu, UNICEF Estonia, Executive Director

Main questions

- » What is the position of your institution/organization in youth policy?
- » What is the real and what is the desirable position of your institution/organization in discussions and decisions concerning youth policy?
- » What issues concerning youth are you currently working on?
- » How do you measure the effectiveness of your work (reaching goals)? Please specify the goals.
- » Are there issues/problems not raised in public yet that, in your opinion, would need to be raised? If yes, what topics and how should they be approached?
- » What are the main institutional and organizational problems within youth policy?
- » What is the position of youth in society in general?
- » What are the topics in public when talking about youth?
- » Is youth aware of their rights and obligations? If yes, how should the informative work be done?
- » Are enough rights guaranteed to youth by law? What rights should be added/denied/changed in law?
- » What possibilities are there for youth to participate in youth policy?
- » Are enough opportunities available for youth to engage in political debates?
- » How active are young people in participating in political debates, discussions?
- » How to make discussions concerning youth (problems) more interesting to youth?
- » How are youth's opinions taken into account in political decisions?

- » How would you describe your cooperation (including initiatives, effects, plans, formats) with other relevant organizations in youth field?
- » How would you describe your cooperation (including initiatives, effects, plans, formats) with the Ministry of Education and Science and the Estonian Youth Work Center?
- » How would you describe the human resources available in the youth field in the broader sense (youth workers, pedagogues, child care officers—sufficiency, education, supplemental training, motivation, attitudes on youth, etc.)?
- » How would you describe the sufficiency and availability of different relevant information for youth?
- » How would you describe the sufficiency and availability of different (needed) services for youth?
- » How would you describe the sufficiency and use of financial resources in the youth field (for what mostly used and why? Transparency, effectiveness, etc.)?
- » How would you evaluate the effectiveness of youth policy today?

Specific questions to stakeholders

- » What rights are, in your opinion, not guaranteed for juvenile offenders?
- » How do you evaluate the possibilities for juvenile offenders to participate in society, decision making, etc., in a broader way?
- » How would you describe the sufficiency and availability of different (needed) services for juvenile offenders/youth?
- » How would you describe the sufficiency and availability of different relevant information needed for juvenile offenders/youth?

Web Poll for Youth

Questions

- » Which topics and issues would you like to have a say in in political discussions?

- » How to make debates on youth-related issues more interesting for youth?
- » Have young people been given enough opportunities to participate in political debates?

Thematic Focus Group Interviews

Focus Group I: Policy process and coordination

List of interviewees

Edgar Rootalu, Estonian Youth Council

Jevgeni Krishtafovitch, NGO Open Republic

Kaur Kötsi, Estonian Youth Work Center

Nele Gerberson, Ministry of Social Affairs, Department of Labor Policy Information and Analysis

Peeter Taim, Estonian Youth Workers Union

Reet Kost, National Agency of the Youth in Action Program

Riina Vaap, Estonian Union of Open Youth Centers

Tõnu Poopuu, Ministry of Social Affairs, Department of Children and Families

Main questions

- » Should there be a common/coordinated youth policy in Estonia?
- » How is youth policy-related cooperation currently organized? What organizations do you cooperate with? On which topics? Who should initiate more cooperation and how?
- » To what extent are youth currently involved in the planning, implementation of, and evaluation of youth policy measures? What could be improved?
- » Which cooperation models/arrangements have turned out to be successful?

- » What are the main problems in coordination and cooperation? Do you perceive a need for a better coordination? How should it be organized (resource sharing, exchange of best practices, etc.)?
- » What could be done to involve young people more actively in designing policies that affect their lives?
- » What resources/what support systems are currently available for stakeholders involved in planning and implementing youth policies? How do you evaluate the existing measures (sufficient/not sufficient)?
- » Which issues/policies should and could be more centralized/decentralized?
- » Should the new directions and goals in your field be manifest in the next Estonian youth strategy (2014 on); if so, how?

Focus Group II: Integration of Russian-speaking youth

List of interviewees

Anna Konovalova, Director of Narva Youth Center

Seven randomly selected young people from Narva Youth Center (5 boys, 2 girls aged 15–18)

Main questions

- » What are the interests of young people?
- » In which ways do young people participate in society? What are the main obstacles to participation?
- » Which channels do you use to get information about your rights and opportunities as young people? Is there enough information?
- » What are your plans for the future?
- » Are you aware of what is happening in your town and local community? Can young people participate in the decisions made by the city council?
- » What should be done in your town so that you would want to stay or return after finishing your studies?
- » What problems do youth face in your hometown?

- » In what language do you look for information about your opportunities?
- » What should be done to facilitate communication between the Estonian- and Russian-speaking youth communities in Estonia?
- » Do Russian-speaking youth in different parts of Estonia (e.g., East Estonia and the capital) have similar opportunities?
- » What kind of support measures exist for youth initiatives?

Focus Group III: Rights of youth at risk and juvenile offenders

List of interviewees

Andres Aru, Chancellor of Justice, Head of Department of Children's Rights
Ene Pikner, family worker, NGO Öökull

Ljudmilla Atškasov, Director of NGO Öökull

Marina Paddar, Chair of Juvenile Committee of Tartu County; juvenile police officer

Maris Raudam, Secretary of Juvenile Committee of Kristiine District (Tallinn)

Main questions

- » Working with at-risk youth depends to a large extent on the existing legal framework and strategies: what are your comments on the current framework and situation in Estonia?
- » What are the main problems of at-risk youth in your opinion?
- » In your opinion, how much can at-risk youth influence decisions and topics relevant to them and on which level they can participate in the process?
- » What rights are not guaranteed for this target group?
- » What programs and other measures are available today for this target group, which of them are effective, and what measures are still needed?

Appendix III: About the Authors

Simon Bart

has been concerned with the international comparison of youth policy through OSYI, the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy, and the EU-China Policy Dialogue Support Facility. He studied history, political science, and public law in Berne and Rome. Since 2006, Simon has been a member of Politools, an interdisciplinary research network that develops web-based projects to expand political interest and to improve the level of political knowledge among citizens, particularly with regard to young people.

Marius Ulozas

is the co-founder and director of the Lithuania-based Institute for Policy Research and Analysis and a freelance youth trainer, working with several NGOs and international institutions, including the Council of Europe, European Youth Forum, Youth for Exchange and Understanding, Council of Lithuanian Youth Organizations and others. Marius studied philosophy, political science and law, and has a long-time working experience in public relations and communication. His experience in youth policy primarily concerns the development and analysis of cross-sectoral youth policy: both at the national level, working with the government of Lithuania, as well as the local level in the framework of the cooperation agreement of the Baltic states and Flanders.

Liisa Mürsepp

is a studying for her master's in sociology at the Institute of International and Social Studies (IISS) at the Tallinn University. In addition to youth studies, her main research interests include urban sociology, revitalization of the urban space, and housing sociology. Liisa is one of the founding members of the student council at IISS and a member of the institute's student consultative body for the development of the MA program in sociology. Being a young activist herself, she has acquired both an academic as well as a good practical understanding of the rights, opportunities, and concerns of young people in Estonia today.

Ilona-Evelyn Rannala

has been working at the Tallinn City Government Sports and Youth Department since 2004 and was appointed Head of the Youth Department in 2007. She is a board member of the Estonian Youth Workers Association and an active participant in several youth-related inter-institutional working groups, tackling issues such as the prevention and reduction of juvenile crime, application of the Estonian Youth Work Strategy, and youth work quality development. Her previous experience as a kindergarten teacher and Assistant Director of Kõo Day Care Center for children with special needs gave Ilona hands-on experience of work with children and youth. She holds a master's degree in social work and is currently writing her PhD thesis on the importance of dialogue in working with juvenile offenders, analyzing the experience of juvenile committees in Estonia.

Marti Taru

has more than 10 years of extensive experience in youth research. Working at the Institute of International and Social Studies at the Tallinn University since 2002, his principal research fields are youth participation, youth civic activism, youth cross-cultural integration, youth and employment. He participates in and coordinates several national and international expert networks, being a selected member of the Pool of European Youth Researchers and the Estonian correspondent at the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policies. Marti is involved in the development of a compre-

hensive youth monitoring system in Estonia and national youth work-quality management system; he has conducted evaluations of the European Commission's Youth in Action program and youth work in municipalities, and co-authored numerous youth-related international comparative studies. Having previously studied sociology and political science and knowledge-based management and marketing at the University of Tartu, Marti is currently pursuing a PhD degree in political science at the University of Helsinki, Finland.

Maarja Toots

is the coordinator of the Youth Program at the Open Estonia Foundation, where she works to support the capacity-building and advocacy endeavors of youth organizations and manages grants for youth-driven initiatives promoting open society goals. Before joining the Open Estonia Foundation, she worked as a project manager in the field of development education at the European Movement Estonia. Maarja studied government and politics at the University of Tartu and is currently a master's candidate in public administration at the Tallinn University of Technology.

Youth and Public Policy in Estonia

After regaining independence, Estonia has undergone a profound transition, becoming a democratic nation with an exceptionally liberal economy and its own place within the European Union. In 2011, young people between 7 and 26 years of age made up 22 percent of the total Estonian population, a percentage that is going to drop considerably in the coming decades.

Against this dual backdrop, this book reviews public policies and their effect on Estonian young people with an eye to the implications of the country's eventful recent history, significant Russian-speaking minority, and aging population.

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